

COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Europe, the Caucasus, & Central Asia



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OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK

Cases of COVID-19 in Europe have nearly returned to levels seen during the first wave of the pandemic reaching across the region, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The European Commission has proposed a shared traffic light system for member states to use for border control policies. The proposal recommends countries classified as green and orange zones to not be subject to border control restrictions, while red zones could have restrictions such as 14-day quarantine periods for people arriving from those locations, though individual countries retain the power to dictate their respective policies. Red zones would apply to regions or countries that have 150 cases per 100,000 people in a 14-day period, or more than 50 cases per 100,000 if there is a test positivity rate of at least three percent. For orange zones, countries could have non-mandatory recommendations on arrivals from those areas. Under the proposal, all same-colored zones should be treated equally, meaning the same policies for one red zone country or region should be applied to all other countries or regions classified as red. The proposal would have the ECDC produce a weekly color-coded map for the shared program. The proposal includes exceptions for people such as essential workers and journalists. It remains to be seen if the proposal will indeed be accepted by member states, and whether it would be modified substantially to gain approval. Concerns persist that substantial increases not only in new cases but also in strain on healthcare systems through the winter could prompt a further patchwork of restrictions around the EU. It is advised to continue monitoring associated developments as outbreak levels around the region continue to evolve, and to take precautions to mitigate the risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19.

EUROPE

There has been concern expressed in **Albania** over the government's shift to including test numbers from private labs in the country, after only including data from public labs for months. Critics have alleged that the government is trying to show a higher level of testing capacity. There has been demand in Albania for testing in order to be allowed entry into certain countries, including Greece, without a potentially lengthy quarantine requirement. Cases in the country had been rising through most of August, though an initial downward trend may be developing.

As the **Czech Republic** has seen rising cases recently, Prague announced that measures in the capital are being tightened from September 9 to stem transmission levels. Bars and clubs must close by midnight, under the new rules. The recent increase in case levels has surpassed the levels seen in the first wave of the pandemic. Despite the rise in cases, officials have emphasized that the healthcare system remains well within capacity levels.

Following the rollout of its contact tracing mobile application, **Finland** announced that about one quarter of people around the country had already downloaded it in the few days after it became available. The uptake is a strong initial sign that the app could be a useful tool in conjunction with human tracers to combat transmission in the country. Officials noted that they were also working on future updates that would support interoperability with tracing apps from other countries as well.

France has seen increasing hospitalizations following the rise in new case levels around the country. However, in hard-hit areas such as Paris and Marseille, hospital admissions remain within manageable levels and the daily death toll remains low.

In **Greece**, the first case of COVID-19 has been confirmed at the Moria migrant camp on the island of Lesbos. While the man confirmed to have the virus was taken for care at a local hospital, the confirmation has raised concerns for transmission through the camp and potentially around the island. The facility for asylum seekers had been designed to accommodate 3,000 people, though it is heavily overcrowded with about 12,000 people.

In **Germany**, recent case levels have slightly declined overall, with the rise in cases through much of August potentially being tamped down by calls for greater caution and the winding down of the summer travel season. Authorities in Berlin have mandated the wearing of masks at large outdoor demonstrations in response to the limited use of face coverings at recent protests against COVID-19 regulations. Numerous lawmakers have backed an idea of shortening the quarantine period for COVID-19 from 14 days with the aim of boosting compliance and mitigating economic impacts. Leading German virologist Christian Drosten has said that there is evidence indicating the virus may not be infectious in most people from five days after the development of symptoms. While the prospect of a shortened quarantine period remains under review, there has been no associated policy change by the time of writing.

A recent study from **Iceland** found that about 91 percent of people who recovered from COVID-19 in the country had detectable antibodies. In addition, researchers found that antibody levels had not declined four months following confirmation of infection.

Italy has seen rising hospitalizations recently as its new case levels have grown. Many new cases have been linked to travel, particularly for those recently in Sardinia or visiting other countries with active transmission. The Veneto region has also seen a cluster develop from transmission involving meat factory staff in Treviso. Italian authorities have ordered nearly 50 percent more doses of flu vaccine as they seek to mitigate demands on the healthcare system over the coming winter period.

Highlighting **Norway's** approach to aggressively mitigate transmission in the country, a man from Germany who had traveled to Norway via the Netherlands was found to have been violating quarantine policies. He was expelled from the country and banned from returning for two years, in addition to receiving a EUR 1,900 fine.

Results published in The Lancet medical journal of stage one and two testing for **Russia's** Sputnik V vaccine showed that it produced antibodies in all participants and did not have serious side effects. However, the two-shot vaccine was licensed before phase three trials, including much higher test participation levels, had been undertaken for the vaccine, thus leaving questions that will persist until the results of the phase three trials can be released and independently evaluated.

