



**Video message
from the Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
on the corona pandemic
on 2 April 2020**

Fellow citizens,

We are all going through a difficult time right now.

When we wake up in the morning, the world still looks familiar to us. And yet it seems strangely unreal. Pedestrian zones are deserted. Schoolyards are empty and silent. Our favourite pub and Italian restaurant are shut. The few pedestrians out on the streets give each other a wide berth.

Some of us are already hit especially hard by the crisis because of illness, loneliness or financial worries. Many other people are experiencing this period as a sort of enforced deceleration. We are supposed to be calm and yet we feel anxious inside. We are supposed to be patient and yet we impatiently seek normality. We are supposed to keep our distance and yet we long for closeness.

Yes, this crisis unleashes our deepest fears. But it also brings out the best in us! And that, fellow citizens, must be our guiding principle!

In recent days, I spoke with people who are wonderful examples of this, people who are inspiring and helping others: Amandeep Grewal, a medical student from Reutlingen, lost no time in setting up an online platform to place medical students with hospitals and doctors' surgeries. Katrin Höhne, who works at a hospital, is sewing face masks for her colleagues at home with her three children. Igor Levit, the renowned pianist, is livestreaming joyful music from his living room to our living rooms every evening – and tonight's performance will be broadcast here from Schloss Bellevue.

These are just a few examples which show that while we may have to isolate ourselves, that certainly doesn't mean we can't help others.

Fellow citizens, Each and every one of us can do something to help right now! We can do the shopping for our older neighbours. We can phone our relatives – and perhaps in particular those with whom we rarely speak. We can read our grandchildren a bedtime story over the phone. We can send cards or letters to our loved ones in care homes while we are not allowed to visit them.

We can make use of the many ideas and platforms now appearing in the internet – for volunteers who, for example, want to help farmers with the harvest; for people who are now keeping in touch with their religious communities online; or for sports trainers or midwives who are offering their courses via video.

We can buy vouchers from our favourite shops that currently have to remain closed and order takeaways from our favourite restaurants. And we can choose not to ask for our money back if we have bought tickets for events that have now been cancelled, as the livelihoods of so many of the artists and performers whose work means so much to us now in particular are at acute risk now in particular.

We can do all these concrete things, and more besides, right here and right now for each other!

Dr Claudia Meister, who is currently working in a mobile corona testing team, laughed when she told me on the phone that “there are also good things about this crisis – we’re really getting to know each other now.”

And she is right. So, fellow citizens, as we are really getting to know each other now, then let’s show each other our best sides. Let’s show compassion! Let’s show solidarity!

If we succeed in doing this together, our society will not fall apart in this crisis. On the contrary, its members will become closer.

I’m so grateful to everyone who is helping. Thank you so much.

All the best to you. And let’s look out for each other!