

**Weekly COVID Update:**

**Cross-National Policy Comparisons and Canadian Trends in Social  
Distancing, Social Media Activity, and Government Support**

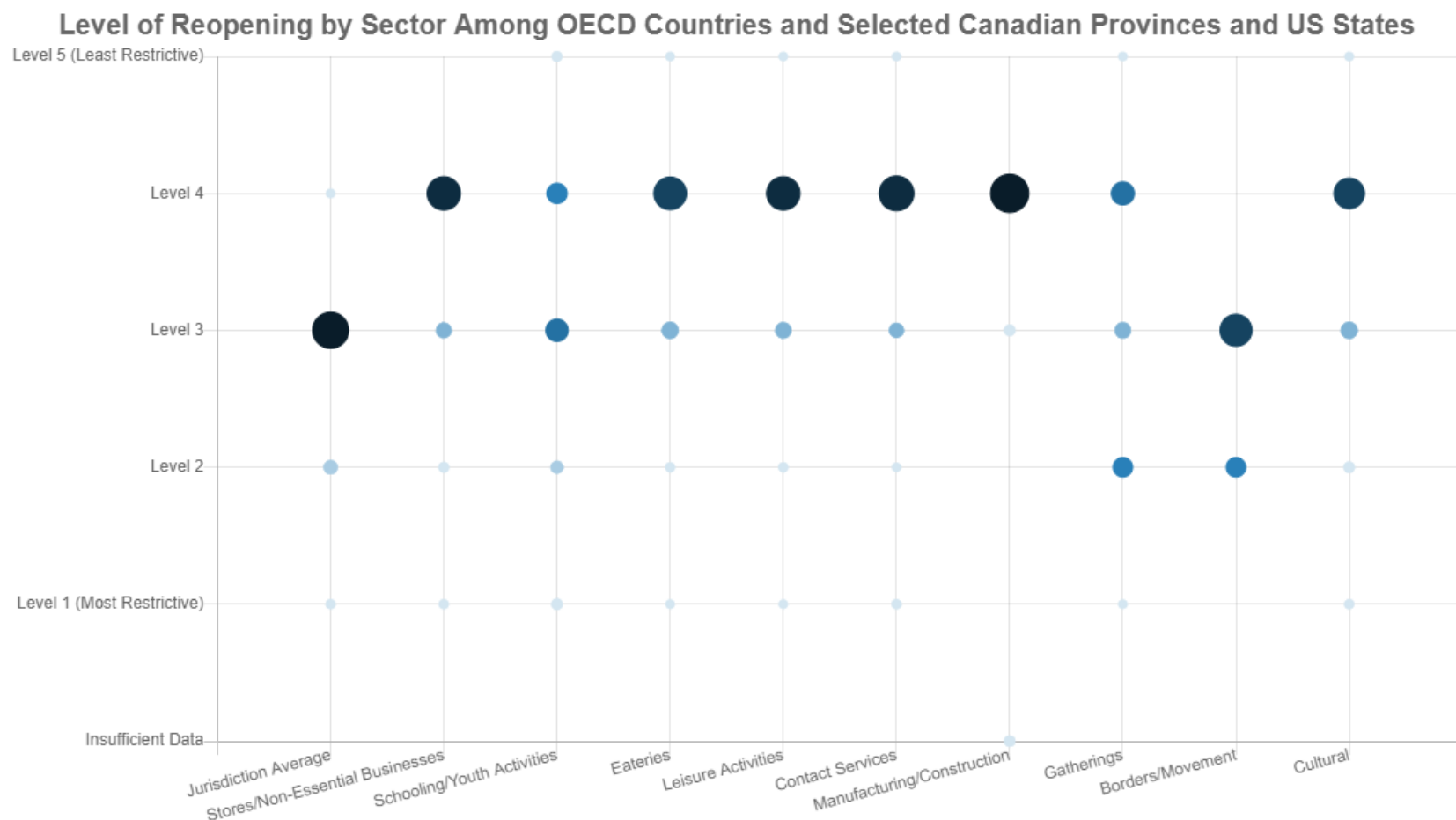
**August 4, 2020**

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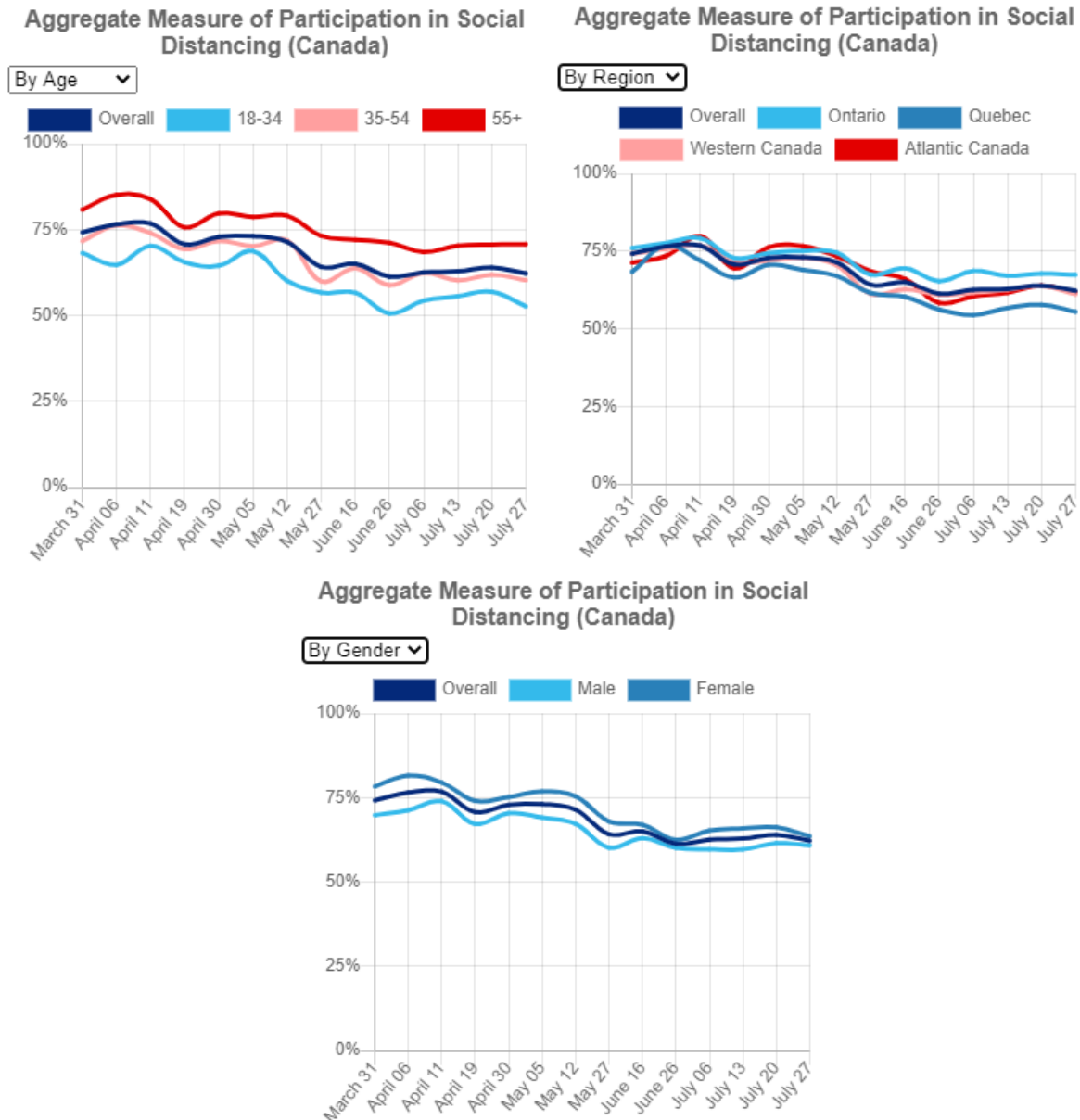
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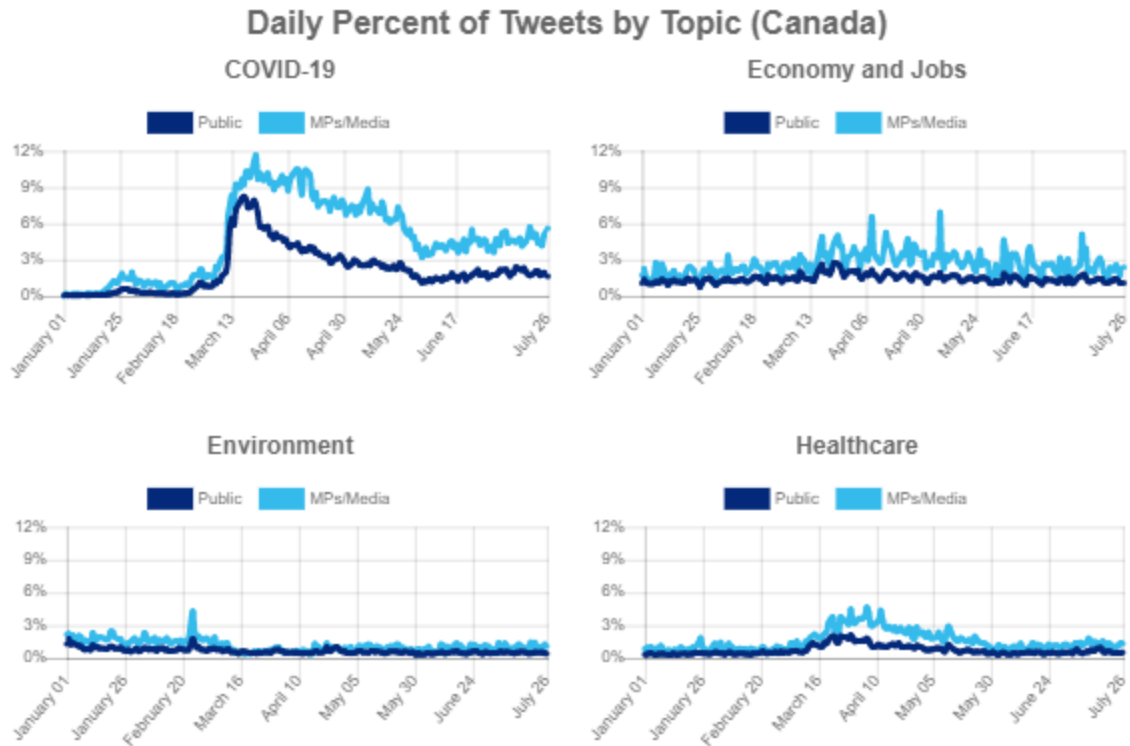
## **Data Visualizations from Dashboard**



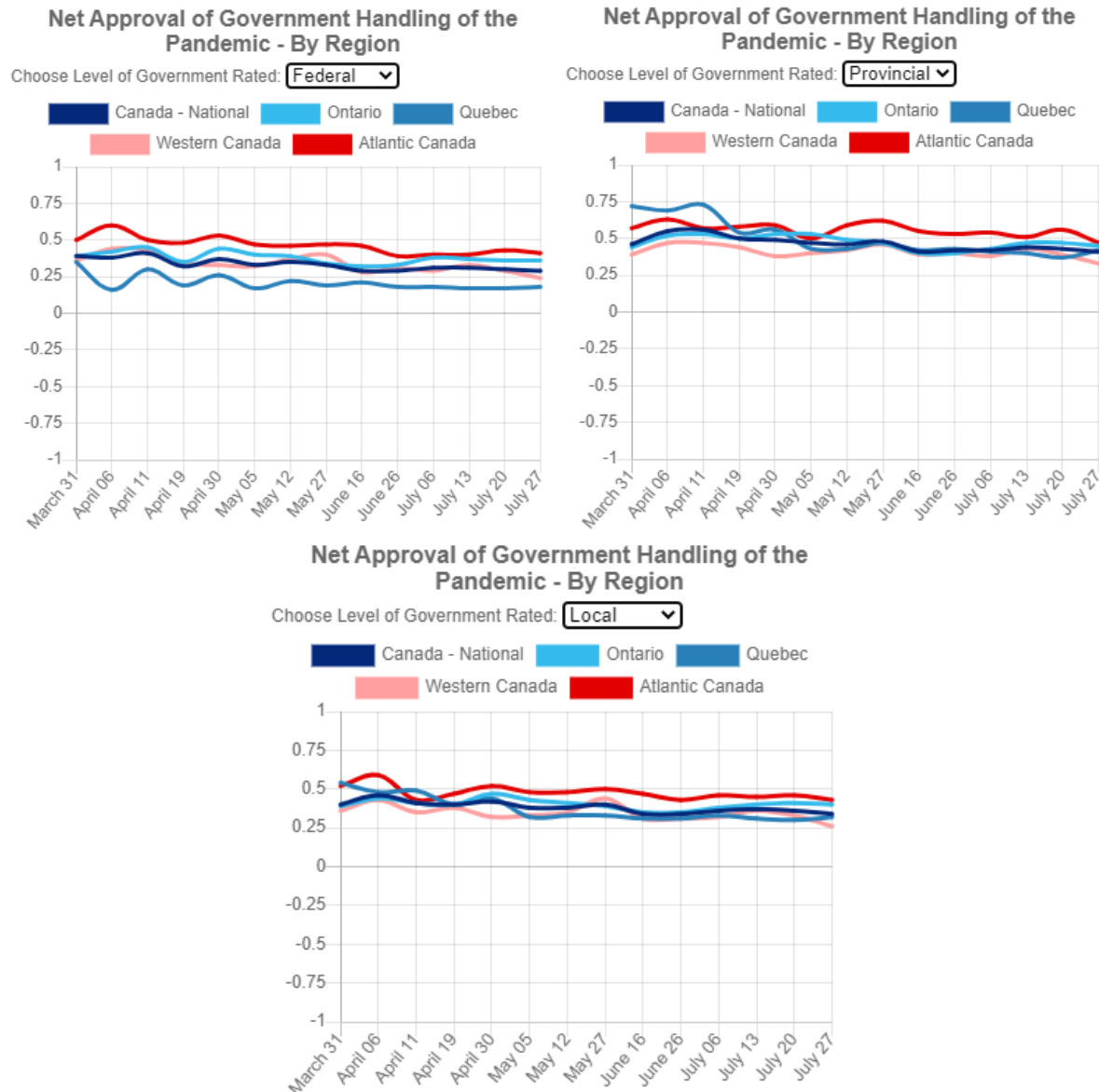
**Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 52 different jurisdictions as of August 4.** The reopening policies of 52 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses, Schooling/Youth Activities, Eateries, Leisure Activities, Contact Services, Manufacturing/Construction, Gatherings, Borders/Movement, and Cultural. Each sector is assigned a level of reopening from Level 1 (Complete Lockdown) to Level 5 (Unrestricted Access). The larger and darker a dot is, the more jurisdictions are at that level of reopening. For details, see [www.reopeningaftercovid.com](http://www.reopeningaftercovid.com).



**Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada).** We asked Canadians whether, as a result of the pandemic, they had taken any of the 6 following actions: avoided crowded places; avoided in-person contact with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintained 2 metre distance from others; avoided domestic travel; avoided public transit; and avoided the grocery store at peak times. The graph displays the percentage of these measures taken by the average survey participant. The surveys used to collect these data were run in partnership with the Media Ecosystem Observatory (MEO). Each survey has a sample size of approximately 2,500 people. For each survey, we worked with a leading sample provider to generate a nationally representative, online sample of Canadians. In addition, following data collection, we applied survey weights to each survey so that—within each province—the sample is representative of the population age and gender.



**Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada).** The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other. The Twitter data are provided by the Media Ecosystem Observatory (MEO). It aims to capture the entire Canadian Twitter conversation. To do so, MEO identified a set of politicians, political journalists, public intellectuals, and Canadian-specific hashtags and collected every Twitter user that touched one of these themes or individuals. MEO then evaluated each individual, looking at their follower or friending behaviour, biographies, self-identified location, and hashtag use and included them in the sample if they were determined to be algorithmically likely to be Canadian. The dataset contains approximately 200,000 tweets a day. The analysis uses a 10% sample of the public's daily tweets and the full set of daily tweets from MPs, senators, and journalists.



**Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region.** We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score, participants' answers were coded as follows: strongly approve (1); somewhat approve (0.5); neither approve, nor disapprove (0); somewhat disapprove (-0.5); and strongly disapprove (-1). The graph displays the average score. The surveys used to collect these data were run in partnership with the Media Ecosystem Observatory (MEO). Each survey has a sample size of approximately 2,500 people. For each survey, we worked with a leading sample provider to generate a nationally representative, online sample of Canadians. In addition, following data collection, we applied survey weights to each survey so that—within each province—the sample is representative of the population age and gender.



## **Individual OECD Country Profiles**

## THE AMERICAS

### *Canada*

#### → *Alberta*

Alberta remains in phase two as cases continue to rise across the province. The premier said the province's policy response to small outbreaks in specific regions will involve targeted lockdowns but should involve reverting back to a total lockdown. Only a significant spread would warrant a province-wide lockdown.<sup>1</sup> In Banff, masks are now mandatory in indoor public spaces and outdoors along main streets. Edmonton's City Council is considering a temporary bylaw that would fine those not wearing masks in any indoor public places \$100.<sup>2</sup> The government continues to defend its back to school plan despite concerns from parents and school boards. The Calgary Board of Education wants additional funds to cover the implementation of COVID-19 health and sanitary measures. The education minister said that school boards have flexibility within their budgets to cover these costs and said that the plan follows the advice of public health officials, school boards, and superintendents.<sup>3</sup> The NDP provided an alternative back to school plan that included hiring extra teachers and expanding into other facilities in order to ensure a classroom cap of 15 students.<sup>4</sup>

#### → *British Columbia*

British Columbia is experiencing increases in daily new infections but there is fairly sufficient capacity in the medical system. An order was issued on July 30 restricting non-resident travel to Haida Gwaii from the B.C. coast to help control the recent outbreak there.<sup>5</sup> B.C. is still at phase three of its reopening plan. Most businesses are open subject to restrictions. In terms of the upcoming school year starting in September, full-time instruction is expected for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within learning group limits that vary based on the level of education. Self-directed learning will support in-class instruction if required.<sup>6</sup> The province is providing \$1.5 million to help local sport organizations with fixed costs during the pandemic. Children, families and athletes are going to see their local sport programs return.<sup>7</sup>

#### → *Manitoba*

On July 30, the government of Manitoba announced its plan to reopen schools in fall. There will be full time learning in classrooms for all students from kindergarten to Grade 8; high school students may have some remote learning--depending on whether schools can ensure physical distancing. COVID-19 prevention efforts are to be measured in levels, so the return to classes will begin at Level 1 in September, but this may be scaled up depending on COVID-19 cases in the province. Level 1 involves enforcing two metres of physical distancing between students to the greatest extent possible. When this is not possible, students will be organized into cohorts and space will be arranged to encourage separation, including the use of larger areas like multipurpose rooms. Schools will also need to limit gatherings in common areas such as lunchrooms and will be encouraged to use outdoor venues as much as possible. Lunches and recesses will be staggered and teachers will move between classrooms, instead of students, to limit the number of people gathering in hallways and schoolyards. Assemblies and gatherings that exceed whatever the current public health guidelines are at that time will not be permitted. Sports and gym classes can continue as long as they meet physical distancing requirements.<sup>8</sup>

#### → *New Brunswick*

As of August 4, there were no active cases of COVID-19 in the province of New Brunswick for a second straight day, according to the Government of New Brunswick's COVID-19 Dashboard. No new cases of the respiratory disease have been reported in the province for 15 days. Prior to Monday, there were still two active cases--both in the Fredericton region. Both people have recovered.<sup>9</sup>

→ *Newfoundland and Labrador*

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador remains at Alert Level 2. The government and public health officials are considering whether or not to make masks mandatory in the province given the low rate of COVID-19 infections. Between May 4 and July 26, more than 12,000 travel exemptions were issued to people travelling to the province. On July 29, the last COVID-19 update was provided from the province's outgoing premier; the new Liberal leader and premier-designate will be named on Monday.<sup>10</sup>

→ *Northwest Territories*

Even though a mine worker tested positive in the Northwest Territories, the worker is not showing symptoms and the government has said that there is no additional risk to other workers with the heightened precaution used to minimize contact between miners.<sup>10A</sup> NWT is still at phase two of their relaxing plan and is not expected to move to phase three until the situation of the whole country is under control. Travelling within the NWT is still restricted upon arrival with limited exceptions.

