

Weekly COVID Update:

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

July 6, 2020

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Foreword

Canada, like many countries around the world, is beginning to reopen its economy. At the same time, we are still confronting a serious public health threat in the SARS-CoV-2 virus and in COVID-19.

How are we reopening, compared to other countries? And how are we doing as a country at maintaining social distancing and the public support and attention necessary to sustain the fight against COVID-19?

On our Dashboard, we present unique quantitative data on:

- The openness of the economy on nine different dimensions in 52 different jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories.
- Trends in social distancing in Canada.
- Trends in social media attention to COVID-19 and selected other topics.
- Trends in support for federal, provincial, and local government management of COVID-19.

We also provide a weekly qualitative summary of the actions governments are taking and considering taking to reopen their economies and manage the coronavirus.

Our data are updated weekly. You can subscribe to a weekly update by visiting our website: www.reopeningaftercovid.com.

Please direct any questions or comments to peter.loewen@utoronto.ca.

Data Visualizations from Dashboard

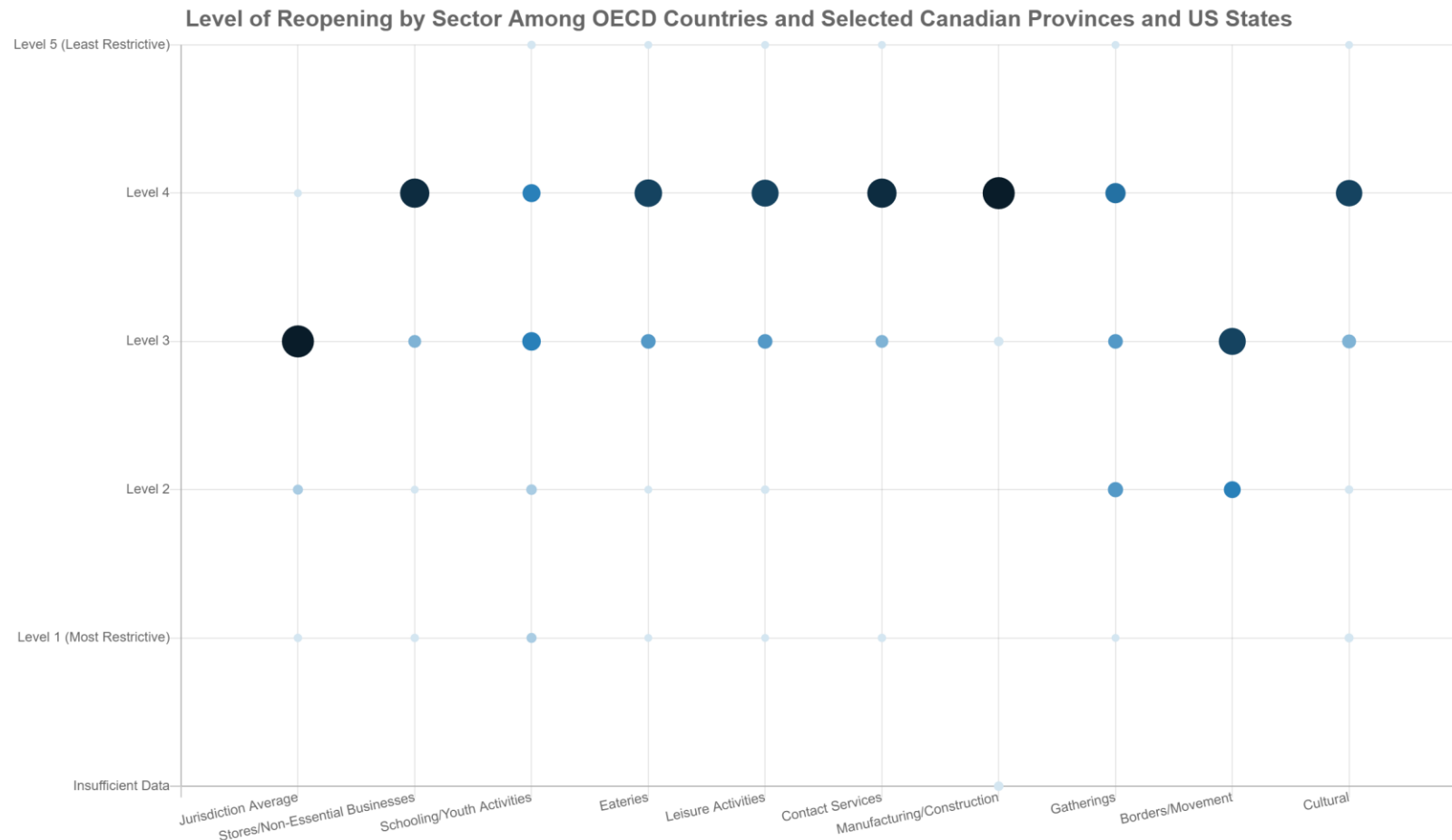


Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 52 different jurisdictions as of July 6. The reopening policies of 52 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses, 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.

