

# Confidence in Merkel is at all-time high in several countries during her last full year in office



German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives at a press conference at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin following a virtual meeting with governors of Germany's 16 states on Aug. 27, 2020. (Omer Messinger-Pool/Getty Images)

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As Angela Merkel enters the home stretch of her nearly 15-year tenure, more people express confidence in the German chancellor than in any other world leader asked about in a recent Pew Research Center survey of 14 countries. And in six of those countries, the share of adults who have confidence in Merkel is the highest on record.

This year marks the last full calendar year that Merkel will serve as the head of Germany's federal government. Merkel announced in October 2018 that she would not seek reelection in elections planned for next year. She is closing out her tenure amid the coronavirus pandemic and widespread economic pessimism in Europe and elsewhere.

Overall, a median of 75% across the surveyed countries say they have confidence in Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs. That is higher than the share who say the same about French President Emmanuel Macron (63%), British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (50%), Russian President Vladimir Putin (23%), Chinese President Xi Jinping (19%) and U.S. President Donald Trump (17%). Majorities of adults express confidence in Merkel in every country surveyed except Italy, where people are divided (50% confident, 49% not confident).

### Confidence in Merkel is at its highest level on record in several countries

% who say they have confidence in German Chancellor Angela Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs

	<div><div>Highest rating</div><div>Lowest rating</div></div>												
	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'14	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
U.S.	38	44	39	47	43	46	45	-	-	56	55	59	61
Canada	-	48	-	45	-	-	-	-	59	66	68	73	74
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	87
France	80	87	84	77	81	80	70	78	71	79	78	74	78
Italy	-	57	-	-	-	-	49	32	33	39	40	44	50
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	83	89	85	82	88
Spain	37	36	51	49	57	69	53	34	40	52	54	69	72
Sweden	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84	89	82	86	87
UK	51	62	53	51	60	64	58	69	59	68	62	69	76
Australia	-	-	48	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	67	69	72
Japan	-	27	47	42	46	-	55	-	-	67	65	60	67
South Korea	-	27	34	34	36	-	-	-	-	74	76	69	69
Germany	77	85	76	75	72	69	77	81	73	81	68	74	81

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey, Q15d.