→ *Nova Scotia*

Nova Scotia Health has released an advisory of a potential exposure to COVID-19 on July 31 at Chebucto Road HRM Park, which had previously been mistakenly reported to have occurred at the Maritime Muslim Academy playground in Halifax. The advisory is related to an individual(s) who may have been asymptomatic before visiting the playground or experiencing mild symptoms that had previously gone unnoticed. The advisory is being issued out of an abundance of caution. In addition, Nova Scotia Health is directly contacting anyone else known to be a close contact of the person(s) confirmed to have COVID-19.<sup>11</sup>

→ *Nunavut*

The government of Nunavut has opened an additional isolation hub for medical travellers at a hotel in Winnipeg to relieve demand after weeks-long wait times at other locations were reported. Nunavut is hoping to develop a medical travel bubble with other jurisdictions in Canada to eliminate the need for a two-week isolation period before returning to the territory.<sup>12</sup> The Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities is encouraging its local affiliates to adopt the territory's school reopening plan, but officials from the Coalition are concerned about complying with additional cleaning requirements and the ability of children to follow social distancing regulations if there are outbreaks reported in Nunavut. Baker Lake will be the first Nunavut community to go back to school on August 7.<sup>13</sup>

→ *Ontario*

Case counts have slightly decreased in the province over the last week. Nevertheless, the Windsor-Essex area will remain in phase two due to the current transmission rate.<sup>14</sup> Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board is set to begin processing thousands of eviction applications on August 4, amid pressure from tenant advocacy groups trying to extend a ban on evictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> After facing criticism over reopening bars and indoor dining too early, the Ontario government implemented additional contact tracing measures at these facilities on July 31.<sup>16</sup> Bars and restaurants (and also tour boat operators) in Ontario are required to keep client logs for a period of 30 days and to disclose the logs should a case be detected. However, some stakeholders are concerned that this is a breach of privacy by private establishments and that the government should use the COVID Alert app instead.<sup>17</sup> Additional details about the planned reopening of schools were released this week.<sup>18</sup>

→ *Prince Edward Island*

In P.E.I, the Chief Public Health Officer is not prepared to make non-medical masks mandatory but strongly recommends wearing them in public. The province is now allowing family members who live

outside of the Atlantic bubble to apply for pre-approved recreational travel in order to visit the island.<sup>19</sup> To qualify, family members must be Canadian citizens or have permanent residency status, and must fill out a declaration form prior to their arrival.<sup>20</sup> The Canadian Premier League will play its shortened COVID-19 soccer season in Charlottetown beginning August 13.<sup>21</sup> Farmers in the province are in need of more labourers as there are not enough temporary foreign workers arriving due to COVID-19 restrictions.<sup>22</sup>

#### → *Quebec*

27 people developed COVID-19 during an outbreak at a day camp in Boucherville en Montérégie at the Les Ateliers de Charlot l'Escargot camp, which led to the closure of camp from July 20 to August 7.<sup>23</sup> Smaller outbreaks were reported at camps in Montérégie, Gatineau and Montreal. The government is concerned about a trend toward hosting large parties regardless of gathering limits among individuals age 15-34.<sup>24</sup> As of August 3, the limit indoors for performance halls, theaters, cinemas, religious services and community halls increased from 50 to 250 with protective measures and distancing in place.<sup>25</sup> Schools, colleges and universities are expected to reopen in September. The Quebec government will collaborate with CEGEPs and universities to discourage parties and plan for rapid interventions if there is an outbreak.<sup>26</sup> Schools will have social bubbles and will have teachers rotate through classrooms instead of students. Students in Grades 10 and 11 will have the option to study in person or remotely.<sup>27</sup> Officials also said that the recent increase in personnel and PPE in long term care homes is allowing them to improve in the areas where they struggled most during the first wave.<sup>28</sup>

#### → *Saskatchewan*

As of August 3, the number of active cases in the province is now at 254. Testing centres are reaching their capacity and hospital admissions are rising.<sup>29</sup> Premier Moe warned residents of Saskatchewan not to give in to COVID-19 fatigue as cases associated with community transmission rise in the province. He said that new outbreaks would not affect the province's reopening plan. Moe said that the province is considering implementing a mandatory mask policy and that full details on the school reopening plan will be issued within the next week.<sup>30</sup> Opposition Leader Meili said that the province has not been clear enough in its recommendation of mask use, its school reopening plan, or in the benchmarks used to ease the province's lockdown restrictions.<sup>31</sup> The chair of the Hutterite Safety Council said that naming specific colonies that have COVID-19 outbreaks is stigmatizing the whole community and that their relationship with the province is deteriorating.<sup>32</sup> Health officials will visit all 80 Hutterite colonies in the province to disseminate information on COVID-19 after a leaked Saskatchewan Health Authority document showed that the estimated Rt rate in the South region of the province is now at 3.14.<sup>33</sup>

#### → *Yukon*

No active cases remain in Yukon. With people testing positive shortly after their visit to the Yukon, the government is asking Yukoners who could have been exposed to the virus to take precautions and monitor themselves for symptoms. Yukon is now in phase three of its reopening plan. The restrictions on the number of people allowed at gatherings — 10 indoors, 50 outdoors — have not changed. However, household bubbles can increase to up to 15 people and up to five households are allowed to mingle. Indoor seated events can take place with up to 50 people; events outdoors can accommodate up to 100. Restaurants can provide dine-in services at 100% capacity with social distancing. Bars are permitted to host live music again, although no dancing or other mingling of patrons will be allowed. Recreational facilities will be able to provide a wider range of services to the customers. Safety plans are still being worked on for a safe return to sports.<sup>34</sup>

### *The United States*

#### → *California*

On July 29, California reported its second highest daily death toll from COVID-19.<sup>35</sup> However, as of August 4, California experienced its first decline in weekly new COVID-19 cases in the last 12 weeks.<sup>36</sup> The governor said that California needs to increase public education about COVID-19 to discourage behaviours that contribute to a surge in cases.<sup>37</sup> As of July 30, 21 of 58 California counties, which are home to 10% of California's population, were permitted to reopen indoor salons and businesses pending local restrictions.<sup>38</sup> On July 29, the Orange County Board of Education announced that they were suing the Governor of California and the California Public Health Officer to obtain a court order allowing schools to have in person classes and on campus services.<sup>39</sup> The board says the order is necessary to create equal learning opportunities for children from underprivileged families, who would be unequally burdened otherwise.<sup>40</sup> Local salon owners and employees are protesting for the reopening of personal care businesses in California, which they said have been forced to operate underground--something that is even less sanitary.<sup>41</sup>

→ *Illinois*

Eleven Illinois counties are now in the "warning" level, signalling that COVID metrics in these counties are not safe.<sup>42</sup> Chicago continues to enforce a quarantine on out-of-state travellers from states where the case rate is greater than 15 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 resident population, per day, over a 7-day rolling average.<sup>43</sup>

→ *Michigan*

Michigan's 7-day moving average for daily cases as of August 1 was 768, the highest since early May.<sup>44</sup> On July 29, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued an executive order to reimpose restrictions in Regions 6 and 8, which include the Upper Peninsula and 17 counties in northern Michigan; the restrictions cap indoor gatherings at 10 people and completely close indoor bars where alcohol accounts for 70% of sales.<sup>45</sup> However, Whitmer allowed for Detroit's casinos to reopen at 15% capacity on August 5.<sup>46</sup>

→ *New York*

As of August 4, for the second day in a row, no COVID-related deaths have been recorded in New York City.<sup>47</sup> Over the weekend, the State Liquor Authority and State Police Task Force recorded violations of state laws (indoor service and serving alcohol without food) at 134 establishments.<sup>48</sup> With regards to school reopenings in the fall, Governor Andrew Cuomo will make an announcement in the coming week.<sup>49</sup>

→ *Texas*

Reports describe Texas' resurgence of cases beginning in mid-June, with an increase in the COVID-19 death toll by July.<sup>50</sup> On July 29, Texas reported a daily record for COVID-19 related fatalities.<sup>51</sup> Its case count now exceeds that of New York.<sup>52</sup> The hotspot for cases in Texas is in Rio Grande Valley where reports indicate that hospitals began reaching their capacity earlier in July.<sup>53</sup> Doctors in Texas are urging residents to get the flu shot to lower the burden of the flu on health care systems in the fall.<sup>54</sup>

