

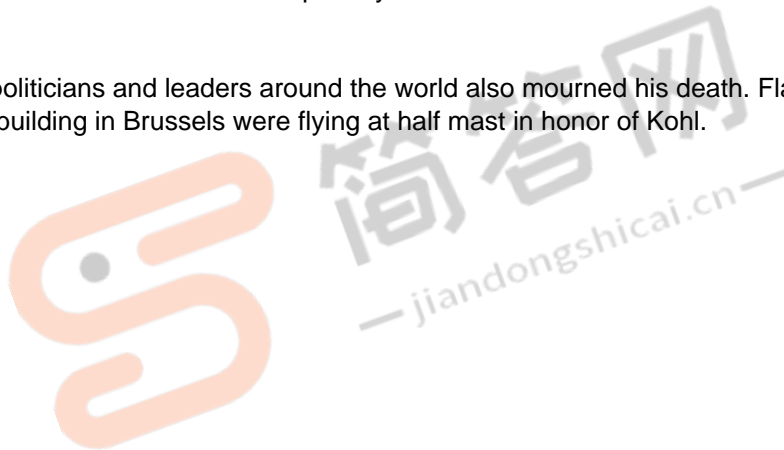
《德国前总理去世 默克尔：世界失去了一个伟大的德国人》

周五，德国前总理去世，享年87岁，德国前总理默克尔表示，世界失去了“一个伟大的德国人和一个伟大的欧洲人”。

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday said the world has lost "a great German and a great European", with the death of former leader Helmut Kohl on Friday at the age of 87. Speaking during a visit to Italy, she gave a moving tribute to her mentor, saying Kohl changed her life decisively by reuniting Germany.

"Helmut Kohl changed my life. Like millions of other people, I could escape the life of dictatorship of the GDR into a life of freedom, I could start living without fear of constant observation. Everything that followed in the 27 years since then would not have been possible without Helmut Kohl. Personally, I am very grateful that he existed," said Merkel, who was appointed to her first ministerial post by Kohl.

Besides Merkel, many politicians and leaders around the world also mourned his death. Flags outside the European Commission building in Brussels were flying at half mast in honor of Kohl.





Kohl was Germany's longest serving post-war chancellor. Showing great political aspiration when he was young, he joined the Christian Democratic Union in middle school. He began to serve as the chancellor of Germany in 1982 and was elected four times in total, making his chancellorship last for 16 years until 1998.

Amid uncertainties after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, Kohl put forward a 10-point plan for "overcoming of the division of Germany and Europe." Seizing the initiative, he spearheaded the end of Germany's decades-long division. Under his efforts, the country was officially united within a year.

Kohl was also an advocate for European integration. He was a driving force behind the introduction of the euro currency, and an architect of the Maastricht Treaty, which is the foundation of today's European Union.



Director Cui Hongjian from the Department for European Studies of China Institute of International Studies said Kohl was very friendly to China and made several visits to the country since the 1970s, making great contributions to the development of China-Germany bilateral ties. Cui believes that as a politician who inherited Kohl's political legacy, Merkel is expected to do more for better development of bilateral ties between the two countries.

