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## **FORMER HEADS OF STATE AND NOBEL LAUREATES CALL ON CANDIDATES FOR GERMAN CHANCELLOR TO WAIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RULES FOR COVID VACCINES**

Dear Annalena Baerbock, Armin Laschet, and Olaf Scholz,

We, the undersigned former Heads of State and Government and Nobel Laureates, write to you in the conviction that Germany has a significant role to play in global efforts to bring the COVID-19 pandemic to an end. The impact of that would be of huge significance to people in Germany and around the world.

As candidates to be the next German Chancellor, responsibility for your country's leadership on this issue will fall on one of you.

German publicly-funded science developed the world-class mRNA BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine which was a huge achievement. Yet vaccines are zero per cent effective for those who cannot access them.

The fact that a few vaccine producers hold monopoly control over how much vaccine is made and where it is made has resulted in a serious shortage of doses. As a result, billions of people remain unvaccinated in countries without access.

In low-income countries, less than two per cent of adults are fully vaccinated. The global supply falls far short of the levels needed to provide global vaccination coverage. The artificial restriction on manufacturing and supply is leading to thousands of *unnecessary* deaths from COVID-19 each day, and countless thousands of cases — a proportion of which will suffer long term, adverse health impacts.

In light of this we are deeply concerned with Germany's continued opposition to a temporary waiver of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) intellectual property rules which thwart more rapid production of COVID-19 vaccines and access to technologies.

There are qualified manufacturers around the world who, with a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights and the necessary knowledge and technology transfer, could produce the billions of additional doses of safe and effective vaccines needed to fight the pandemic.

However, the position taken by Germany and some other countries at the WTO is undermining the will of the more than 100 countries which do support negotiations on a TRIPS<sup>[1]</sup> waiver. South Africa and India have led the push for those negotiations, and they have been joined by others from across regions, including France and the United States.

We write to express our hope that, after its general election, Germany will change its position and will support negotiations on the proposed TRIPS waiver.

We do not advocate a suspension of intellectual property rules lightly, but we believe that it is essential in the fight against the pandemic. Moreover, a waiver would still allow for vaccine originators to be fairly compensated whilst vaccines truly become a public good.

While donating excess vaccines to developing countries is crucial, it is not in itself a sustainable solution — the vaccine problem is one of both distribution and supply. Covax aims to provide vaccines to cover nearly thirty per cent of populations in countries that it serves — and has been unable to obtain sufficient supply to meet even that modest goal. Its challenge is even more daunting as Germany and other high-income countries move to offer their citizens booster shots, while billions of people remain unvaccinated.

That is why developing countries being able to manufacture their own vaccines, and dramatically increase their supply, is vital. We need, more than ever, a people's vaccine.

If elected and chosen to lead the next German Government, we urge you to support a wide and comprehensive waiver of intellectual property rules on all COVID-19-related technologies at the WTO.

We also urge you to ensure that German pharmaceutical companies openly and rapidly share life-saving mRNA vaccine technology with qualified producers around the world, including by working with the World Health Organization COVID-19 Technology Access Pool and the mRNA hub in South Africa.

We urge you to make these the policies of any future coalition government.

Germany is in a unique and historic position today. Having helped create the most successful vaccine technology against COVID-19, by overcoming pharmaceutical monopolies and insisting that the technology be shared, it has the ability to help end this pandemic.

The experience that many of us share allows us to empathize with the realities of political office and the pressures you face. But let us be clear that this is an unparalleled moment: Germany can and must lead the charge to vaccinate the world.

Signed,

**Peter Agre** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2003)

**Rosalia Arteaga** — President of Ecuador (1997) <sup>2</sup>

**Shaukat Aziz** — Prime Minister of Pakistan (2004–2007) <sup>2</sup>

**Joyce Banda** — President of Malawi (2012–2014) <sup>1</sup>

**Barry Clark Barish** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2017)

**Francoise Barre-Sinoussi** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2008)

**J. Georg Bednorz** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1987)

**Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1996)

**Valdis Birkavs** — Prime Minister of Latvia (1993–1994) <sup>1</sup>

**J. Michael Bishop** — Nobel Laureate in Medicine (1989)

**Elizabeth H. Blackburn** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2009)\*

**Kjell Magne Bondevik** — Prime Minister of Norway (1997–2000; 2001–2005) <sup>1</sup>

**Dumitru Bragish** — Prime Minister of Moldova (1999–2001) <sup>2</sup>

**Gordon Brown** — Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2007–2010) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Micheline Calmy-Rey** — President of Switzerland (2007 and 2011) <sup>1</sup>