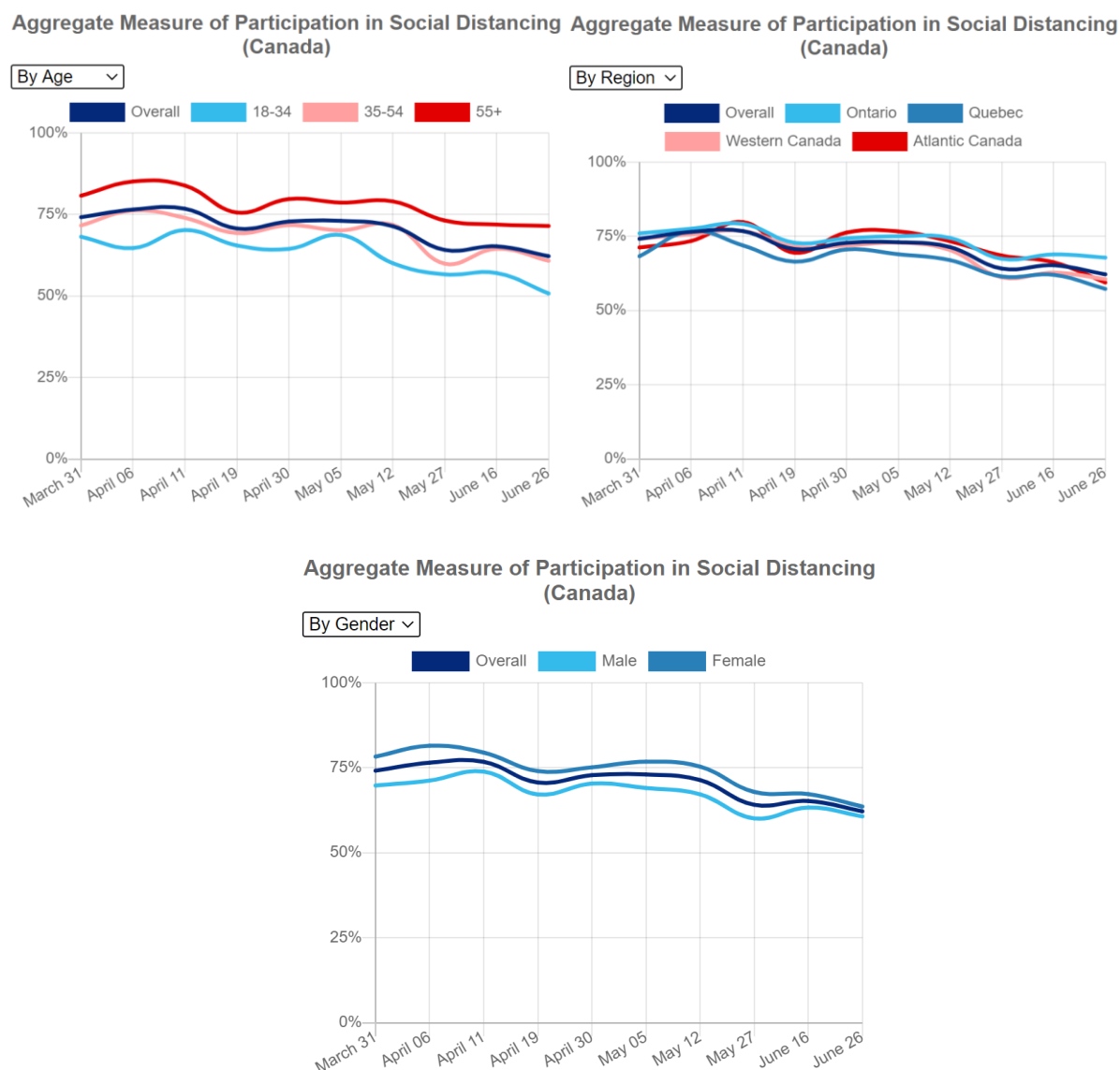


Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada). We asked Canadians whether, as a result of the pandemic, they had taken any of the 6 following actions: avoided crowded places; avoided in-person contact with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintained 2 metre distance 