

WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE

The latest news summarized by Pia Zekay



GLOBAL HEALTH

**MASKS NO LONGER
REQUIRED OUTDOORS IN
ITALY**

**VACCINATION RECORD IN
INDIA**

**FIRST CENTER FOR
VACCINATION MAKING IN
AFRICA**

EUROPE IN THE WORLD

**NEW EUROPEAN "JOINT
CYBER UNIT"**

**FURTHER SANTIONS
IMPOSED ON BELARUS**

**EU-TURKEY MIGRATION
AGREEMENT**

COUNTRY FOCUS: ETHIOPIA

GLOBAL HEALTH

Starting next week, it is no longer required to wear a mask outdoors, Italian health minister Roberto Speranza announced. However, masks will remain mandatory indoors as well as in public transport and in restaurants until one is seated. The whole situation will be monitored closely and in accordance with the recommendations of the special advisory council.

India broke the vaccination record on this Monday, as around 7.8 million people received a jab on this particular day. In the previous weeks, it was around three million people per day. Right on time for World Yoga Day public parks opened again in New Delhi but there were only occasional events due to Covid restrictions that are still in place.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced the very first center for vaccination making in Africa. In the best case, South Africa will be able to manufacture the first Covid vaccines within the next 9 to 12 months and make the continent more independent from vaccination imports. Afrigen Biologics and Biovac will be part of the technology transfer and there are negotiations with Pfizer according to a WHO scientist.



COVID IN NUMBERS AUSTRIA

Confirmed infected: 645,740

Confirmed recoveries: 636,365

Deaths: 10,680

Hospitalized:237

In Intensive Care: 80

New Infections This Week:125

Total Number of PCR Tests Administered: 12,133,217

Total Vaccinations: 6,910,539*

*Vaccinations recorded in the e-vaccination card

EUROPE IN THE WORLD

The European Commission plans on a new rapid cybersecurity response team. The “Joint Cyber Unit” will allow national capitals hit by cyberattacks to ask for help from other countries and the European Union, including an ad-hoc response team dealing with incidents in real-time. The “Joint Cyber Unit” has been in the planning since 2019 and will presumably start its work by the end of 2022.

The Council of the European Union imposed a fourth set of sanctions against Belarus due to enduring repression, the escalation of serious human rights violations and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight. The goal of the sanctions is to “put pressure on the Belarusian political leadership to [...] avoid further repression” according to the press release. The sanctions are imposed on 78 individuals and 8 entities in Belarus.

At a meeting between German chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian prime minister Mario Draghi in Berlin, both agreed that they want to increase efforts concerning the migration agreement between the Union and Turkey, Merkle said that she and Draghi “agree that without cooperation with Turkey, the EU will not get anywhere”, also offering assistance to Turkey which hosts around 3 million refugees currently.

COUNTRY FOCUS

ETHIOPIA

On Monday Ethiopia held its key elections amid rising tensions and a conflict in the northern region of Tigray. Due to the pandemic the election was delayed since August 2020 and is the first general election since 2015. However, it has been criticized as the election will exclude one-fifth of the constituencies, including all seats in Tigray.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who came into power in 2018, faces his first electoral test with this election. He aims at legitimising his position and strengthening it against political opponents. Abiy Ahmed was initially known for his efforts in ending the decades-long conflict with the neighbouring country Eritrea and eventually received the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitments in 2019.

In November 2020 Abiy Ahmed launched a military operation in the Tigray region in the north of Ethiopia. He deployed troops to Tigray to oust the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as the ruling party which also used to dominate the Ethiopian government. This resulted in a conflict that has killed thousands of civilians and a humanitarian crisis. As a reaction to Abiy Ahmed's course of action, the European Union and the US ceased their humanitarian support for Ethiopia.