

German chancellor calls on society to come together to beat COVID

Berlin (dpa) - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has issued a call for the public to stand together in the fight against the pandemic in his first new year's address to the nation.

Scholz, who succeeded Angela Merkel as chancellor in early December, appealed to all Germans to get vaccinated amid a massive fifth wave of infections in the country driven by the Omicron coronavirus variant.

"What matters now is speed. We have to be faster than the virus," Scholz said, according to a transcript of his speech distributed in advance.

"Together let's do everything - and I really mean everything - so that we can finally defeat coronavirus in the new year."

Scholz asked for understanding regarding the significantly tightened restrictions that have just come into force in Germany, including the limits on private gatherings. The new coronavirus variant spreads even more easily than previous ones, he said.

"Please take these restrictions very seriously. For your protection, for the protection of your families. For the protection of all of us."

The chancellor called on critics of the state's measures, some of whom have resorted to violence in recent weeks, to be respectful of other views.

There will always be differences of opinion, Scholz said, "but a strong community can withstand contradictions if we listen to each other and show respect for each other."

Source:

<https://www.dpa-international.com/topic/german-chancellor-calls-society-come-together-beat-covid-urn%3Anewsml%3Adpa.com%3A20090101%3A211231-99-548905>

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