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.

Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada)

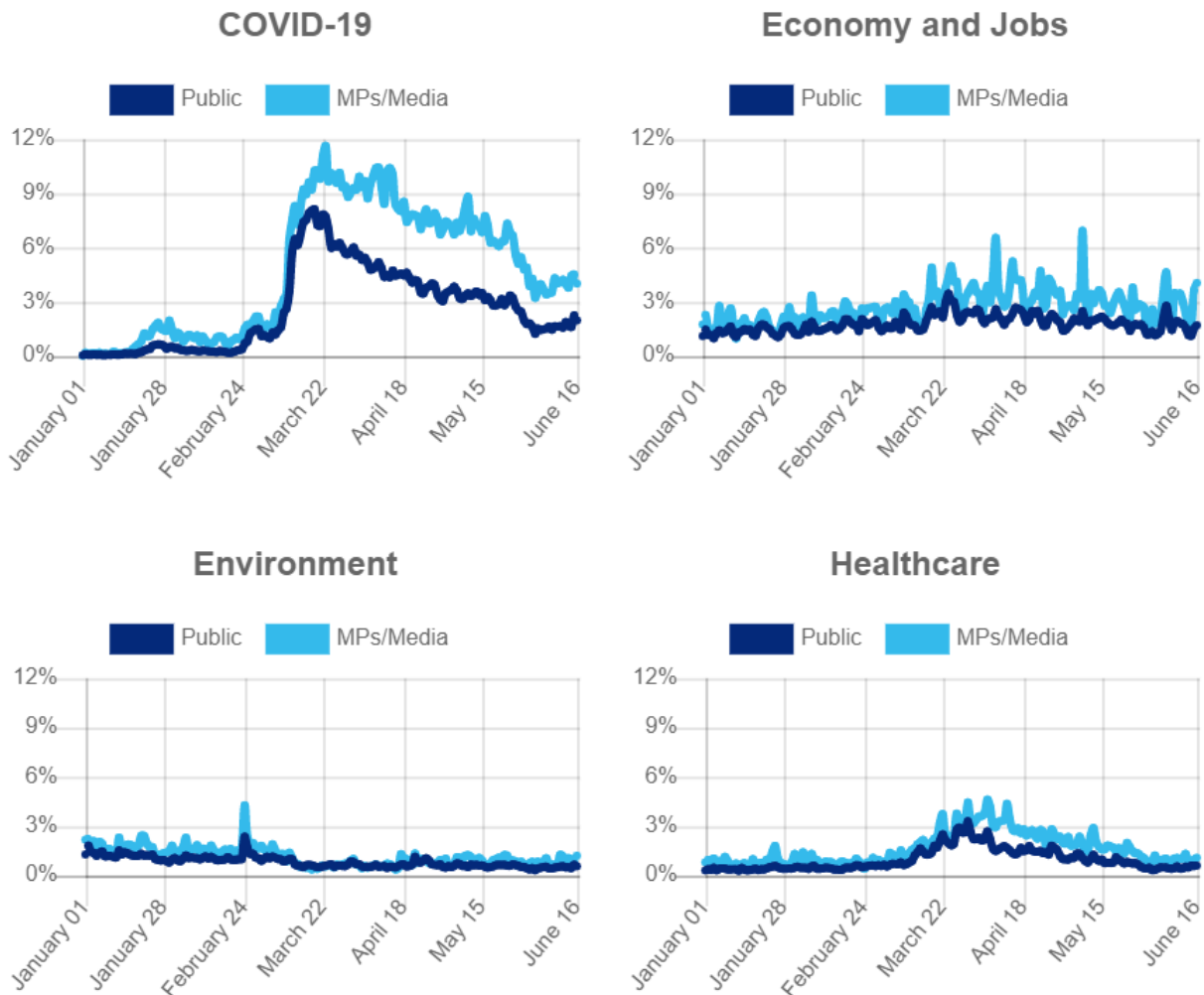


Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada). The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other. 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.

