

THE MESSAGE FROM THE GERMAN MINISTER OF HEALTH

Speaker: Jens SPAHN, Federal Minister of Health | Germany

Germany's healthcare system has enabled the country to respond well to the health crisis

Germany's effective response to the COVID-19 crisis has been head and shoulders above many neighboring countries both in terms of flattening the infection curve and in terms of severity.

The country reacted at the very beginning of the crisis, taking it very seriously and quickly increasing the number of intensive care beds from 12,000 to 40,000.

German laboratories and researchers were also mobilized very early on to develop the first tests in the country. A total of 14 million people were tested in Germany, which made it possible to know exactly how many people were infected, how many were asymptomatic and, above all, to predict the future pressure of the virus on the healthcare system and social life.

The rapid response of the health system made it possible to prepare citizens, health institutions and various actors. For example, efforts implemented by primary care helped avoid hospital saturation while allowing hospital teams to focus on serious cases only. The number of serious cases and the ratio of deaths to the number of infected citizens are lower in Germany than in other countries. This is partly due to the way the German ratio is calculated, but also because the chains of contagion were mainly linked to clusters of young people, populations at risk were less infected with the virus.

This crisis should push Europe to rethink globalization and work together to produce a vaccine

All countries have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis, both caring for patients and supplying protective equipment. It is important to learn lessons from this crisis, and in particular to rethink globalization so as not to be too commercially dependent on one country or region of the world. It is for this reason, and for the outreach of the European Union, that a COVID-19 vaccine against must be invented and produced in Europe.