

WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE

The latest news summarized by Pia Zekay



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GLOBAL HEALTH

GREECE TIGHTENS RULES

**CZECH REPUBLIC
REINTRODUCES TESTS FOR
TRAVELERS**

**AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
DAY VACCINATION GOAL**

EUROPE IN THE WORLD

**SLOVENIA TAKES OVER EU
PRESIDENCY**

**SIMPLIFICATION OF TRADE
AGREEMENTS**

**MEETING BETWEEN EU AND
US ANTITRUST CHIEF**

COUNTRY FOCUS: HUNGARY

GLOBAL HEALTH

On Monday the European Union handed out the first installments of its Covid-19 recovery fund, Next Generation EU through grants with the aim to create jobs and support businesses. The money will fund 41 national and regional programs aimed at bridging the gap between emergency response measures and long-term investments.

Several European airlines and airports stated concerns over the roll-out of the EU's Digital Green Certificate. There is a need for better coordination among the Member States as there is no coherent concept for the Covid-19 certificate right now. The certificate will be implemented as of 1st of July however there are 10 different certificates planned by various countries.

The so-called Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus spreads quickly around the globe. In the United Kingdom, about 90 percent of new cases are related to the variant, in Germany, it's around every second new case. Israel and Portugal are considering new lockdown measures to curb the spread and Austria too reported that 13 percent of new cases are related to the Delta variant.



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COVID IN NUMBERS AUSTRIA

Confirmed infected: 646,814

Confirmed recoveries: 638,456

Deaths: 10,718

Hospitalized: 128

In Intensive Care: 47

New Infections This Week: 107

Total Number of PCR Tests Administered: 13,071,600

Total Vaccinations: 8,154,289*

*Vaccinations recorded in the e-vaccination card



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EUROPE IN THE WORLD

From the 1st of July on Slovenia took over the presidency of the Council of the EU for the upcoming six months. Among the priorities of the presidency are a resilient recovery for a post-pandemic era as well as ensuring security and stability in the EU's neighbourhood with a special focus on the Western Balkan area.

Currently, the European Commission is seeking to simplify trade negotiations with external actors on behalf of the EU Member States, as it becomes increasingly more difficult to get trade agreements ratified in all national and regional parliaments. This means that certain accords will need approval only from the Council and the European Parliament.

The European Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager and the newly appointed chair of the US Federal Trade Commission, Lina Khan held a virtual meeting last Friday. Vestager announced on Twitter that she is looking forward to working together and "making sure Big Tech plays by the rules".



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COUNTRY FOCUS HUNGARY

On Monday the state of democracy hit another low in Hungary. The NGO Reporters Without Borders released a list of 37 heads of state and government who “embody in a particularly drastic way the ruthless suppression of press freedom” including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. He is the only EU leader on the list.

Viktor Orbán who has served as Prime Minister since 2010 shows an increased repressive leadership style, transforming the country into an autocratic state and destabilizing the whole neighbourhood. In March this year, Hungary’s ruling Fidesz party left the EPP grouping of the European Parliament, ahead of a vote that would have very likely expelled it anyway.

Meanwhile, the EU struggles to find the right approach towards the development within one of its own Member States. However, the European Commission recently announced to take legal steps against Hungary’s new LGBT+ law to protect the Union’s values and human rights.



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