*Mexico*

Mexico has the fourth highest death toll from COVID-19 globally, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.<sup>55</sup> Cancun, Puerto Vallarta and Los Cabos--three major Mexican travel destinations--have reopened and are accepting tourists, despite the continued closure of the US-Mexico land border.<sup>56</sup> San Felipe in Baja California has reopened to Mexican tourists and to local tourism, but the area is restricting foreign tourism because of the COVID-19 situation in California.<sup>57</sup> To protect Mexicans, Baja California will continue to limit access to the area with exceptions for essential services.<sup>58</sup> The region's reopening allows access to beaches and hotel capacity up to 30%. As of July

30, malls reopened with sanitary measures and social distancing rules. Bars and movie theaters are expected to reopen during the week of August 3.<sup>59</sup> For the period spanning August 3 to 16, approximately half of Mexico is expected to be in the red category, which is phase one of the federal government's reopening plan. The other half will be placed in the orange category, which is phase two of reopening.<sup>60</sup> Federal health officials and state governments will meet during the week of August 3 to review the protocol for placing states in the reopening categories.<sup>61</sup> The federal reopening spotlight system has been openly contested by some states that have decided not to follow it. Approximately nine governors have called for Deputy Health Minister Lopez-Gatell's resignation because of the negative impact of closure recommendations on local economies and the high COVID-19 death toll in Mexico.<sup>62</sup>

### *Chile*

On July 28, Chile began gradually lifting lockdown restrictions in Santiago.<sup>63</sup> As part of the Chilean government's Testing Traceability and Isolation strategy, the Undersecretary of Public Health and Mayor of Las Condes conducted an Active Search procedure on July 29. This procedure performs PCR testing on pedestrians in communes that have entered the Transition phase, or phase two, of reopening.<sup>64</sup> Las Condes was one of the communes that entered phase two and which began daily testing in communes.<sup>65</sup> The government also expects people to prove residency if they are moving around in communes in the Transition phase.<sup>66</sup> The Undersecretary for Children and the Undersecretary for Public Health met with the Chilean Society of Pediatrics and other health experts to determine how permits should work for children and adolescents to leave home during the pandemic and when and where they should be permitted to go.<sup>67</sup> The government's decision to reopen has been criticized by medical experts in Chile who claim that the country is not ready to reopen.<sup>68</sup>

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

### *France*

France reported 3,376 new COVID-19 cases over the first weekend of August.<sup>69</sup> The number of people being treated in ICUs for the disease has increased for the first time since April. Many experts acknowledge that France is experiencing a resurgence, which has been attributed to various bars that opened in mid-July.<sup>70</sup> Although mask wearing became mandatory in all indoor public places across the nation last month, rules on wearing masks outdoors in the hardest-hit parts of France (Lille and Nice) took effect on August 3.<sup>71</sup> Pressure is growing on the government to mandate the use of masks outdoors nationwide.<sup>72</sup> Although the government does not want to resort to another nationwide lockdown, it has yet to close any regions with outbreaks.<sup>73</sup>

### *Germany*

After a few weeks of having an R0 above 1, Germany's current 7-day R-value is estimated at 1.00.<sup>74</sup> Although most of the economy is open, modifications such as social-distancing rules and wearing masks on public transit and in shops remain in place--especially since there has been a recent uptick in daily cases.<sup>75</sup> On August 1, approximately 20,000 mask-less protestors gathered in Berlin to protest against COVID restrictions.<sup>76</sup> This caused many German politicians to call for more restrictions on the right to demonstrate.<sup>77</sup> This week, the eastern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is the first German state to start the school year. Most students will return to the classroom in "cohorts" that will spend the whole day together. If one person in the cohort gets infected, only the cohort (as opposed to the whole school) will quarantine.<sup>78</sup>

### *Belgium*

On July 29, the PM announced the decision to not transition into phase 5 but instead to impose new COVID-19 restrictions for at least the next four weeks. Contact bubbles have been reduced from 15 to a fixed 5 people per household. However, groups of 10 can meet in public--provided social distancing is followed and face masks are used.<sup>79</sup> This limit of 10 people also applies to receptions, banquets, and private gatherings, which has been reduced from 50 people. The government has reintroduced shopping alone measures, with a maximum time of 30 minutes per store. Moving forward, patrons at restaurants, bars, and wellness centres will have to register and leave their contact details.<sup>80</sup> Public gathering restrictions have been cut in half: 100 people allowed indoors and 200 permitted at outdoors.<sup>81</sup> The most affected province in Belgium--Antwerp--has imposed a curfew between 11:30 pm and 6:00 am. It has also closed fitness centres and adopted stricter controls in restaurants and bars.<sup>82</sup> A new contact tracing app is being developed and is set to be released in September to boost the current efforts. Using Bluetooth technology, the data collected will provide information to authorities more quickly and efficiently to pinpoint emerging hotspots.<sup>83</sup>

### *Netherlands*

Effective August 1, Netherlands exempted the compulsory quarantine requirement for returning holidaymakers from countries branded code orange or red<sup>84</sup>--along with mandatory testing of asymptomatic travelers who arrive in the country from destinations with a high number of COVID-19 cases.<sup>85</sup> However, random testing will be carried out at airports, with travellers encouraged to self-quarantine at their homes upon return. Previously, people entering the Netherlands were advised to self-isolate for two weeks upon arrival from a country classified as "code red", where people should not visit under any circumstances, or from "code orange" countries, where people should only visit under extraordinary circumstances. Effective August 5, face masks will be made compulsory in busy parts of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, with fines imposed on those who fail to comply. The move came following a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in Rotterdam in the past few weeks.<sup>86</sup> Local health board officials have also closed three cafes in Amsterdam because they were potential sources of clusters and a staff member continued to work despite having symptoms of COVID-19.<sup>87</sup>

### *Spain*

Over the weekend, Spain reported approximately 8500 new cases--most of which were reported in Aragon.<sup>88</sup> Four areas in Aragon have reverted to phase two of reopening.<sup>89</sup> The regional government of Madrid has made masks mandatory in public places and is limiting the number of people permitted at gatherings. Madrid will also begin an information campaign that targets young people who have recently contributed to the spread of COVID-19 by resuming their social activity.<sup>90</sup> In response to increasing cases in the northeastern region of Spain, the UK has banned travel to Spain and suspended flights. The Prime Minister of Spain says it is a mistake because the increase in cases is located predominantly in Catalonia and Aragon. Spain and the UK are discussing a solution.<sup>91</sup> Germany has also advised Germans to refrain from visiting the Catalonia, Aragon and Navarra regions, which have recently experienced increasing cases.<sup>92</sup>