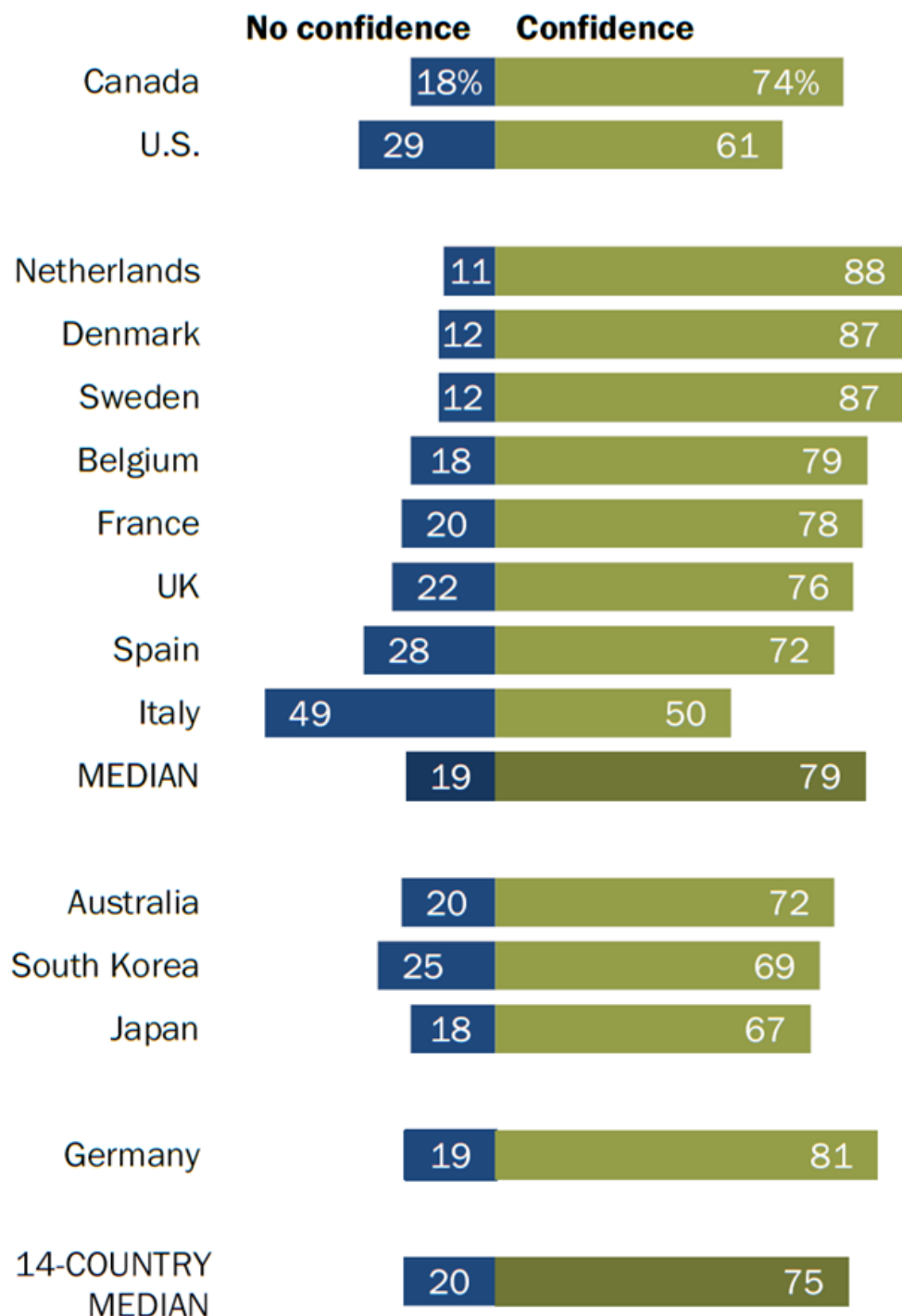
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The six countries where confidence in Merkel is now at its highest level on record are the United Kingdom (where 76% have confidence in her), Canada (74%), Spain and Australia (both 72%), Japan (67%) and the United States (61%). In France and Italy, confidence in Merkel was higher prior to the eurozone crisis than it is now. And in Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea and Sweden, more people had confidence in Merkel in the years following the height of the refugee crisis than currently.

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## Majorities in nearly every country surveyed have confidence in Merkel

*% who say they have \_\_\_ in German Chancellor Angela Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs*



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15d.

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Since Merkel took office in 2005, confidence in the German chancellor has been relatively stable in much of Europe – Germany in particular – as she has helped coordinate national and international responses to the eurozone debt crisis, the refugee crisis and now the COVID-19 pandemic. A majority of Germans have expressed confidence in Merkel throughout her tenure, with around eight-in-ten (81%) doing so now. The share of Germans who express *no* confidence in Merkel has declined 12 percentage points in two years, from a high of 31% in 2018 to the current figure of 19%.

Notably, confidence in Merkel remains high internationally even though views of Germany have declined in several countries since 2007. In Italy, for example, the share of adults with a favorable view of Germany declined from 75% in 2007 to 53% in 2019. Still, Germany continues to be viewed much more favorably than not overall. Across 15 European countries surveyed by Pew Research Center in 2019, including Russia and Ukraine, a median of 74% had a positive view of Germany.

**Views of Merkel differ by education level and, in some countries, by gender**

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## People with more education are more likely to have confidence in Merkel

*% who say they have **confidence** in German Chancellor Angela Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs*

	Less education	More education	Diff
	%	%	
Italy	47	64	<b>+17</b>
UK	72	88	<b>+16</b>
Australia	66	81	<b>+15</b>
U.S.	55	69	<b>+14</b>
South Korea	62	75	<b>+13</b>
Denmark	85	96	<b>+11</b>
Germany	78	88	<b>+10</b>
Japan	63	73	<b>+10</b>
Belgium	77	86	<b>+9</b>
Netherlands	84	92	<b>+8</b>
Canada	70	78	<b>+8</b>
Sweden	85	90	<b>+5</b>

Note: For the purpose of comparing educational groups across countries, education levels are standardized based on the UN's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The "less education" category is secondary education or below and the "more education" category is postsecondary or above in all countries surveyed. All differences shown are statistically significant.

