

## **Almuth D Merkel**

### Language Statement

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In most European countries, it is compulsory to learn at least one foreign language. In my home country Germany, this language is typically English. As I entered seventh grade at the Gymnasium (secondary school), I had to select a second foreign language. I chose a school that also offered Spanish, in addition to French and Latin. I enjoyed learning English and Spanish, and fortunately had the opportunity to take French in ninth grade as well.

During a week-long class trip to Great Britain, we were accommodated with host families. Albeit I did not speak English very well at the time, it was a very enriching experience to communicate in a language other than my native language. As a result, I seized the opportunity to participate in a school exchange program and went for three months to school in Chile and for another month in Bolivia. Upon my return home, I again had to choose from a catalogue of electives for eleventh grade and decided to take Italian.

The ability to speak the local language amplified the enriching experiences I made abroad. Similarly, the good English training I received in school allowed me to pursue a degree in the United States. Today, I am fluent in German, English, and Spanish, and possess elementary communication skills in French and Italian.

Learning a language is an investment with incredible returns. It opens doors that would remain shut otherwise. In the future, I hope to add more languages to my repertoire. I perceive myself as a global citizen, have felt at home in many places already, and I am more than happy and eager to learn the language of the country that my career invites me to.