

Coronavirus Disease – COVID-19

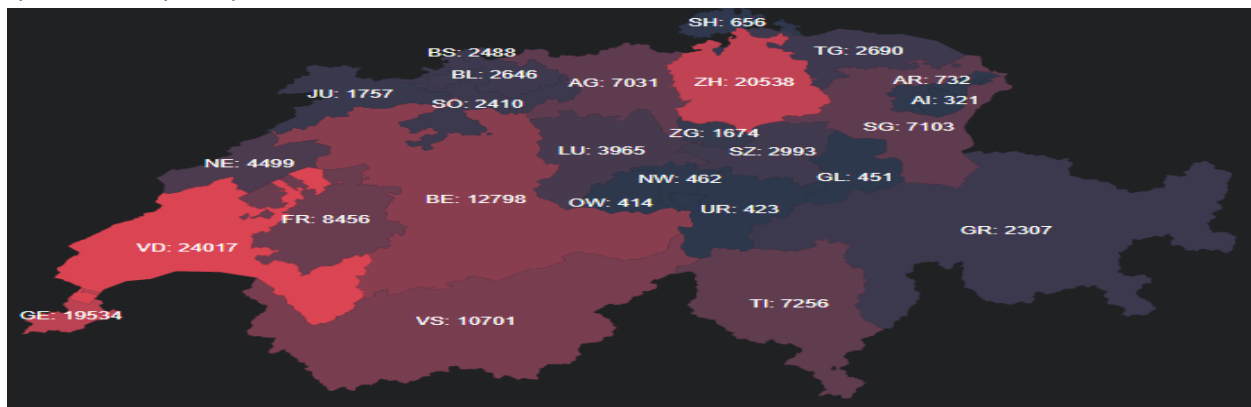
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- The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak is over 1,189,667 worldwide, with the highest number of deaths in USA (234,499) and Brazil (159,104). There have been more than 45,612,663 global cases in 210 countries and territories. [1]
- The number of coronavirus cases in Europe has exceeded the 10 million mark since the beginning of the pandemic, with more than 1.5 million cases confirmed last week alone, the WHO's Europe director Dr. Hans Kluge said Thursday. *"Europe is at the epicenter of this pandemic once again. At the risk of sounding alarmist, I must express our very real concern and convey our steadfast commitment to stand beside you and support you as best we can."* Kluge said. Kluge warned that hospitalizations have risen to *"levels unseen since the spring,"* with cases moving from 7 million to 9 million in the past two weeks and deaths rising by 32% across the region last week. Testing systems have not kept up with *"very high-speed transmission,"* and test positivity rates have reached new highs in most European countries. [2]
- An international team of scientists that has been tracking the virus through its genetic mutations has described the extraordinary spread of the variant, called 20A.EU1, in a research paper published on Thursday. Their work suggests that people returning from holiday in Spain played a key role in transmitting the virus across Europe, raising questions about whether the second wave that is sweeping the continent could have been reduced by improved screening at airports and other transport hubs. Because each variant has its own genetic signature, it can be traced back to the place it originated. *"From the spread of 20A.EU1, it seems clear that the [virus prevention] measures in place were often not sufficient to stop onward transmission of introduced variants this summer,"* said Emma Hodcroft, an evolutionary geneticist and lead author of the study. The scientific teams in Switzerland and Spain are now rushing to examine the behaviour of the variant to establish whether it may be more deadly or more infectious than other strains. Dr Hodcroft stressed that there was *"no evidence that the variant's [rapid] spread is due to a mutation that increases transmission or impacts clinical outcome"*. But she emphasised that 20A.EU1 was unlike any version of Sars-Cov-2 virus she had previously come across. [3]
- The Tages-Anzeiger writes that the *"drastic measures"* announced on Wednesday by Interior Minister Alain Berset are rather less drastic compared to what's happening in neighbouring countries, and even in some Swiss cantons. Germany has announced plans to shut down all restaurants, bars and theatres in November, the newspaper writes, even though it has a lower infection rate than Switzerland. Canton of Valais has shut down most entertainment and sports facilities. France also announced a nationwide lockdown on Thursday. Its editorial says a return to an *"extraordinary"* situation is needed, and that the government should take charge and guide the country through this *"winter of crisis"* with a well-thought out plan – with another lockdown as the *"emergency"* solution. [3]
- European countries are calling for World Health Organization to be given greater powers to independently investigate outbreaks and compel countries to provide more data. After a meeting between EU ministers to discuss how the UN health agency should be strengthened, the German health minister, Jens Spahn, said on Friday the WHO should receive more political support and financial backing for its international efforts to manage acute health crises. *"The WHO can't be on its own and carry the weight of this pandemic alone,"* he said. [4]