### *The United Kingdom*

The UK's seven-day moving average continues to increase--with 928 reported cases as of August 3. A major incident has been declared in the Manchester area, allowing the creation of a "central command structure" to help tackle the rising number of COVID cases.<sup>93</sup> On July 30, Health Secretary Matt Hancock reintroduced lockdown measures in parts of northern England, barring households from visiting one another.<sup>94</sup> This is the UK's second regional restriction. The first one, in Leicester, ended on August 3--allowing restaurants, pubs, shops and hairdressers to reopen more than a month after they

were closed.<sup>95</sup> PM Boris Johnson called off plans to allow venues, including casinos, bowling alleys and skating rinks, to open from August 1.<sup>96</sup> Wedding receptions were also put on hold, along with plans to allow limited numbers of fans back into sports stadiums and audiences into theatres.<sup>97</sup> Scientists have warned that current testing and contact tracing is inadequate to prevent a second wave after schools in the UK reopen in early September (August 11 in Scotland).<sup>98</sup>

### *Ireland*

On August 1, the Irish health department issued a warning to ensure gatherings are a maximum of 10 people indoors, with additional advice to avoid house parties. Restaurants are directed to enforce a limit of 50 people (including staff) on their premises at any time, ensuring all procedures and protocols are being followed. Environments where safety measures are not in place should be avoided.<sup>99</sup> Effective August 3, random testing is taking place at airports in response to the increasingly volatile international situation.<sup>100</sup>

### *Luxembourg*

Effective July 31, passengers arriving in the UK from Luxembourg are required to isolate for 14 days. This follows the removal of Luxembourg from the UK's quarantine-free list. The decision came after a consistent increase in COVID-19 cases in Luxembourg since the end of June.<sup>101</sup> However, Germany added Luxembourg to its list of countries who fall out of the designated risky zone and won't be required to quarantine on arrival. This is so as not to slow traffic between the two countries. When travelling to Germany, a negative test no older than two days will be required.<sup>102</sup>

### *Portugal*

On July 31, the government of Madeira announced its decision to extend the state of calamity in the archipelago until August 31. Masks are mandatory in all public places.<sup>103</sup> The entire Lisbon Metropolitan Area (AML) is to remain in the state of contingency, while the rest of mainland Portugal stays on alert for at least another 15 days. Measures in the AML include mandatory home or hospital confinement for people infected with COVID-19 or subject to active surveillance. Up to 10 people are allowed to gather outdoors, while the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited. Restaurants are only allowed to operate beyond 8 pm for on-site meals (both inside establishments and on licensed terraces), on a take-away or home delivery service. No closing time is imposed on fuel supply services, pharmacies, funeral homes, sports equipment stores, clinics, offices and veterinarians.<sup>104</sup> Despite the number of cases in Portugal, Denmark removed the mobility restrictions previously imposed on passengers coming from Portugal, effective August 1, due to Portugal's ability to test on a large scale, detect positive cases, control their transmission, and treat them in the appropriate way.<sup>105</sup>

## **CENTRAL EUROPE**

### *Austria*

The Austrian government has imposed travel restrictions on 32 countries--including Mexico, the US, Chile, and Sweden--in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. Medical professionals, seasonal workers, and diplomats are exempted from this decision but will be required to take a test. In effect until September 30, 2020, Austria continues to allow entry for travellers from 30 EU countries without



testing and quarantine measures.<sup>106</sup> On July 28, an outbreak was traced to hotels, bars, and guesthouses at an Austrian holiday resort in Upper Austria.<sup>107</sup>

### *Greece*

Several new restrictions came into effect in Greece on July 28, including an expanded list of indoor public spaces that require masks. The list now includes retail shops, public service offices, banks, food stores, bakeries, and elevators. Masks are not required at churches.<sup>108</sup> Passengers arriving in Greece from Bulgaria and Romania will be required to have proof of a negative test result from within 72 hours prior to entering the country. This is not required for Greek citizens or permanent residents, or for essential professional travellers.<sup>109</sup> Effective August 1, Greece will allow cruise ships to dock--but only if passengers can present evidence of a negative test in the previous 72 hours. Six cruise ports will be open and random testing will be conducted by Greek authorities.<sup>110</sup>

### *Italy*

On July 27, a request by the PM to extend the current state of emergency until October 15 was approved in the upper house of Parliament. This extension expands both regional and central government powers related to COVID-19 restrictions, such as declaring red zones and increasing hospital resources. The Opposition is accusing the PM of trying to keep too much power--citing the fall in the rate of infections in Italy.<sup>111</sup>

### *Slovenia*

Slovenia's contact tracing app is currently operational and being tested by the National Institute of Public Health. The app is expected to become available for download in mid-August.<sup>112</sup> The Association of Social Institutions has left the government's COVID-19 task force due to criticism about its lack of strategy for long-term care homes. A majority of cases have been in long-term care homes, schools, and shops, leading a government spokesperson to urge extra caution in workplaces.<sup>113</sup>

### *Switzerland*

Effective July 23, people arriving in Switzerland from a list of 42 countries have to quarantine for 10 days. The Federal Office of Public Health has decided to add more countries to the risk list on the basis of new infections. A group of health experts would like Switzerland's list extended to include nations that do little or no testing.<sup>114</sup>

## **EASTERN EUROPE**

### *Czech Republic*

Sweden and Tunisia – effective July 27 and August 3, respectively – are now among the countries considered by Czech health authorities to have a “low risk” of infection. This means that citizens travelling to the Czech Republic from either country will no longer have to provide a negative COVID-19 test upon arrival.<sup>115</sup> Meanwhile, Romania was removed from the list of low-risk countries on August 3--meaning that foreigners travelling to the Czech Republic from Romania will now be required to submit a negative COVID-19 test prior to entering the country or else remain in self-isolation for at least 2 weeks.<sup>116</sup>

### *Hungary*

From July 31, foreigners travelling to Hungary from countries with a “yellow” or “red” rating will be required to pay for their own COVID-19 tests if should they choose to take one instead of a mandatory 2-week quarantine upon arrival in Hungary.<sup>117</sup> Foreigners entering Hungary are required to undergo a medical examination upon arrival at the border--after which they receive an order for mandatory quarantine, and a red card, which they are required to affix to the door of their apartment while in isolation. If travellers wish to be exempted from quarantine, they can submit an application for testing--costing three thousand forints--to a district office, which may or may not approve their request to leave quarantine for the duration of testing.<sup>118</sup>

### *Latvia*

Following a proposal from Latvia’s Center for Disease Prevention and Control, the Latvian government decided to make COVID-19 testing mandatory for temporary international workers at the end of the first week of their work period.<sup>119</sup> The new regulation stipulates that from July 28, temporary workers from “high-risk” countries must be tested for COVID-19 prior to starting work in Latvia, and again 5-7 days after arriving in Latvia. The proposal and subsequent regulatory action came after Latvian health authorities confirmed that 5 temporary workers from Uzbekistan were infected with COVID-19 shortly before entering Latvia.<sup>120</sup>

### *Lithuania*

Effective August 1, protective face masks are again mandatory in Lithuania when using public transport, as well as in enclosed shopping and service provision locations. However, face masks will not be mandatory in public catering facilities and during cultural and sporting events. Exceptions will also be applied to services that cannot be provided while wearing a mask.<sup>121</sup>

### *Poland*

On August 4, Poland reported another record daily increase in COVID-19 infections, with at least 680 confirmed cases and 6 deaths. This follows a spike driven by outbreaks among coal miners and at large public gatherings.<sup>122</sup> The new daily record comes a week after Polish authorities decided to ease certain restrictions related to COVID-19, particularly those limiting the number of participants in public gatherings, sporting events, and artistic performances.<sup>123</sup>

