



**Video message
by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and
Ms Büdenbender on the corona pandemic
on 8 April 2020**

Fellow citizens,

We're experiencing unusual times – unusual and for many families trying times.

“The corona pandemic has changed our lives completely. It has changed the way we live together. We have to keep our distance from each other, out of responsibility towards one another. This is an imperative of human kindness. But we often find it difficult.”

“Many people are now staying at home. Especially in our cities, that often means being alone at home, separated from our loved ones, far away from our family. Others are spending much more time with their partner, with the family. Many draw strength from this; they are grateful for the closeness, for the time they spend with each other, with their children.

However, the changes to our daily lives do present challenges. Who looks after the children when the parents are working as doctors and carers, as bus drivers and as supermarket cashiers? How can we combine teleworking and home schooling? The youngest child starts complaining when the boss calls. The 12-year-old does all kinds of things on the computer, but not their homework. The middle child is hungry and wants to eat now, immediately. On top of all that, we now have to spend the Easter holidays at home!”

“And there is another great worry: we are no longer allowed to see those who especially need us: our lonely mother, our fragile father, our grandparents. What we find even more difficult is the fact that we are not allowed to visit them in hospital or in their care homes. That's heartbreaking. And yet it is especially important to remember that we have to keep our distance in order to protect them! We have to keep our distance but show them that we are with them.

Yes, this is asking much of us, indeed sometimes it's asking too much and we find some things too difficult to deal with. But we're certain that most of you understand that the current restrictions are necessary, vitally important, and accept them. And many are now even rising above themselves. They are strong as families and that makes our society strong."

"However, it is especially important to me that we don't forget those within our society who have been hit particularly hard by this crisis: Single parents.

Or those who live alone and see that the companionship they need has been abruptly reduced.

Or the families who live in confined spaces and now fear even more than they used to that they cannot cope.

And the women and children whose own homes are, unfortunately, not a safe haven – and who are now in danger of being subjected to domestic violence much more frequently.

Yes, many social organisations are closed. But even now there are points of contact to which those in difficult situations can turn – you can see some of them in a moment. There are people providing support: in the youth welfare offices, in institutions caring for children and young people, in women's shelters, via emergency helplines or private individuals. They distribute food, supervise homework online, set up messenger services and virtual meeting platforms."

"We would both like to thank all of you, the countless individuals who are giving your time and effort, most sincerely. You are showing us what solidarity means – on both a large and a small scale. You are demonstrating what holds our country together!

Yes, we have to keep our distance. But, at the same time, we are close to each other. And everyone can play their part."

"You are already doing that day in and day out. You are sticking together. You are doing that for each other, for all of us. We firmly believe that this is the way to master the challenges we currently face. Keeping our distance and yet sticking together."

"All the best to you. And let's look out for each other."