

# Germany's Bundestag Expert Committee Draft Report Finds No Evidence that Lockdowns Did Anything

The leaked document appears to represent a loose consensus of the German political establishment. The lockdowners will now strike back.

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*A few weeks ago, I wrote about [attempts by Karl Lauterbach to delay the work of an expert committee with a mandate from the Bundestag to evaluate the effectiveness of lockdowns and other containment measures in Germany](#). Christian Drosten went so far as to resign from the committee, and [gave a rambling radio interview](#) in which he complained that the evaluative body hadn't been granted enough time and that it had been staffed with the wrong people.*

The whole controversy struck me as strange. Surely this was going to be some milquetoast whitewash of the lockdowns, and so you had to wonder why Drosten and Lauterbach were even bothering.

Well, I was wrong: The committee aren't preparing a whitewash at all. They are poised, instead, to issue a mostly honest report admitting that there is no evidence that German containment has achieved anything. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* has obtained a draft of their report, which is set to be released towards the end of this month. Their crack Corona reporter, renowned hypochondriac schoolmarm and [go-to eugypius villain Christina Berndt](#), is [not pleased](#).

Image on the right: The hypervaccinated Christina Berndt, in a rare maskless appearance. (Source: eugypius)



It's fairly clear that the conclusions of the committee represent the quiet consensus of the post-Merkel German political establishment. Its experts were appointed by the government and the Bundestag, with each political party being permitted a number of nominations proportional to their share of electoral representation. Politicians were given every opportunity, in other words, to ensure that the committee didn't arrive at any undesirable conclusions.

What we're looking at here, is a surreptitious effort by the political arm to close the door on mass containment, which explains the opposition from Lauterbach and Drosten. These men are merely the leading edge of the public health dictatorship in Germany, which has its deepest roots in academia, the permanent bureaucracy and the press. They will now strike back, and do everything in their power to avoid having their signature policies discredited.

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There are important scraps of information to be gleaned from Berndt's anathema:

The chapter on the Corona measures is poorly crafted, the selection and commentary of the scientific literature is one-sided, the negative consequences of the measures are overemphasised, important aspects are simply omitted; only a preconceived negative opinion of the Corona measures will find confirmation here, various virological and epidemiological experts told the SZ.

According to the chapter's authors, there is in the end little evidence for the benefit of many measures, from contact restrictions to 3G rules – with the exception of wearing masks indoors.

From the beginning of this year, as country after country dropped all containment measures, politicians like Markus Söder began hawking a political compromise – vestigial mask mandates to appease the hystericists, and otherwise no restrictions. This is the vision that ultimately won out, and it just can't be a coincidence that this is exactly what the expert committee ended up supporting.

The chapter is being drafted under the leadership of virologist Hendrik Streeck from the University of Bonn, who was originally supposed to share this task with Christian Drosten from the Charité in Berlin. But Drosten left the committee because, in his view, a sound scientific evaluation wasn't possible in the allotted time and with the personnel available to the committee ...

Streeck has had a more balanced view of containment and the risk posed by SARS-2 from the very beginning. Drosten obviously dropped out, calculating that it would be better to discredit the report from the outside, than lend the authority of his name to its contents.

[M]any important details in the draft report are surprising. It opens with the statement that Germany did not do well during the pandemic. For example, it claims that life expectancy in Germany for 2021 has fallen “by about half a year compared to the pre-Covid year 2019,” while people in Sweden, which critics of the measures regard as a positive example, are living longer. The comparison of 2021 with 2019 seems strange, though, because Sweden experienced massive deaths in 2020, and then imposed stricter measures later.

The selection of studies moreover seems arbitrary. For example, relevant studies that give a good rating to Germany’s handling of the pandemic during the first wave are not mentioned, such as a high-ranking paper by Max Planck researcher Viola Priesemann published in the journal Science. ...

Image below: Viola Priesemann is a frightening person. (Source: eugypius)



Here we learn that the report is a not-so-subtle rebuke of the Merkel government specifically: It rates Germany’s pandemic performance poorly, snubs Merkel-adjacent modellers like the forever-wrong Viola Priesemann, and compares German outcomes unfavourably to Sweden, which took the opposite path of minimal mitigation.

Sometimes, studies that evaluate interventions as effective are cast into doubt with succinct statements that they have been “critically received”, without providing a reference. And in numerous places there is no reference at all, only the deliberate insertion of “REF” to suggest that there is something more to come here. An expert who, like other critics of the study, does not want to be named, says: “It looks like they’re still looking for the right literature reference, because studies that support an opinion can always be found.”

Or, it’s, you know, a draft, but by all means, get your science friends to provide baseless anonymous criticism of conclusions you don’t like.

The dishonesty continues:

[L]iterature references are sometimes misrepresented in the report. For example, it is claimed that even the WHO, [in a report from March 2019](#), “did not recommend broad contact and movement restrictions for the population in the event of an influenza pandemic due to a lack of scientific evidence.” Yet the report says the opposite. The WHO explicitly recommends avoiding crowds even in the case of a “moderate”

influenza pandemic, school closures and masks from the next severity level (“severe”), and closing workplaces and travel restrictions from the “extraordinary” severity level, which probably applies to Covid-19.

This is more evidence that the report is trying to drive a stake through the heart of the lockdown regime. In addition to relying on modellers and avoiding international comparisons, the lockdowners like to elide the crucial distinction between mitigation and containment. Mitigation measures to “slow the spread,” including temporary regional closures, are categorically not the same as “broad restrictions on contact and movement” like lockdowns, border closures and mandatory quarantines of the healthy. Mitigation is when your schools close; containment is when your kids can’t play with their friends. Thus the WHO report, which Berndt misrepresents, says that “Contact tracing,” “quarantine of exposed individuals,” “entry and exit screening” and “border closure” are “not recommended in any circumstances” (p. 3) – to say nothing of lockdowns.

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Mass containment depends upon a whole tapestry of convenient lies and fictions. The middle path would have been to say that the measures are no longer necessary or cost-effective, given the widespread availability of vaccines and the immune resistance the German population has cultivated, while otherwise affirming the theoretical validity of the doctrinal system. Apparently, the report leaked to Christina Berndt doesn’t do that. It’s instead an effort to sink mass containment as a viable policy now and for all time, orchestrated by politicians desperate to end the closures.

For much of 2021, official messaging was dominated by two rival discourses, that I nicknamed Team Lockdown and Team Vaccine. Some limited vaccine scepticism was possible, so long as you expressed deep fanatical devotion to repressive non-pharmaceutical interventions. Conversely, you were allowed to demand an end to lockdowns and other measures, so long as you sang the praises of the vaccines. In 2022, with the rise of Omicron, we have seen the total rout of Team Lockdown and the ascendancy of Team Vaccine everywhere but China.

I expect the Bundestag report to be thoroughly trashed by the German press and academic establishment, but as a sign of some opposition, finally, somewhere, it’s encouraging.

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*Featured image: Protest against Corona measures in Berlin on August 1, 2020: Leonhard Lenz, Wikimedia Commons, CCO*

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