Despite **Spain** having new case levels comparable to the spring peak period of the outbreak, the health minister on Thursday maintained that a nationwide lockdown "is not appropriate" at this time. Madrid remains hardest hit of the country's regions, with officials in the capital announcing a cap of ten people allowed to gather indoors starting Monday, in addition to restrictions on the number of people able to attend funerals and religious services in the region. A new hospital under construction in the Madrid region for treating COVID-19, or other patients in a health emergency, is expected to start services in November. In the Madrid region, 16 percent of hospital beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients, while the average nationwide is substantially lower, at six percent.

Switzerland is preparing to relax ease policies on social gatherings from October, while officials evaluate transmission mitigation measures in the months ahead as the winter holiday season approaches. Switzerland has seen a gradual rise in new cases over recent weeks, though COVID-19 measures vary by canton and authorities have generally expressed support for finding a balance between restrictions and sustaining day-to-day activities. Furthermore, hospitalizations have not had a notable increase and daily deaths remain in the single digits.

The overall reproduction "R" number in the **United Kingdom** continues to be approximately 0.9-1.1 percent. Officials are closely monitoring transmission levels as schools resume and the level of people returning to offices in some areas of the UK is starting to increase incrementally. In England, overall case levels have remained largely unchanged, though there continues to be variance in transmission across the regions and localities, with Leeds reported to potentially become considered an area of concern amid rising case levels there.

CAUCASUS

Following a sustained decline, **Armenia's** new case levels appear to be stabilizing. After suppressing case levels, **Azerbaijan** had a recent uptick in cases, though further substantial rises may be stemmed as average new case levels have leveled off. **Georgia** continues to have broad day-to-day

variance in case levels, with a recent increase in cases in the Adjara region, though recent case levels nationally have not reached 40 in a one-day period.

CENTRAL ASIA

Kyrgyzstan is preparing for parliamentary elections on October 4, with campaigning officially under way. Although transmission levels remain low in the country, caution is advised over any potential gatherings in the run-up to voting. With low transmission levels in both countries, Kyrgyzstan has opened the Dostuk border checkpoint to **Uzbek** nationals, though Uzbekistan did not immediately reciprocate with allowing Kyrgyz nationals entry.

Media reports have indicated that hospitals in **Turkmenistan** have been overwhelmed with patients, although the government has not yet confirmed a case of COVID-19 in the country. According to reports, hospitals in Ashgabat have had been under increasing strain with growing demand for several weeks, and that there has been a rising level of fatalities in conjunction with increased hospitalizations. Authorities have allegedly mandated some healthcare personnel to work in quarantine zones, and there have also been reports of personal protective equipment shortages.

TABLE FOR REOPENING

Country	Lockdown/Curfew in Effect; Expiration	Business Reopening Status Open*/Closed/Phased	Compulsory Face Mask Use	Gov't Links
Albania	No Longer Mandatory	Phased	Yes	Link
Andorra	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Armenia	No Longer Mandatory	Phased	Yes	Link
Austria	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Azerbaijan	Localized Restrictions; September 30	Phased	Yes	Link
Belarus	None	Open	No	Link
Belgium	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Bosnia and Herzegovina	No Longer Mandatory	Phased	Yes	Link
Bulgaria	No Mandatory Restrictions	Open	Yes	Link
Croatia	Localized Restrictions	Open	Yes	Link
Cyprus	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Czech Republic	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Denmark	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Estonia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	No	Link
Finland	No Longer Mandatory	Open	No	Link
France	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Georgia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Germany	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Greece	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Greenland	None	Open	No	Link
Hungary	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Iceland	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Ireland	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Italy	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Kazakhstan	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Yes	Link
Kosovo	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Yes	Link
Kyrgyzstan	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Yes	Link
Latvia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Lithuania	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Liechtenstein	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Luxembourg	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Malta	None	Open	Yes	Link
Moldova	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Monaco	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Montenegro	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Netherlands	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
North Macedonia	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Yes	Link

Norway	No Longer Mandatory	Open	No	Link
Poland	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Portugal	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Romania	No Longer Mandatory	Phased	Yes	Link
Russia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Varies by Location	Link
San Marino	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Serbia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Slovakia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Slovenia	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Spain	Localized Restrictions	Open	Yes	Link
Sweden	None	Open	No	Link
Switzerland	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link
Tajikistan	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Yes	Link
Turkmenistan	None (Claims No Cases)	Phased	Yes	Link
Ukraine	Localized Restrictions	Open	Yes	Link
United Kingdom	Localized Restrictions	Phased	Varies by Location	Link
Uzbekistan	Localized Restrictions in Zones	Phased (red, yellow, green zones)	Yes	Link
Vatican	No Longer Mandatory	Open	Yes	Link

*Open status may nonetheless include limited restrictions, such as for gyms and cinemas, still in effect