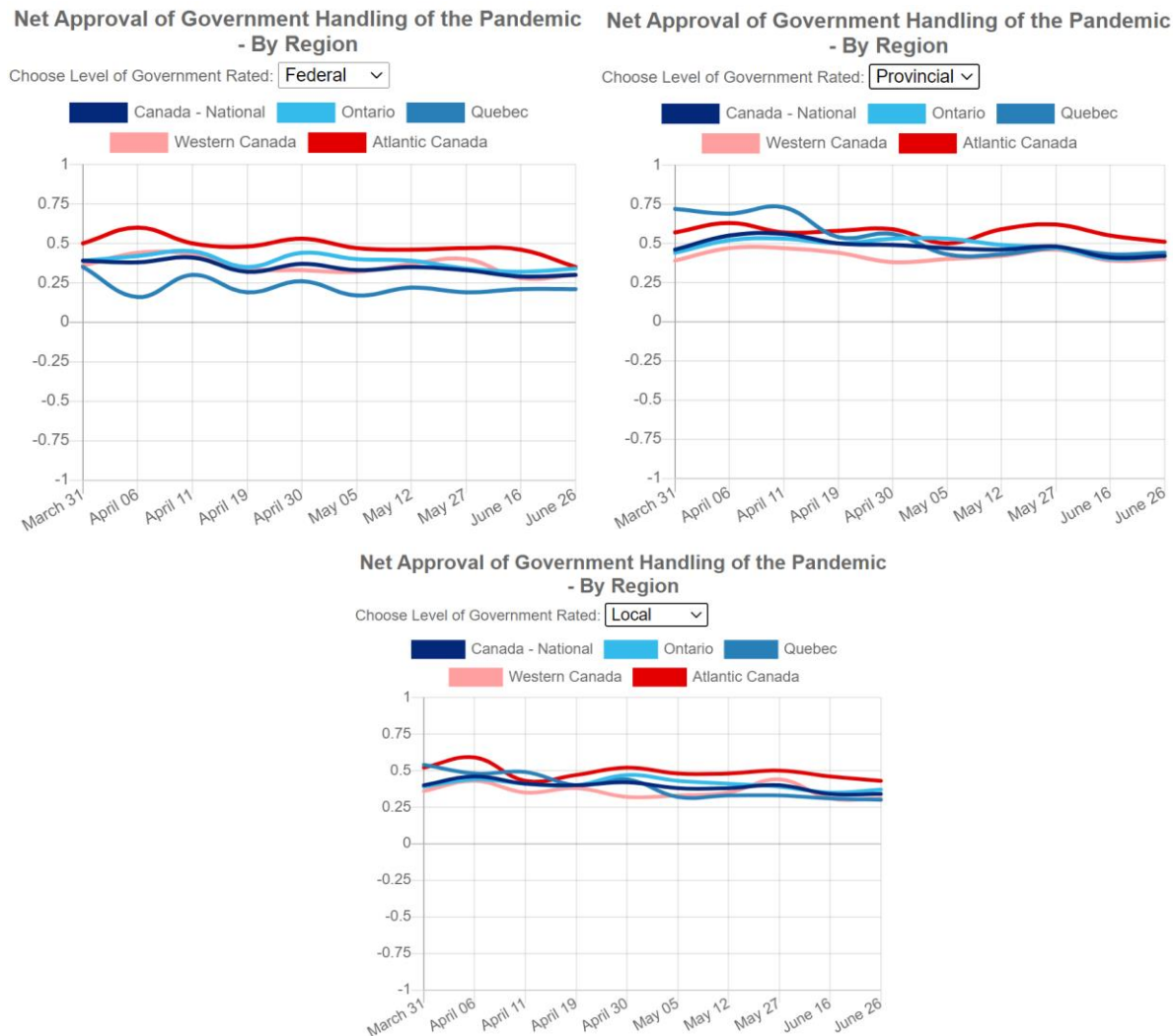


Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region. We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score, 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*