Countries	Deaths	Cases	Recovered
USA	234,499	9,237,464	5,988,726
Brazil	159,104	5,499,875	4,954,159
India	121,211	8,094,636	7,376,961
Mexico	90,773	912,811	668,667
UK	46,229	989,745	N/A
Italy	38,321	647,674	283,567
France	36,020	1,282,769	115,287
Spain	35,639	1,238,922	N/A
Iran	34,478	604,952	477,300
Peru	34,362	897,594	819,717
Colombia	30,926	1,053,122	950,348
Argentina	30,442	1,143,800	946,134
Russia	27,656	1,599,976	1,200,560
South Africa	19,164	721,770	649,935
Chile	14,158	508,571	485,152
Indonesia	13,782	406,945	334,295
Ecuador	12,622	166,302	141,759
Belgium	11,308	392,258	24,443
Iraq	10,862	470,633	397,241
Germany	10,499	512,720	345,700
Turkey	10,177	373,154	322,465
Canada	10,100	230,547	193,158
Bolivia	8,705	141,484	110,759
Netherlands	7,345	341,374	N/A
Philippines	7,185	378,933	330,457
Ukraine	7,041	378,729	155,026
Romania	6,867	235,586	167,897
Pakistan	6,795	332,186	313,527
Egypt	6,247	107,209	99,273
Sweden	5,938	124,355	N/A
Bangladesh	5,905	406,364	322,703
Saudi Arabia	5,383	346,880	333,409
Poland	5,351	340,834	134,724
China	4,634	85,940	80,967
Guatemala	3,714	107,339	96,752
Morocco	3,572	212,038	174,911
Czechia	2,862	310,068	128,628
Panama	2,678	132,045	108,342
Honduras	2,661	96,150	39,804
Israel	2,514	313,701	299,822
Portugal	2,468	137,272	77,449
Switzerland	2,249	154,251	65,200
Dominican Republic	2,236	126,332	104,486
Algeria	1,949	57,332	39,635
Ireland	1,902	60,297	23,364
Kazakhstan	1,825	111,492	106,187
Moldova	1,766	75,201	55,190
Japan	1,744	99,622	91,890
Hungary	1,699	71,413	17,953
Afghanistan	1,533	41,334	34,258
Ethiopia	1,457	95,301	50,753
Paraguay	1,373	62,050	41,800
Costa Rica	1,357	107,570	65,666
Armenia	1,300	87,432	54,316
Tunisia	1,253	58,029	5,032
Bulgaria	1,225	48,150	19,695
Myanmar	1,219	51,496	31,330
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,212	48,137	27,870
Oman	1,208	114,434	103,060
Kyrgyzstan	1,142	58,394	49,522
Nigeria	1,141	62,521	58,249
Austria	1,082	99,576	64,987
Belarus	977	97,499	85,982
North Macedonia	977	29,558	19,994
El Salvador	971	33,445	29,186
Kenya	964	53,797	35,876
Nepal	920	168,235	128,958
Australia	907	27,580	25,240
Libya	847	60,628	34,369