**Kim Campbell** — Prime Minister of Canada (1993) <sup>1</sup>

**Fernando Henrique Cardoso** — President of Brazil (1995–2003) <sup>1</sup>

**Martin Chalfie** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2008)

**Laura Chinchilla** — President of Costa Rica (2010–2014) and Vice President of Club de Madrid <sup>1</sup>

**Aaron Ciechanover** Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2004)

**Helen Clark** — Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999- 2008) <sup>1 2</sup>

**J. M. Coetzee** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature (2003)

**Marie-Louise Coleiro-Preca** — President of Malta (2014–2019) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Emil Constantinescu** — President of Romania (1996–2000) <sup>2</sup>

**Rafael Correa** — President of the Republic of Ecuador (2007- 2017), Member of Council of Progressive International

**Mairead Corrigan-Maguire** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1976)

**Robert F. Curl Jr.** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1996)

**Mirko Cvetkovic** — Prime Minister of Serbia (2008–2012) <sup>2</sup>

**Mohamed ElBaradei** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2005)

**Gerhard Ertl** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2007)

**Ameenah Gurib Fakim** — President of Mauritius (2015–2018) <sup>2</sup>

**Andrew Z. Fire** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2006)

**Jan Fisher** — Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (2009–2010) <sup>2</sup>

**Joachim Frank** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2017)

**Jerome I. Friedman** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1990)

**Chiril Gaburici** — Prime Minister of Moldova (2015) <sup>2</sup>

**Leymah Roberta Gbowee** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2011)

**Andre Geim** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2010)

**Walter Gilbert** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1980)

**Sheldon Glashow** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1979)

**Dalia Grybauskaitė** — President of Lithuania (2009–2019) <sup>1</sup>

**Alfred Gusenbauer** — Chancellor of Austria (2007–2008) <sup>1</sup>

**John L. Hall** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2005)

**Jeffrey Connor Hall** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2017)

**Tarja Halonen** — President of Finland (2000–2012) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Leland H. Hartwell** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2001)

**Hilda Heine** — President of the Marshall Islands (2016–2020) <sup>1</sup>

**Richard Henderson** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2017)

**Avram Hershko** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2004)

**Jules A. Hoffmann** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2011)

**Roald Hoffmann** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1981)

**François Hollande** — President of France (2012–2017)

**Tasuku Honjo** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2018)

**Gerardus 't Hooft** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1999)

**Michael Houghton** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2020)

**Tim Hunt** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2001)

**Louis J. Ignarro** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (1998)

**Mladen Ivanic** — President of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014–2018) <sup>2</sup>

**Elfriede Jelinek** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature (2004)

**Mehdi Jomaa** — Prime Minister of Tunisia (2014–2015) <sup>1</sup>

**Brian D. Josephson** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1973)

**Ivo Josipovic** — President of Croatia (2010–2015) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Takaaki Kajita** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2015)

**Eric R. Kandel** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2000)

**Tawakkol Karman** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2011)

**Wolfgang Ketterle** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2001)

**Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic** — President of Croatia (2015–2020) <sup>2</sup>

**Roger D. Kornberg** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2006)

**Jadranka Kosor** — Prime Minister of Croatia (2009–2011) <sup>2</sup>

**Leonid Kuchma** — President of Ukraine (1994–2005) <sup>2</sup>

**Chandrika Kumaratunga** — President of Sri Lanka (1994–2005) <sup>1</sup>

**Aleksander Kwaśniewski** — President of Poland (1995–2005) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Finn E. Kydland** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics (2004)

**Ricardo Lagos** — President of Chile (2000–2006) <sup>1</sup>

**Zlatko Lagumdzija** — Prime Minister of Bosnia & Herzegovina (2001–2002) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Yuan T. Lee** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1986)

**Robert J. Lefkowitz** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2012)

**Yves Leterme** — Prime Minister of Belgium (2008; 2009–2011) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Michael Levitt** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2013)

**Petru Lucinschi** — President of Moldova (1997–2001) <sup>2</sup>

**Igor Luksic** — Prime Minister of Montenegro (2010–2012) <sup>2</sup>

**Mauricio Macri** — President of Argentina (2015–2019) <sup>1</sup>

**Barry J. Marshall** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2005)

**Eric S. Maskin** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics (2007)

**John C. Mather** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2006)

**Arthur B. McDonald** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2015)

**Peter Medgyessy** — Prime Minister of Hungary (2002–2004) <sup>2</sup>

**Rexhep Meidani** — President of Albania (1997–2002) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Carlos Mesa** — President of Bolivia (2003–2005) <sup>1</sup>

