

# Germany: Green-Christian Democrat government in Baden-Württemberg presses ahead with reopening

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Despite warnings from virologists of a looming increase in COVID-19 infections, governments at the federal and state levels in Germany are largely dismantling all public health restrictions. The German state of Baden-Württemberg, which is governed by a Green-Christian Democrat (CDU) coalition, is a case in point.

Although the region has experienced its highest seven-day incidence of infections per 100,000 people—27 cases per 100,000 residents as of last Wednesday, compared to a nationwide average of 21—the state government led by Green Minister President Winfried Kretschmann is pressing ahead with the reopening drive, provoking a new wave of infections in the process.

“The danger remains. We are still in a pandemic,” Kretschmann felt compelled to warn last Tuesday. The possibility exists “that people become careless and that the wave (of infections) can return,” he declared.

The responsibility for the continued high number of new infections in the state, which recorded 667 cases on Wednesday and six deaths, bringing the total to 10,036, lies with the government. After the Greens and CDU published their coalition agreement on May 5, 2021, one of the first measures they announced was a new COVID-19 order. It came into force on May 14 and included sweeping reopening measures, to be implemented as soon as the incidence rate fell below 100 cases per 100,000 inhabitants for five days running. This removes the requirement that local authorities follow the so-called “federal emergency brake.”

The government has focused ever since on accelerating the reopenings and pressing ahead with its

policy of mass infection. The coalition carried out first and foremost the reopening of all schools and child care facilities, which are now open throughout the state, so that the labour power of parents is fully at the disposal of big business. In 33 of the state’s 44 rural districts and cities, in-person learning in full classrooms is taking place. The state government is also planning to allow summer camps where children will stay overnight. To this end, the COVID-19 order will be revised in mid-June.

People who have recovered from an infection or those who are fully vaccinated are no longer counted when calculating the upper limit for private meetings. Overnight stays by tourists in hotels and holiday homes are also permitted, as well as the running of travel buses, recreational boats and cable cars. Outdoor swimming pools, swimming in lakes, and spas have also been permitted.

Events with large numbers of people, which have proven to be sources of mass infections, are once again allowed. Outdoor cultural events with up to 100 attendees are permitted, as well as professional and elite sports with up to 100 spectators.

Retail stores are allowed to admit customers without any tests, so long as the store restricts the number of people per square metre to half the level of a store. In Sindelfingen, it has been possible for the past two weeks to go shopping without getting tested, making an appointment, or leaving contact details so that infections can be traced at a later date.

Restaurants have been reopened in many areas between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., with restrictions on customers only enforced indoors. The 9 p.m. closing time is also set to be abolished. According to the DPA

news agency, the Green-CDU government is considering “adapting the rule to the realities of life.”

With its aggressive reopening policy, the state government is continuing the agenda that has been characteristic of the Green Party throughout the pandemic. The party is part of 11 out of 16 state governments in a wide range of coalitions, and has spearheaded the “profits before lives” strategy from the outset.

At the federal level, the Greens voted in March 2020 for the federal government’s coronavirus emergency bailouts, which funnelled hundreds of billions of euros primarily to the banks and big business. Ever since, the Greens have pushed ahead with the reckless reopening of businesses and schools so as to extract the vast sums of money handed over to the financial oligarchy from the working class. Here are only a few examples of how the Greens spearheaded the reopening drive throughout the pandemic:

The Social Democrat (SPD)-Left Party-Green coalition in Berlin ordered final-year students to return to in-person learning in April 2020. In Saxony, the CDU-SPD-Green coalition government reestablished in-person learning with full classrooms in May 2020 and reopened child care facilities at full capacity. The Greens described the reopening of schools as an “important step for more justice in education,” because the coronavirus crisis had impacted “children from socially disadvantaged families above all.”

Green Party representatives also participated in the right-wing extremist demonstrations demanding an immediate end to all coronavirus protection measures in the interests of big business. For example, the leader of the Green parliamentary group in the Saxony state parliament, Franziska Schubert, took part in a protest by coronavirus deniers in May 2020 and stated on a sign she was carrying that she was “prepared to talk” with them.

During the same month, Green Party mayor of Tübingen, Boris Palmer, summed up the inhumane character of the Green Party’s policies. “I’ll put it in brutal terms for you: we’re saving the lives of people in Germany who will probably die in six months anyway,” he declared. The current effort by the Greens to expel Palmer following his latest outburst in no way represents a deviation from these policies, but is merely a transparent attempt to cover them up.

The Greens’ entire election campaign for the 2021 federal election underscores that they are a ruthless party of big business that will relentlessly pursue the interests of the corporate and financial elites at home and abroad.

At their party congress in November 2020, the Greens adopted a new party programme that called for a more independent German and European great power foreign policy and a massive programme of military rearmament.

In March 2021, they presented their programme for the federal election with the cynical title “Germany: everything is possible.” While the programme offers nothing for workers and young people other than the empty phrases about “social justice” and “prosperity based on climate fairness,” the business, military, and financial elites get everything they want: more money for rearmament and wars, a strengthened apparatus to suppress domestic social opposition and pro-business reforms to shore up German capital in its competition with its global rivals.

The Greens do not raise a single demand or make a single proposal in their entire election programme to combat the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed almost 90,000 lives in Germany alone. For this reason, among others, the Green Party and its chancellor candidate, Annalena Baerbock, are being embraced by leading business representatives, such as Siemens chief executive Joe Kaeser, as “pragmatic renewers.”



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