Sudan	837	13,772	6,764
Serbia	814	45,137	31,536
Venezuela	789	91,280	85,897
Kuwait	773	125,337	116,202
Jordan	772	69,306	7,600
Denmark	719	45,225	34,052
Azerbaijan	718	54,174	42,996
Greece	620	37,196	9,989
Lebanon	610	77,778	39,123
Yemen	599	2,062	1,366
Uzbekistan	562	66,542	63,713
Croatia	531	46,547	30,910
Albania	502	20,634	11,097
UAE	490	131,508	127,607
Palestine	481	53,075	45,896
S. Korea	463	26,385	24,227
Cameroon	426	21,793	20,117
Finland	358	15,910	11,300
Zambia	349	16,415	15,600
Senegal	323	15,605	14,732
Ghana	320	48,055	47,169
Bahrain	319	81,262	78,102
Slovenia	315	32,503	11,208
DRC	305	11,253	10,554
Montenegro	294	18,066	13,942
Georgia	285	37,263	19,810
Norway	282	19,861	11,863
Syria	281	5,633	1,898
Angola	275	10,269	3,736
Malaysia	249	30,889	20,248
Madagascar	244	16,968	16,301
Zimbabwe	242	8,349	7,864
Qatar	232	132,343	129,349
Haiti	232	9,057	7,429
Slovakia	212	55,091	12,508
Jamaica	205	9,005	4,442
Malawi	184	5,916	5,303
Mauritania	163	7,700	7,416
Lithuania	157	13,823	4,691
Nicaragua	156	5,514	4,225
Luxembourg	152	17,134	10,081
Bahamas	142	6,644	4,257
Mali	136	3,545	2,746
Namibia	133	12,858	10,972
Cuba	128	6,801	6,178
Guadeloupe	126	7,605	2,242
Ivory Coast	124	20,628	20,310
Guyana	123	4,098	3,154
Gambia	119	3,666	2,666
Eswatini	117	5,899	5,542
Suriname	111	5,197	5,053
Uganda	108	12,201	7,461
Trinidad and Tobago	107	5,636	4,293
Hong Kong	105	5,321	5,082
Somalia	104	3,941	3,185
Chad	97	1,473	1,307
Cabo Verde	95	8,603	7,796
Congo	92	5,290	3,887
Mozambique	91	12,777	10,437
Equatorial Guinea	83	5,083	4,964
Tajikistan	82	10,977	10,182
Liberia	82	1,426	1,279
Sierra Leone	74	2,362	1,795
Estonia	73	4,771	3,747
Andorra	73	4,567	3,260
Guinea	71	12,020	10,550
French Guiana	70	10,425	9,995
Latvia	69	5,679	1,406
Niger	69	1,219	1,135
Burkina Faso	67	2,471	2,211

- Moderna and Pfizer appear to be "neck and neck" in the race for a Covid-19 vaccine -- so much so that the United States could see critical safety and efficacy data for both companies' vaccine candidates around the same time, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Currently, there are six Covid-19 vaccine candidates in the United States -- four of which are in Phase 3 trials, Fauci said, adding that Moderna and Pfizer are "neck and neck." [5]
- Taiwan just marked its 200th consecutive day without a locally transmitted case of the disease. Taipei's response to the pandemic has been one of the world's most effective. The island of 23 million people last reported a locally transmitted case on April 12. As of Thursday, it had confirmed 553 cases -- only 55 of which were local transmissions -- and seven deaths. [3]
- An influential model of the coronavirus pandemic has predicted 399,000 total coronavirus deaths in the US by Feb. 1, a 15,000-death increase over last week's prediction. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington School of Medicine said it's most likely that by the middle of January, 2,250 Americans will be dying every day from coronavirus three times more than the current rate. "Scaling up mask wearing can delay the need for further social distancing mandates and save 62,000 lives by February 1," it said. [5]
- Swiss universities are to go back to distance learning from Monday, while schools nationwide stay open under conditions -- according to new anti-coronavirus measures announced by the government on Wednesday. In addition, Starting Thursday, the government will classify just four countries -- Belgium, Czech Republic, Andorra and Armenia -- as high-risk. Travellers arriving from these countries will need to spend ten days in quarantine [6]



Newly reported cases since 01.06 in Switzerland. [6]

• Funding opportunity for researchers

PRACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe) Fast Track Call for Proposals

- <https://prace-ri.eu/prace-support-to-mitigate-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic/>

The US Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program - a call for proposals on COVID-19

- <https://ebrap.org/eBRAP/public/ProgramFY.htm?programFYId=256400>

Anyone submitting to US (NIH, DoD) or EU Horizon 2020 calls can contact the Grants Office for support: grantsoffice@research.unibe.ch. The Grants Advisors responsible for the ISPM are Aline Schöglér (aline.schoegler@research.unibe.ch) and Leah Witton (leah.witton@research.unibe.ch).

Sources

- [1] <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>
- [2] <https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-10-30-20-intl/index.html>
- [3] <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/was-sagt-der-bundesrat-zu-den-hohen-zahlen-und-zum-mini-lockdown-224429048882>
- [4] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2020/oct/30/coronavirus-live-news-eu>
- [5] <https://www.swissinfo.ch>
- [6] <https://www.corona-data.ch/>