**Stjepan Mesic** — President of Croatia (2000–2010) <sup>2</sup>

**James Michel** — President of Seychelles (2004–2016) <sup>1</sup>

**Edvard Moser** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2014)

**May-Britt Moser** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2014)

**Gerard Mourou** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2018)

**Denis Mukwege** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2018)

**Bujar Nishani** — President of Albania (2012–2017) <sup>2</sup>

**Konstantin Novoselov** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2010)

**Sir Paul M. Nurse** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2001)

**John O’Keefe** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2014)

**Olusegun Obasanjo** — President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999–2007) <sup>1</sup>

**Djoomart Otorbayev** — Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan (2014–2015) <sup>2</sup>

**Georgi Parvanov** — President of Bulgaria (2002–2012) <sup>2</sup>

**Andrés Pastrana** — President of Colombia (1998–2002) <sup>1</sup>

**P.J. Patterson** — Prime Minister of Jamaica (1992–2006) <sup>1</sup>

**Arno Penzias** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1978)

**Edmund S. Phelps** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics (2006)

**William D. Phillips** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (1997)

**Rosen Plevneliev** — President of Bulgaria (2012–2017) <sup>2</sup>

**John C. Polanyi** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1986)

**H. David Politzer** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2004)

**Stanley B. Prusiner** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (1997)

**Jorge Fernando Quiroga** — President of Bolivia (2001–2002) <sup>1</sup>

**José Manuel Ramos-Horta** — President of Timor Leste (2007–2012) <sup>1</sup>

**Charles M. Rice** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2020)

**Sir Richard J. Roberts** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (1993)

**Mary Robinson** — President of Ireland (1990–1997)

**José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero** — President of the Government of Spain (2004–2011) <sup>1</sup>

**Petre Roman** — Prime Minister of Romania (1989–1991) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Michael Rosbash** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2017)

**Juan Manuel Santos** — President of Colombia (2010–2018), Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2016), Member of the Elders and Conservation International Arnhold Distinguished Fellow

**Jean-Pierre Sauvage** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2016)

**Randy W. Schekman** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2013)

**Brian P. Schmidt** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2011)

**Gregg L. Semenza** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2019)

**Jenny Shipley** — Prime Minister of New Zealand (1997–1999)\*

**George P. Smith** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2018)

**Joseph E. Stiglitz** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics (2001)

**Sir James Fraser Stoddart** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2016)

**Petar Stoyanov** — President of Bulgaria (1997–2002) <sup>2</sup>

**Laimdota Straujuma** — Prime Minister of Latvia (2014–2016) <sup>2</sup>

**Jigme Yoser Thinley** — Prime Minister of Buthan (2008–2013) <sup>1</sup>

**Kip Stephen Thorne** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2017)

**Martín Torrijos** — President of Panama (2004–2009) <sup>1</sup>

**Elbegdorj Tsakhia** — President of Mongolia (2009–2017) <sup>1</sup>

**Danilo Türk** — President of Slovenia (2007–12) and President of Club de Madrid <sup>1</sup>

**Cassam Uteem** — President of Mauritius (1992–2002) and Vice President of Club de Madrid <sup>1</sup>

**Raimonds Vejonis** — President of Latvia (2015–2019) <sup>2</sup>

**Vaira Vike-Freiberga** — President of Latvia (1999–2007), Co-Chair Nizami Ganjavi International Center <sup>1 2</sup>

**Filip Vujanovic** — Prime Minister of Montenegro (2003–2018) <sup>2</sup>

**Sir John E. Walker** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (1997)

**J. Robin Warren** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (2005)

**Arieh Warshel** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry (2013)

**Rainer Weiss** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2017)

**Eric F. Wieschaus** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Medicine (1995)

**Jody Williams** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1997)

**David J. Wineland** — Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics (2012)

**Muhammad Yunus** — Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2006)

**Viktor Yushchenko** — President of Ukraine (2005–2010) <sup>1 2</sup>

**Valdis Zatlers** — President of Latvia (2007–2011) <sup>2</sup>

**Ernesto Zedillo** — President of Mexico (1994–2000) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Member of Club de Madrid

<sup>2</sup> Member of Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)

[\[1\]](#) The WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

\* Signatory to the letter after 13 September 2021