Since June 12, Alberta has remained in Phase 2 of its reopening strategy--with some relaxing of public gathering restrictions and more businesses reopening.¹ Outdoor gathering limits were increased from 100 to 200 people on June 30 for events such as festivals, sporting events, and outdoor performances. Seated events must be arranged to maintain physical distancing and compliance with public health measures. Other outdoor private gatherings, such as weddings or funerals, remain capped at 100 people. Across the province, there is a backlog of cattle waiting to be processed at meatpacking plants due to temporary shutdowns and a reduction in operations due to COVID-19 outbreaks.² A news report from the Tourism Industry of Alberta Association found that between 60% and 70% of small-to-medium sized tourism businesses could close. 72,000 people in the province work in the tourism industry.³ The province's Chief Medical Officer of Health addressed concerns related to the public health risks associated with Edmonton becoming an NHL hub city. Teams that will be in COVID-19 bubbles could regularly come in contact with other teams, but would have little-to-no close contact with anyone outside the bubble. Players would be subject to extensive testing from private labs but the chief medical officer said that free public testing will remain the province's priority.⁴

→ *British Columbia*

British Columbia has continued to report a limited level of new infections for the past few weeks. Health officials declared all community outbreaks over on July 2. The provincial state of emergency is expected to expire on July 7. British Columbia is still at Phase 3 of its reopening plan. Most businesses are open subject to restrictions. Mass gatherings of more than 50 people are still prohibited. People can travel freely within the province in a careful manner. Starting in July, residents at long-term care facilities and seniors' assisted living residences will be able to visit with one designated family member or friend, which may be expanded in the future. The government is working with all the public postsecondary institutions to support their planning for the 2020/2021 academic year.⁵

→ *Manitoba*

Since Manitoba entered phase three of reopening on June 21, no new COVID-19 cases have been discovered as of July 4--with the exception of an individual who was tested positive on June 29 after flying from Winnipeg to Vancouver on June 19. Individuals in the affected rows of the airplane were advised to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop, people are requested to self-isolate and get tested.⁶

→ *New Brunswick*

Starting on July 3, travel within the Atlantic provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador) will be permitted without the requirement to self-isolate for Atlantic Canada residents.⁷ Canadians residing outside of Atlantic Canada must self-isolate for 14 days upon arriving in New Brunswick - unless they have already self-isolated in another Atlantic province, in which case they may enter the province without self-isolating again.⁸ On July 1, Service New Brunswick announced that it would reopen all of its 33 service centres by July 13, while urging residents to continue using online or telephone services where possible.⁹ All zones in New Brunswick remain in the "yellow" level of the province's phased recovery plan.¹⁰ Movement to the "green" level will not occur until a vaccine has become available.¹¹

→ *Newfoundland and Labrador*

Newfoundland and Labrador is at Alert Phase 2. Bars and nightclubs reopened, but dance floors remain prohibited and capacity is restricted. Despite this, overcrowding and dancing continues in many establishments.¹² On July 4, historic sites will reopen with a one-way flow pattern for visitors with designated entry and exit doors where possible. Effective July 3, residents of Atlantic Canada can resume travel within the region without having to self-isolate for 14 days when arriving in another province. Visitors from outside the region will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and, once this period has passed, can travel within the Atlantic region.¹³ Premier Dwight Ball said that if the Atlantic bubble is successful it could be expanded to other provinces on July 17.¹⁴ However, many are concerned about whether the Atlantic bubble is in the best interest of the province. The government is being criticized for planning to allow non-essential travel despite the continued day-to-day restrictions.¹⁵

→ *Northwest Territories*

No active cases remain in the Northwest Territories. The provincial state of emergency and the public health emergency are expected to expire on July 8. Non-residents now have to pay for the cost of their stay at the isolation centre starting July 1.¹⁶ The territorial government has been challenged by business groups and doctors over its slow pace of reopening.¹⁷ The Northwest Territories is now at Phase 2 of its relaxing plan. In most cases, indoor gatherings and events can have a maximum of 25 people, while 50 are allowed at outdoor events (including sporting events). Similar limits apply to businesses and services. Households may have up to 10 people in their house at a time, including family members.¹⁸ The plan for reopening schools in the fall was released on July 3. There are different rules for different age groups since younger students are reported to be less likely to get infected.¹⁹