### *Slovakia*

The Public Health Office of the Slovak Republic has strongly recommended that Slovak citizens avoid travelling to the regions of Catalonia, Aragon and Navarre in Spain, and the regions of Zagreb and Vukovar-Srijem County in Croatia. Slovak officials noted that the epidemiological situation is less risky in other regions of Spain and Croatia. Both countries currently remain on Slovakia’s list of “less risky” countries.<sup>124</sup>

## **NORTHERN EUROPE**

### *Denmark*

Denmark reported 91 new cases of COVID-19 on July 30 in the country’s largest daily increase since May 18. Officials have stressed that one day of data is not concerning, and stated that Denmark’s case numbers are still stable and hospitalizations are going down.<sup>125</sup> A significant proportion of the new

cases are connected to an outbreak at a meat processing plant in Ringsted. The plant has since shut down much of its operations and is operating at half-capacity.<sup>126</sup> The Danish Health Agency has recommended that face masks be used on public transit when social distancing is not possible. Danish officials had previously resisted recommending the use of face masks, but rising infection levels in Denmark led to the change in policy.<sup>127</sup> Denmark lifted all travel restrictions on Sweden on August 1, allowing residents of all regions to travel to Denmark for tourism if they have booked accommodation for at least six nights. The residents of several regions in Sweden were already able to travel to Denmark after reporting an infection rate below 20 new cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks.<sup>128</sup>

### *Estonia*

The number of active cases in Estonia has risen to 69. Most of these are associated with the outbreak in Tartu connected to a symptomatic person who visited several public places.<sup>129</sup> Despite this, the Health Board of Estonia has said that the spread of COVID-19 remains under control, noting that the country has an infection rate that is among the lowest in the EU.<sup>130</sup> Public health officials acknowledged that cases are likely to rise in the coming days due to the new outbreak.<sup>131</sup> The Minister of Social Affairs said that any talk of re-establishing lockdown restrictions is premature.<sup>132</sup> As case numbers rise across Europe, the Estonian government has advised citizens to avoid all international travel because rapidly-changing situations could result in flight cancellations and a potential self-isolation period upon their return.<sup>133</sup> Restrictions on visitor capacity at casinos, nightclubs, and other nightlife institutions changed on August 1, removing the limit of 100 people in all cases and moving to a 50% capacity limit.<sup>134</sup> Estonia extended its direct flight ban to and from high-risk countries until the end of August. The government said they would update the policy once a month to allow airlines more time to plan and prepare their operations.<sup>135</sup>

### *Finland*

Some of the last major restrictions in Finland were lifted on August 1. Events with more than 500 people will be allowed to take place (with social distancing regulations still enforced). The government will lift its recommendation to work from home.<sup>136</sup> These changes have led some prominent public health officials in the country to call for a mandatory mask policy, which is reportedly under consideration by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).<sup>137</sup> Some municipalities are considering implementing their own restrictions if there are local COVID-19 outbreaks. Restrictions may be imposed on individual towns or neighbourhoods, and would primarily focus on schools, workplaces, and public events.<sup>138</sup> There has been substantial regional variation in contact tracing success, with only about half of those infected in Helsinki being able to track the source of their infection. Finnish officials hope that the release of the country's contact tracing app later this month will improve their efforts.<sup>139</sup>

### *Iceland*

Recent outbreaks of COVID-19 in Iceland have caused the government to reintroduce some lockdown restrictions just ahead of a major holiday weekend in the country.<sup>140</sup> On July 31, gathering limits were lowered from 500 to 100 people, and social distancing will be mandatory in public spaces for the first time since May 25. Bars and gyms in Iceland must close if they cannot guarantee social distancing can be respected.<sup>141</sup> Visits to long-term care facilities and prisons have been restricted.<sup>142</sup> Masks must be worn at all other services where social distancing cannot be maintained, including personal care services and on public transit. These mandatory mask policies are the first recommendation of mask use in Iceland.<sup>143</sup> Despite these new restrictions, Iceland will not raise its level of emergency for now, but indicated it was willing to do so if outbreaks continue.<sup>144</sup> There are now over 50 active cases in Iceland, with 39 of those known to have been transmitted domestically. All domestic cases have been

diagnosed since July 23--after the country had gone nearly three weeks without any new domestic cases.<sup>145</sup>

### *Norway*

A local COVID-19 outbreak has been found in the town of Moss, around 60 kilometres south of Oslo. 24 people in the town have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past two weeks, with most infections traced to a single private event. However, the origin of some of the cases is still unknown.<sup>146</sup> Neighbouring municipalities have been consulted about the outbreak in Moss; some of their residents were present at the event in question.<sup>147</sup> Due to another outbreak on a Norwegian cruise ship, the government announced that it will restrict the ability of cruise passengers and crew to go ashore. No cruise ships will dock at a Norwegian port for at least the next two weeks.<sup>148</sup> Norway will likely recommend that all those who can work from home continue to do so for the rest of 2020.<sup>149</sup> On August 1, the Norwegian government reintroduced travel restrictions for Belgium, forcing all travellers from that country to self-isolate for 10 days upon their arrival in Norway.<sup>150</sup> Travel restrictions on Switzerland, Poland, and the Czech Republic are also likely to be reintroduced this week after those three countries reported increasing caseloads.<sup>151</sup>

### *Sweden*

Sweden has lifted its recommendation against non-essential travel to four more countries: Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. The government also extended its recommendation against non-essential travel to non-exempted EU countries and the UK until August 12.<sup>152</sup> Sweden will extend its recommendation to work from home until the end of 2020 to ease congestion on public transit in the fall.<sup>153</sup> State epidemiologist Anders Tegnell said that Sweden may recommend wearing face-masks if the infection rate in the country were to rise again.<sup>154</sup> Officials in the coastal region of Västra Götaland have warned that tourist areas have been overcrowded in recent days, and pointed to COVID-19 fatigue and falling infection rates in the country as the reason why Swedes have been flouting social distancing recommendations.<sup>155</sup>

## **ASIA/PACIFIC**

### *Japan*

Japan recorded more than 1,000 new cases per day for five days in a row through to August 2. The daily average of new infections in Tokyo during the week of July 29 was over 250, with around 60% of the cases being untraceable. Experts believe that the virus has spread to all generations by diverse means. The Tokyo Medical Association is considering increasing the number of testing sites in Tokyo to 1,400 from the current 300 or so.<sup>156</sup> The government plans to provide another 80 million washable cloth masks to care facilities nationwide by the end of September, in addition to the 77 million that it has already supplied.<sup>157</sup> The government has decided against easing attendance limits any further at public events; the current cap of 5,000 will remain until the end of August.<sup>158</sup> Restaurants and bars in Tokyo where alcoholic drinks are served, as well as karaoke parlors, are asked to close by 10 pm during the period from August 3 to 31. As compensation, small and medium-sized companies that operate those types of businesses will be offered about \$1,900 if they agree to the operating shorter hours.<sup>159</sup> The Tokyo governor also called on residents to refrain from going out and drinking in groups. Japan's education ministry said that more than 1,700 boards of education planned to shorten summer holidays to make up for cancelled classes.<sup>160</sup> Starting August 5, foreigners with certain residence statuses--such as international students, technical trainees and some company employees--will be allowed to enter Japan on the condition that they comply with requirements such as taking a PCR test.<sup>161</sup> Japan, Vietnam

and Thailand have agreed to allow businesspeople to resume visits between the countries. Japan has started accepting long-stay visa applications. Arrivals of Vietnamese and Thai people in Japan are expected in August.<sup>162</sup> To help boost international business travel, the government is working on a reservation system for businesspeople to get tested before they go abroad. This could be set up in late September.

