

## Angela Merkel's *legacy*: has she saved or destroyed Europe?

Angela Merkel's approach to a problem, wrote one of her biographers, is "to *sit it out*". Rather than entertain grand ideas of a "historic mission" or "strategic vision", she aims to "solve today's problems, in a way that ensures she stays in power".

legacy 遗赠; 遗产

sit it out 坐观其变

The German chancellor, once described by *Forbes* as the world's most powerful woman, managed that for 13 years. She has been *measured*, cautious, *methodical*, *pragmatic*, sometimes *maddeningly noncommittal* and seemingly always in control.

Forbes 福布斯

measured 慎重的

methodical 有系统的; 有方法的

pragmatic 实际的; 务实的

maddeningly 使人恼火的

noncommittal 态度不明朗的

But this week, weakened by *plummeting* polls, an unpopular and ineffective *coalition*, *dire* performances in recent state elections and increasingly acrimonious *in-fighting* among her centre-right alliance, she *conceded* defeat.

plummeting 暴跌; 垂直下降的

coalition 结合

dire 可怕的; 悲惨的

concede 让步; 承认

in-fighting 内斗

She is, her defenders say, a fundamentally decent politician who fought for democratic values: whose civil, *level-headed* persona represents all that the *posturing* populists now challenging Europe's unity in countries like *Hungary* and Italy --- and the one in the White House --- do not.

level-headed 冷静的

posturing 故作姿态

Hungary 匈牙利

heritage 遗产；传统

Others, however, are not so sure. “Much of what we think we know about Merkel is either spin or **speculation**,” says Hans Kundnani, senior research fellow at Chatham House. “The extraordinary thing is, after 13 years in the **chancellery** we still don’t really know who she is.”

speculation 推测；投机

chancellery 总理之职；总理府

Merkel’s hard line on enforcing **austerity** was popular in Germany but almost certainly helped fuel support for populist movements in southern Europe, while her 2015 open borders policy --- based, Kundnani believes, as much on a misreading of German opinion as on compassion --- boosted the German anti-immigration party.

austerity 经济紧缩

“We don’t yet know,” says Kundnani, “whether Merkel will go down in history as the woman who destroyed Europe, or saved it.”