→ *Nova Scotia*

Starting July 3, travel within the Atlantic provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador) will be permitted without the requirement to self-isolate for Atlantic Canada residents.²⁰ Canadians residing outside of Atlantic Canada must self-isolate for 14 days upon arriving in Nova Scotia, unless they have already self-isolated in another Atlantic province--in which case they may enter Nova Scotia without self-isolating again.²¹ Also on July 3, social events, religious gatherings, weddings, funerals, cultural events, and other mass gatherings will be allowed to take place with up to 250 people outdoors, and up to 50% capacity--or 200 people--for indoor venues.²²

→ *Nunavut*

The territorial government announced that it had its first presumptive case of COVID-19: a person working at the Mary River mine on Baffin Island.²³ The individual is from outside the territory, and all known contacts of the person are now in isolation. No workers at the facility are from Nunavut, and operations at the mine will continue as usual.²⁴ Confirmation of the positive test is expected to arrive this week. Nunavut had previously announced a presumptive case in April, but the test result turned out to be a false positive.²⁵ The government has said that the positive test will not affect the territory's reopening plan, and there is no risk of infection for Nunavut community members.²⁶ The outdoor gathering limit was increased to 50 people on June 29. Some indoor facilities can have up to 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever number is lower.²⁷

→ *Ontario*

Although there was a slight spike in cases due to rigorous testing of migrant workers, Ontario reported fewer than 200 daily cases this past week.²⁸ Outbreaks remain concentrated among long-term care homes, farms, and manufacturing plants.²⁹ Even though Toronto's Humber River Hospital is reporting zero ICU patients with COVID-19 for the first time since mid-March, doctors and nurses are still preparing for an 'inevitable' second wave.³⁰ Ontario was to be the first province to try a contact tracing app, which was due to launch on July 2; however, this date has been pushed back indefinitely.³¹ Many experts say that this app,

which follows the Apple-Google model, could prevent a major second wave because it can identify transmission quicker.³² This week, some school boards began surveying parents for their input on reopening.³³ Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has proposed a model that would have half of the students attending school on Monday and Tuesday; Wednesday would be a day for deep cleaning of schools; and on Thursday and Friday, the other half of the students would return.³⁴

→ *Prince Edward Island*

Prince Edward Island is currently in Phase 4 of their reopening strategy, which is intended as the final phase of reopening.³⁵ The Atlantic bubble came into effect on July 3, allowing residents in the region to travel without quarantine requirements. Visitors to PEI will be required to submit an online declaration form before their departure and undergo health screenings upon arrival. Residents of PEI returning from other provinces in the region will not need to submit a declaration form but will be subject to a health screening.³⁶ A group of restaurants has drafted a formal request to public health officials to ease COVID-19 restrictions to allow for more customers in their establishments. The group wants to see full capacity in its restaurants, and table sizes increased from 6 to 10 guests, similar to that in Nova Scotia.³⁷ The Minister of Education released additional details about the school curriculum in the fall. An in-school model is preferred but plans are in place for at-home learning. Increased cleaning procedures are being planned for school rooms and buses. Students will likely work in small cohorts with screening protocols for people entering the school to be outlined later on. The government continues to develop an operational plan that will acknowledge the need to hire more teachers, cleaning staff, and bus drivers to ensure compliance with the new social distancing and sanitary measures.³⁸

→ *Quebec*

As of July 13, Quebecers will have to wear masks on public transit.³⁹ Places of worship and amusement parks reopened across Quebec on June 30.⁴⁰ Restaurants in Montreal were permitted to reopen the week of June 22, and since then there have been complaints about restaurant failures to abide by new health regulations.⁴¹ On July 3, eight Cineplex locations reopened in Quebec with sanitation measures.⁴² The Quebec Tourism Department explained that police will be responsible for enforcing public safety and COVID-19 rules, but to manage tourism, additional security and no-parking signs will be used.⁴³ The reopening of casinos is staggered between mid-July and early August, and will include precautions such as rubber tipped pens, masks, reduced hours, increased cleaning, and closed bars and showrooms.⁴⁴ On June 30, the Quebec government said that in September all schools would resume in person at normal capacity for elementary and high school students. Subgroups of students will be created to promote social distancing.⁴⁵ The government encourages CEGEPs and universities to resume in person. The education ministry is preparing a plan for a possible second wave.⁴⁶ Some parents whose children previously returned to elementary schools outside of Montreal reported positive experiences of increased social distancing, sanitation mechanisms, and rules that closed gyms and cafeterias.⁴⁷

