

WEEKLY COVID-19 UPDATE

The latest news summarized by Pia Zekay



European Union & Global

EU ORDERED AN EXTRA 100 MILLION DOSES OF VACCINE

SLOVAKIA RE-OPENED SHOPS AND SERVICES

INDIA'S CAPITAL ANNOUNCES LOCKDOWN

Österreich

AUSTRIA'S NEW HEALTH MINISTER MÜCKSTEIN

AUSTRIA PLANS ON BUYING SPUTNIK V VACCINE

GOVERNMENTAL PLAN FOR RE-OPENINGS IN AUSTRIA

ÖSTERREICH

Confirmed infected: 594,449

Confirmed recoveries: 557,467

Deaths: 9,922

Hospitalized: 2,100

In Intensive Care: 570

New Infections This Week: 2,059

Total Number of PCR Tests Administered: 7,687,817

Total Vaccinations: 2,477,932*

*Vaccinations recorded in the e-vaccination card

ÖSTERREICH

Wolfgang Mückstein a general practitioner and advisor to former health minister Anchober is now Austria's new health minister. Mückstein was introduced into office on Monday and already assembled his team.

The Austrian government announced that they agreed on buying 1 million doses of the Sputnik V vaccine. According to Mückstein, the Sputnik vaccine is "good" and "every additional vaccine helps saving lives". However, it will only be used with the approval of the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

By the end of this week, the government aims to present a comprehensive plan, describing re-opening steps for Mid-May. Openings will go hand in hand with strict requirements which will be specified in the plan, chancellor Kurz announced in a radio interview.



EUROPEAN UNION

On Monday BioNTech/Pfizer announced that the European Union ordered another 100 million doses of their vaccine which adds up to a total order of 600 million doses. These will cover two-thirds of the EU population and the Commission considers buying another 1.8 billion vaccine doses for the future pandemic fight.

The European Union supports the Balkan states with 651,000 BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine doses, to speed up the vaccination process in the region. Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Albania will receive almost 500,000 doses due to their low vaccination rate. The remaining doses will go to Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

After four months of lockdown in Slovakia, shops and other services re-opened on Monday. Former Prime Minister Matovič asked the people to be cautious since “we’re walking on thin ice” and called upon everyone to act responsibly. Officially the national state of emergency in Slovakia ends on the 28th of April.

GLOBAL

India's capital, Delhi, is going into a new week-long lockdown as a reaction to a record spike in Covid-19 cases. Delhi's Chief Minister said that the lockdown "will help us to amplify the number of hospital beds". On Sunday the city reported more than 24,000 new cases on a single day, overwhelming the healthcare system and crematoriums in the area.

The Palestinian National Authority ordered 4,5 million doses of vaccines from BioNTech/Pfizer and the Sputnik V compound. Up to now most of the vaccines for Palestine came in by support of the COVAX initiative by the World Health Organization (WHO). Neighbouring country Israel supported the process and so far, vaccinated 100,000 Palestinians who own an Israeli employment permit.

After the plan was postponed due to political and public complaints, the US government now offers vaccines to prisoners at Guantánamo Bay. The decision of the Pentagon to not only vaccinate the 1,500 staff members but also the detainees intends to protect those on the base that can't be vaccinated.