

WEEKLY COVID-19 UPDATE

The latest news summarized by Pia Zekay



European Union & Global

SPAIN OPENS ITS BORDERS FOR TOURISTS

SLOVAKIA USES SPUTNIK V VACCINE

VACCINE DONATIONS FOR TAIWAN

Österreich

SHORT-TIME WORKING WILL BE EXTENDED

AUSTRIA NO LONGER RISK AREA FOR GERMANY

AUSTRIA DOUBLES CONTRIBUTIONS TO COVAX

ÖSTERREICH

Confirmed infected: 643,323

Confirmed recoveries: 631,869

Deaths: 10,647

Hospitalized: 406

In Intensive Care: 131

New Infections This Week: 325

Total Number of PCR Tests Administered: 11,275,295

Total Vaccinations: 5,714,006*

*Vaccinations recorded in the e-vaccination card

ÖSTERREICH

The Austrian government announced that the possibility to apply for short-time working will be extended until summer 2022. For those branches with a deficit of at least 50 percent like the hospitality and aviation industry and the existing regularities remain in place. Currently around 330,000 people registered for short-time working in Austria.

The German Robert-Koch-Institut removed Austria from its list of risk areas. Thus, there will be no travel restrictions and a pre-travel clearance is no longer necessary when entering Germany by land. Flight passengers are still required to be either vaccinated, recovered or tested. However, the states of Tirol and Vorarlberg are still considered to be risk areas.

Austria doubles its contributions to the COVAX initiative with an additional donation of 2.6 million euros. During a video message at a virtual vaccination summit last week, chancellor Kurz said “No one is safe, until everyone is safe”, having Austria contribute 5 million euros in total.



EUROPEAN UNION

Moderna applies for a European Union authorisation of its vaccine for adolescents aged 12 to 18. During studies, the vaccine showed to be 100 percent effective at preventing illness from Covid. Moderna is the second vaccine maker to apply for a license in children in the European Union after BioNTech/Pfizer.

Spain opened its borders for vaccinated tourists. Other European tourists who did not yet receive a vaccine are allowed to enter with a negative rapid test. The country aims to revive the tourism industry which is a major economic factor. In 2020 the number of tourists in Spain declined by 77 percent which puts a massive strain on the Spanish economy leading to a decrease of the GDP by 10.8 percent.

Slovakia started using the Russian Sputnik V vaccine, despite the pending authorisation through the European Medicines Agency (EMA). After Hungary, Slovakia is now the second country within the European Union to administer the vaccine without an official authorisation through the EMA. Former Slovakian Prime Minister Igor Matovic lost his position as he ordered 200,000 doses of Sputnik V without consultation.

GLOBAL

Indian cities such as Delhi and Mumbai slowly opened up again after the number of Covid cases in the country dropped to around 120,000. Shops, shopping centers, theaters, restaurants and public transport are allowed to open with half their capacities of customers and guests.

A study by a British climate action organisation, discovered that working remotely from one's house can help fight climate change. As fewer people commute to work, CO2 emission per person dropped by 72 percent. Another benefit is the low maintenance of office facilities which was not compensated by higher energy consumption at home.

The United States will donate 750,000 doses of vaccines to Taiwan, as the country is hit by a new wave of Covid cases. Japan already donated 1.24 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to support the country. According to Taiwan a deal with the German company BioNTech failed due to pressure from China.