→ *Saskatchewan*

The provincial government announced that the 50% capacity restriction on restaurants will be lifted on July 6, but physical distancing must be maintained. Health officials and business owners expressed confidence in the cancellation of the capacity limit.⁴⁸ Indoor athletic and performing arts activities may also resume on July 6, while racetracks and rodeo-related activities can resume on July 16.⁴⁹ Contact sports like hockey and football were permitted on June 29, but travelling for competitions and the number of participants at each game must be limited.⁵⁰ Visits to long-term care facilities will be expanded on July 7, allowing more people to serve as support persons for critical and end-of-life care.⁵¹ A heated debate between the opposition NDP and the governing Saskatchewan Party broke out during Question Period on July 2, after the opposition criticized the government for reducing the province's inventory of a variety of health supplies

in 2014.⁵² The health minister responded by saying that it sounded like the NDP were disappointed that the pandemic did not hit Saskatchewan harder than it has.⁵³

→ *Yukon*

No active cases remain in Yukon. The Yukon border will reopen on July 1 to residents of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and B.C. travelling directly from those jurisdictions--without the need to self-isolate. Other Canadians can also enter Yukon if they self-isolate for 14 days upon arriving. Wearing masks or a face covering will be required when entering the airport.⁵⁴ Yukon entered Phase 2 of its reopening plan on July 1 and was expected to remain in this phase for 2 to 4 weeks. Outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people are now permitted. Restaurants and bars can operate at full capacity if following physical distancing. Personal services can reopen. Some public libraries are reintroducing services in a limited capacity. Farmers markets are allowed to host non-food vendors. Public pools must submit an operational plan and receive approval before opening to the public.⁵⁵

The United States

→ *California*

A majority of the positive results in Sacramento are among individuals between 18 and 49 years old.⁵⁶ California is rolling back some reopening policies. In response to an increase in daily new cases, Governor Newsom ordered dine-in restaurants in 19 counties to return to outdoor service or to close; he imposed additional restrictions on cinemas, bowling alleys, game rooms and warehouses.⁵⁷ Bars were closed on June 28. Before the long weekend, Los Angeles canceled fireworks, closed beaches and closed beach parking in Southern California and the Bay area.⁵⁸ California is in phase 2 of its reopening plan which allows stores, offices, outdoor museums and child care to reopen with limitations.⁵⁹ After the June 18 decision to make masks mandatory, some police forces in the Sacramento area said that they would not be enforcing the rule.⁶⁰

→ *Illinois*

On June 26 Illinois entered its fourth phase of reopening. The state reported its lowest death rates since March.⁶¹ After one week of advancing to phase four, all counties in the state, including Chicago, are below the targets of having less than 50 per 100,000 new cases per week and a daily test positivity rate of less than or equal to 10%.⁶² Chicago has issued an emergency order requiring travellers who have been to states experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases to self-isolate for two weeks upon return to the city. In this phase of the reopening plan, movie theaters, zoos, museums and health and fitness centers can reopen with limited capacity (ranging from 25% to 50%).⁶³ Most notably, indoor gatherings of up to 50 people will be permitted, and restaurants will be able to offer indoor dining.⁶⁴ Schools and child care programs with social distancing policies in place (maximum 15 children per group) can also reopen, and hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans can return to work in offices at 50% capacity.⁶⁵

→ *Michigan*

Although the state reported zero deaths on July 5 for the first time since March 20, the 7-day average of positive cases jumped from 290 to 373 last week.⁶⁶ This prompted Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to announce that the state will not advance to the fifth phase of the state's reopening plan by the Fourth of July weekend, as she had originally planned.⁶⁷ Phase five would expand indoor dining services, permit larger gatherings, and open more businesses.⁶⁸