### *South Korea*

South Korea has managed to take control of the second wave as it continues to record a low level of local transmissions. Health officials said on July 29 that more patrols and closed-circuit television cameras would be installed around quarantine sites following a series of recent escapes from the facilities.<sup>163</sup> The punishment will also be toughened for foreign residents who report false self-isolation addresses when they re-enter the country after overseas trips. Plans are underway to inspect and verify if residences registered by inbound foreigners are fit for self-isolation. If not, people will be put in a dedicated quarantine facility.<sup>164</sup> The government is set to address the economic impact of the pandemic as well. The creation of some 93,000 jobs is being planned, involving coronavirus duties such as disinfecting affected areas and detecting safety protocol violations. Medical institutions and businesses will be compensated for part of their losses caused by the pandemic. Cities and provinces that agree to accommodate passengers who require a two-week quarantine will be paid government incentives.<sup>165</sup> South Korea said on August 4 that it will release data on restaurants that follow sanitary guidelines in order to minimize the spread of the virus and to induce people to dine out more--without being excessively concerned about safety.<sup>166</sup> Citing difficulties in maintaining infection prevention rules, the Seoul government announced its decision not to operate all seven riverside pools and water parks this summer. Starting August 3, seafarers on all vessels departing from Russia will be required to submit a certificate of a negative test; some infections have been traced to Russian ships.<sup>167</sup>

### *New Zealand*

New Zealand has gone through more than three months without a locally acquired case from an unknown source. However, there are increasing concerns that unwell New Zealanders are refusing to get tested and that COVID-19 patients are not always honest when revealing their contact histories. In response to a visitor who tested positive after leaving New Zealand, targeted testing has taken place in the communities where the visitor had been to check for signs of community transmission.<sup>168</sup> The Ministry of Health has announced that all 12 public health units are now using the same contact tracing software, which could improve the country's overall contact tracing capacity. An update to the software allowing users to manually enter their digital diary was released on July 30.<sup>169</sup> A bill introduced in Parliament on July 29 would charge temporary visa holders--or New Zealanders who enter the country temporarily or leave and return--for the cost of their government-managed isolation. The system could begin before late August.<sup>170</sup> Normal life goes on without restrictions within the border. Two of the country's busiest airports have sketched out their plans to physically divide operations for an international travel bubble should the government announce one.<sup>171</sup> Having put a hold on new bookings in early July to help the government manage quarantine capacity, Air New Zealand has extended the freeze until August 9.

### *Australia*

Australia is grappling with a major outbreak in Victoria, as well as sporadic transmission in other states. Victoria recorded 723 new infections on August 1, breaking its previous record. Halfway through Victoria's six-week lockdown, the Premier announced tougher penalties for people who fail to self-isolate when required. People instructed to self-isolate will no longer be allowed to go out for exercise.<sup>172</sup> This comes after more than 800 out of 3,000 people who were supposed to be self-isolating

were found not at home during doorknocks conducted by officials. It was announced on July 28 that elective surgeries at all hospitals in Melbourne and Mitchell Shire would be postponed, except for the most urgent procedures. Personnel have been sent into the long term care homes overwhelmed by the outbreaks and infected residents are being transferred to hospitals to receive better care.<sup>173</sup> The progress in reopening has been halted across the country and greatly reversed in hard-hit Victoria. The following stricter lockdown rules have been introduced in Victoria. From August 2, Melbourne has come under stage four restrictions where people are only allowed to go out for essential purposes within five kilometres of their home. A curfew will apply from 8 pm to 5 am each night. Most businesses and services have been either suspended or limited to essential services only. Residents are not allowed to have visitors in their home, but couples will still be allowed to visit each other. All students will return to remote learning. Public transport will be operating at reduced capacity. Starting August 6, regional Victoria will return to stage three restrictions. This means that restaurants and cafes will only be able to offer takeaway and delivery service and beauty and personal care services will need to close.<sup>174</sup> Around the country, a national code has been adopted that long term care residents should not host more than two visitors at any time and visitors cannot mingle in common spaces. The federal and Victorian governments are currently working with the long term care sector on an arrangement where staff will only work at a single facility; the governments will compensate these staff for lost benefits.<sup>175</sup>

### *Turkey*

On August 1, the Turkish state announced their decision to provide more financial support to over one million families during the COVID-19 outbreak. The government launched the Social Protection Shield program in March to meet citizens' needs during the pandemic. Over 2 billion liras (over \$286 USD million) have been distributed to citizens so far, with at least 1.2 million families each having received 1,000 Turkish liras (\$143 USD) in financial support.<sup>176</sup> On August 1, Iraq suspended all flights to Turkey--citing the recent rise of COVID-19 infections in the country.<sup>177</sup>

### *Israel*

Israel continues to have a fairly high level of daily new infections, sometimes exceeding 2,000 per day. The number of tests conducted dropped significantly over the past weekend, but the positivity rate has been steady. The director-general of the Health Ministry hoped that the military would take over the overwhelmed contact tracing program by this week.<sup>178</sup> HaMagen 2, the second version of the contact tracing app, was launched on July 27. It combines GPS data recording with Bluetooth proximity detection.<sup>179</sup> The newly appointed coordinator for the COVID-19 response revealed the outline of his plan on July 28. The plan, which aims to rebuild public trust, emphasized the socioeconomic situation and was skeptical of sweeping lockdown measures.<sup>180</sup> A more detailed plan is expected on August 5. Following the success of restaurant owners in delaying their government-ordered closure, a union representing event hall owners threatened to reopen their businesses this week. A number of retailers also kept their doors open over the past weekend in defiance of the weekend shutdown regulations. The government is now extremely hesitant about changing the COVID-19 restrictions. The cabinet approved a \$1.2 billion plan on August 2 for the coming school year, which is scheduled to begin on September 1. Under the plan, kindergartens and grades 1-2 will operate with normal group sizes. Students in grades 3-4 will learn in "capsules" capped at 18 students. Grades 5-12 will have online education for most of the week.<sup>181</sup> The Health Ministry said that it was working on a plan to allow incoming flights without medical checks or quarantine requirements from countries with low morbidity. The plan is expected to come into effect on August 16.<sup>182</sup>

## **Endnotes for Country Summaries**

# Endnotes

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## **Partnerships and Contributors**

The Media Ecosystem Observatory – a joint effort of Peter Loewen (Toronto), Taylor Owen (McGill), and Derek Ruths (McGill) – is responsible for the social media and behavioural data on our dashboard. The leads on these projects are Eric Merkley (Toronto) and Aengus Bridgman (McGill).

Reopening data and summaries are produced by a team at PEARL (The Policy, Elections, and Representation Lab) at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy: Mitchell Anderson, Haobo Chen, Jad El Tal, Kulsoom Khalid, Anthony Moniuszko, Erika Porco, and Sapphira Thompson-Bled.

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### *Links*

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