

# WEEKLY NEWS UPDATE

*The latest news summarized by LIVIA BENKO*



# AIEES

AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE FOR  
EUROPEAN AND SECURITY POLICY

## COVID IN NUMBERS

## World

**CONFIRMED INFECTED**

**379.298.536**

**RECOVERED**

**299.351.125**

**DEATHS**

**5.693.522**

# EUROPE

Europe has reported 125,643,000 Covid-19 cases and 2,020,000 deaths so far. The emergence of the Covid variant Omicron is still escalating in Europe as of 2022. However, despite the situation, measures are being dropped in many countries. From reopening of bars and restaurants to the dropping of legal requirements for masks, many of Europe's biggest economies are now relaxing Covid-19 rules and restrictions in order to salvage their economies.

Many governments are impatient to reopen their societies, particularly as it has become clear that the new virus variant causes fewer hospitalizations than its previous strains, and also as booster Covid vaccine shots continue to be administered.

While Omicron has been more infectious than previous variants like delta, it has caused less severe illness and booster shots significantly improve one's immunity against the Omicron strain.

According to scientists it's plausible that in a few months the region will be moving towards a kind of pandemic "endgame". Omicron could infect 60 percent of the European population by March. And once the current surge of Omicron sweeping across Europe subsides, the summer period could be calm.



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# SWITZERLAND

Unlike Austria, Switzerland's government states that there will be no legal, and general obligation for the population to be vaccinated but transparent information should be provided to allow people to come to a decision.

The government or local cantons can impose vaccination on "vulnerable groups of people and for certain people, under very strict conditions."

However, no one will be "forced" to get vaccinated.

The Swiss population recently voted in favour of COVID-19 measures, including maintaining the use of health passes to access public life, in a referendum.

Proof of vaccination against or recovery from COVID-19 remains mandatory indoors at bars, restaurants, cinemas and other events.

## COVID IN NUMBERS

## Switzerland

**CONFIRMED INFECTED**

**2.211.456**

**RECOVERED**

**1.338.228**

**DEATHS**

**12.808**

**IN SERIOUS CONDITION**

**200**

# DENMARK

Denmark has become the first country in the European Union to lift all remaining Covid restrictions, despite the rise in cases caused by the Omicron variant.

As of February 1, all domestic Covid restrictions will come to an end and limits on indoor gatherings will be lifted, and the use of facemasks and Covid passes will no longer be mandatory.

Unvaccinated travellers from non-Schengen countries will still be required to take a test 24 hours after entry.

The lifting of restrictions happens despite cases rising rapidly over the last month due to the BA.2 strain.

Covid cases hit their peak of 41,083 new daily cases on January 29.

However restrictions are being lifted due to the country's high vaccine uptake which is more than 80 per cent for two doses, with more than 60 per cent having received a booster jab.

Also Omicron is not considered to be that severe as the previous strains.

## COVID IN NUMBERS

## Denmark

**CONFIRMED INFECTED**

**1.667.768**

**RECOVERED**

**1.117.188**

**DEATHS**

**3.755**

**IN SERIOUS CONDITION**

**32**

# GERMANY

Germany's parliament plans to hold its first debate on February 2 on a possible wide-ranging coronavirus vaccine mandate, with three options emerging: obligatory vaccinations for all adults or for everyone above 50, or no mandate at all. It isn't yet clear when legislation will go to a vote, but it appears that it could be late spring before any law takes effect.

"Three proposals have emerged so far from lawmakers in Scholz's three-party governing coalition.

There is a call for a vaccine mandate for everyone age 18 and above, which would be valid for two years and cover a maximum three shots, with fines for holdouts.

A rival proposal calls for obligatory counselling meetings for the unvaccinated, to be followed by a vaccine mandate for over-50s if progress is unsatisfactory. And one group wants to prevent any mandate".

The exact proposal on how compliance would be checked is unclear, as Germany lacks a central vaccination register.

## COVID IN NUMBERS

## Germany

**CONFIRMED INFECTED**

**9.896.344**

**RECOVERED**

**7.705.000**

**DEATHS**

**118.527**

**IN SERIOUS CONDITION**

**2.274**