

German Minister Commits Suicide After ‘Virus Crisis Worries’

By [Euractiv](#)

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Thomas Schaefer, the finance minister of Germany’s Hesse state, has committed suicide apparently after becoming “deeply worried” over how to cope with the economic fallout from the coronavirus, state premier Volker Bouffier said Sunday (29 March).

Schaefer, 54, was found dead near a railway track on Saturday. The Wiesbaden prosecution’s office said they believe he died by suicide.

“We are in shock, we are in disbelief and above all we are immensely sad,” Bouffier said in a recorded statement.

Hesse is home to Germany’s financial capital Frankfurt, where major lenders like Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank have their headquarters. The European Central Bank is also located in Frankfurt.

A visibly shaken Bouffier recalled that Schaefer, who was Hesse’s finance chief for 10 years, had been working “day and night” to help companies and workers deal with the economic impact of the pandemic.

“Today we have to assume that he was deeply worried,” said Bouffier, a close ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

“It’s precisely during this difficult time that we would have needed someone like him,” he added.

Popular and well-respected, Schaefer had long been touted as a possible successor to Bouffier.

Like Bouffier, Schaefer belonged to Merkel’s centre-right CDU party.

He leaves behind a wife and two children.

Der Tod von Finanzminister Thomas Schäfer erschüttert die Landespolitik. Ministerpräsident Volker Bouffier spricht davon, dass die Sorgen um die Zukunft den Minister „erdrückt“ haben könnten. <https://t.co/EILhkQCjRo>

— FAZ Rhein-Main (@FAZ_RheinMain) [March 29, 2020](#)

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Featured image: An undated handout photo made available by the Ministry of Finance of German state of Hesse shows Finance Minister Thomas Schaefer. According to the Wiesbaden public prosecutor's office, the Minister of Finance of Hesse, Thomas Schäfer, was found dead on 28 March 2020. [EPA-EFE/SABRINA FEIGE]

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