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15d.

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In 12 of the 14 countries surveyed this year, those with a postsecondary education or higher are more likely to have confidence in Merkel than those with less education. In Italy, for example, 64% of those with more education have confidence in Merkel, compared with 47% of those with less education, a difference of 17 percentage points.

Views of Merkel also differ substantially by education in the UK, Australia, the U.S., South Korea, Denmark and Japan. And in Merkel's own country, people with at least a postsecondary education are more confident in their chancellor than those with less education (88% vs. 78%, respectively) - though confidence is high among both groups.

In most countries, views of Merkel don't differ by gender. But in Canada, Spain and South Korea, men are more likely than women to have confidence in her. The reverse is true in Germany, where 86% of women express confidence, compared with 75% of men.

### **In the U.S., confidence in Merkel differs widely by party**

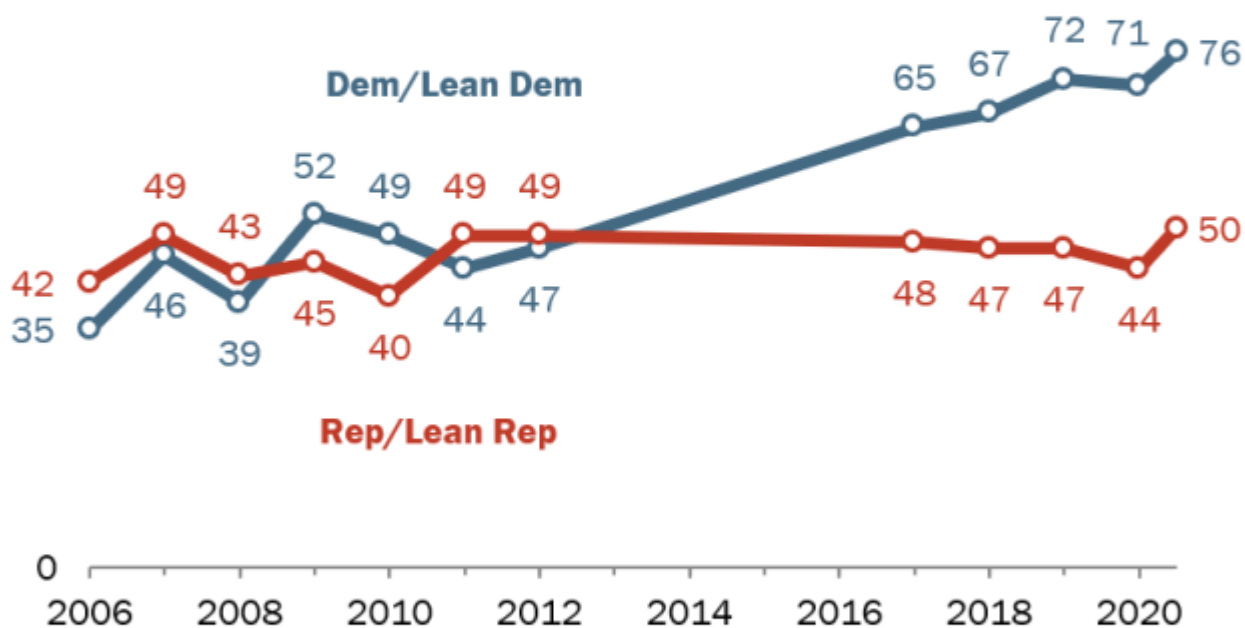
The share of Americans who express confidence in Merkel has increased from 38% in 2006 to 61% in this year's survey. (In 2006, 38% did not offer an opinion, a share that fell to 9% this year.)

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## Democrats have grown much more confident in Merkel since 2006; little change among Republicans

*% who say they have **confidence** in German Chancellor Angela Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs*

100%



Note: In surveys prior to 2017, about a quarter or more of Democrats and Republicans did not offer an opinion.

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15d.

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In recent years, impressions of Germany's leader have differed by Americans' partisan identification. Democrats and independents who lean to the Democratic Party are now much more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say they have confidence in Merkel (76% vs. 50%). Earlier in Merkel's tenure, Democrats and Republicans barely differed in their views.

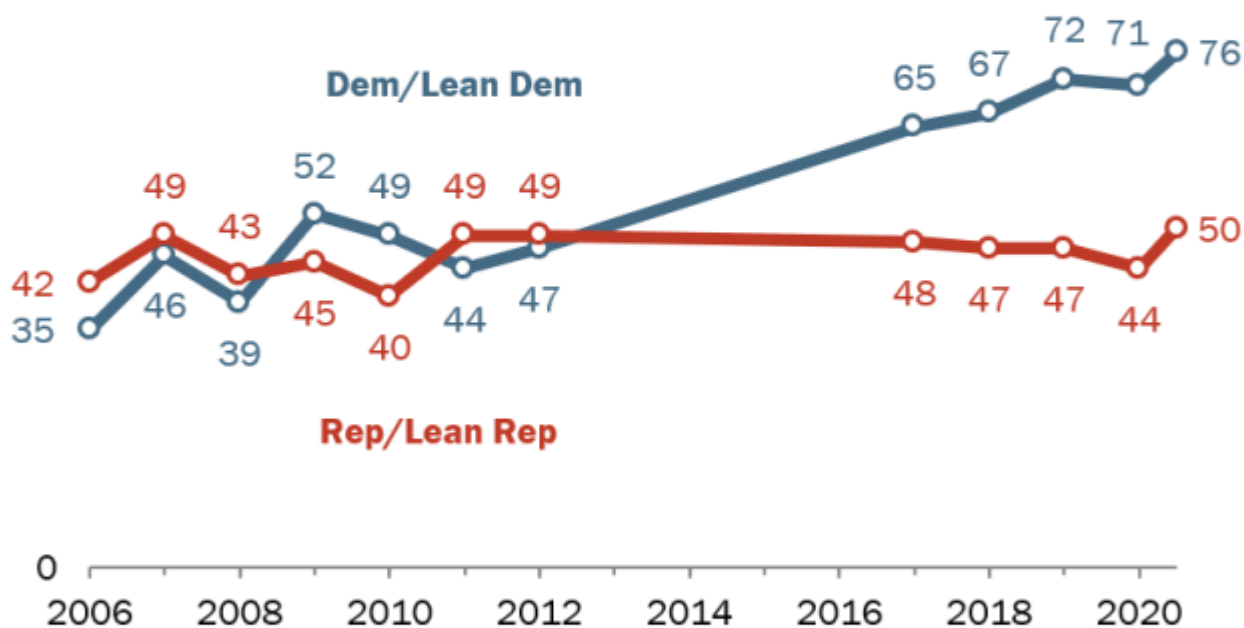
Democrats have become much more likely to express confidence in Merkel over time. In 2006, 35% of Democrats expressed confidence in Germany's leader, a share that has risen to about three-quarters (76%) today. By comparison, Republicans' confidence in Merkel has changed little.

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Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q15d.

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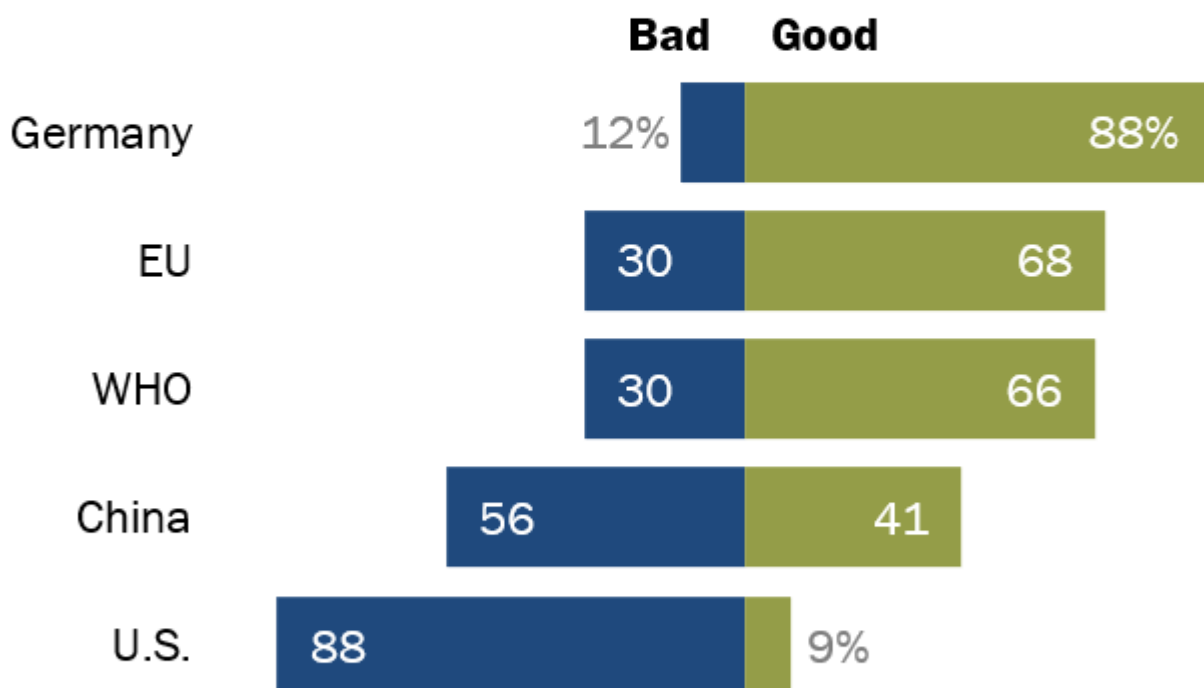
## In Germany, views of country's handling of COVID-19 are linked to confidence in Merkel

Among Germans, views of their country's handling of the coronavirus outbreak are tied to confidence in Merkel. Those who say their country has done a good job dealing with the virus are much more likely than those who say it has done a bad job to have confidence in Merkel (87% vs. 41%, respectively).

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## Germans are positive about their own country's handling of coronavirus, but critical of the U.S. and China

*% of Germans who say each of the following has done a \_\_\_ job dealing with the coronavirus outbreak*



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q10a-e.

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Germany has fared relatively well during the coronavirus outbreak. The country has fewer COVID-19 deaths per capita than many other European countries surveyed. And a majority of Germans (61%) say their everyday lives have not changed too much or at all as a result of the outbreak.

The German economy has also generally held up, though data suggests a slow recovery. About half (51%) of Germans say the current economic situation is good, and they are among the most optimistic in Europe, with 47% saying that the

economic situation will improve in the next year.

Germans are also very positive when rating their own country's job dealing with the coronavirus outbreak: Nearly nine-in-ten (88%) say the country has done well. About two-thirds say both the European Union and World Health Organization have done a good job with the outbreak. However, views are not so positive toward the other two countries asked about in the survey: A majority say China has done a bad job, and 88% say the same of how the U.S. has handled the outbreak.

While Germans broadly have confidence in Merkel, there are political differences in views of the chancellor. Those with favorable views of two of the ruling coalition parties – Merkel's own Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) – are more likely to say they have confidence in Merkel to do the right thing regarding world affairs than those who do not have favorable views of these parties.

However, supporters of Germany's right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party are much *less* likely to be positive on Merkel than those who do not support AfD. About half (51%) of AfD supporters have confidence in Merkel, compared with 86% of those who do not support the party.

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Source:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/02/confidence-in-merkel-is-at-all-time-high-in-several-countries-during-her-last-full-year-in-office/>

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