→ *New York*

This week, the number of active cases began to decrease. The test positivity rate averaged at below 1%.⁶⁹ While the rest of the state is well into phase 4, New York City is entering Phase 3 of its reopening plan on July 6.⁷⁰ In this phase, tattoo parlors, nail salons and other contact services can reopen, but indoor dining is still off-limits.⁷¹ Since face masks should be worn at all times, personal care services that require customers to remove face coverings, like facial waxing or piercings, are prohibited. Businesses that cannot accommodate physical distancing will be tasked with requiring employees to get tested for COVID-19 every 14 days, in addition to health screenings like symptom questionnaires or temperature checks.⁷² New York City's public libraries will begin reopening on July 13.⁷³

→ *Texas*

The Austin area set a record for the number of daily new cases. Austin's mayor is now considering a stay-at-home order. The local health authority recommended mandatory mask wearing for one year.⁷⁴ As of July 1, more than 300 children and 600 staff in child care facilities have been tested positive for COVID-19 and the number continues increasing.⁷⁵ Masks are now required in Texas.⁷⁶ On June 26, Texas closed its bars in response to increasing cases in cities.⁷⁷ Businesses are protesting the closure of bars. Additional federal funding will support Texas hospitals and patients with Medicaid.⁷⁸ Local officials are concerned over potentially overwhelming hospitalizations in major Texas cities.⁷⁹

Mexico

On June 30, Mexico surpassed Spain's death toll.⁸⁰ As of July 2, Mexico had the sixth highest COVID-19 death toll in the world and was the 11th highest for the number of cases.⁸¹ Domestically, 45% of hospital beds reserved for COVID-19 patients have been occupied and 40% of those patients need a ventilator.⁸² On June 30, public health officials reported that the pandemic was peaking in Mexico with large daily infection and hospitalization rates.⁸³ On June 30, Mexico received 100 ventilators from China.⁸⁴ For the week of June 29, 11 states remained in red, which suggests a maximum infection risk; 18 states entered high risk, which is orange; and four states regressed from orange to red. For the week of July 6, five states regressed from orange to red and four proceeded to orange.⁸⁵ Cumulatively, most of Mexico was at the orange risk level.⁸⁶ Orange allows restrictions to be eased for gyms, pools, churches, restaurants, cafes, hotels, theaters, museums, markets and appointment-based barber and beauty salon visits.⁸⁷ Although Mexico City has the most active cases, it entered orange during the week of June 29 because their number of hospitalizations is declining.⁸⁸ In Mexico City, restaurants, maids and sports center staff resumed work, but cinemas, theaters, bars, clubs, museums, casinos and gyms will remain closed.⁸⁹ The government cautions people to stay home and wear masks and has warned that if hospitalizations increase to 65% again, Mexico City will return to red in terms of reopening. A University of California professor criticized Mexico's performance with respect to testing, contact tracing and social distancing.⁹⁰ On June 30, Johns Hopkins researchers said that it did not appear that the virus had peaked yet in Mexico.⁹¹

Chile

On June 30, Chile reported over 3,300 new cases in one day--with 389 people in critical condition and 293 ventilators still available.⁹² As of June 30, Chile had conducted 1,109,792 PCR tests.⁹³ Chile is beginning to see a decline in its COVID-19 positivity rate.⁹⁴ On June 26, additional municipalities entered quarantine. Cordons sanitaires were enforced for the June 27 long weekend in some areas.⁹⁵ Requests for temporary permits to leave home during quarantine have decreased.⁹⁶ On June 26, Chile received 82 new ventilators and PPE was sent to laboratories that assess PCR tests.⁹⁷ The Ministry of Health is introducing a new platform to improve contact tracing capabilities and data collection for health care professionals.⁹⁸ The Chilean government is funding 63 research projects on COVID-19 and its impact on social structures like education and work.⁹⁹ The government will also support engineering technology projects for AI and prediction.¹⁰⁰ On July 1, middle school students in Rapa Nui (Easter Island) returned in person; on July 8

basic education will resume and on July 15 kindergarten will resume.¹⁰¹ The number of people detained for violating curfew saw a small decrease.¹⁰²

WESTERN EUROPE

France

With almost all businesses now reopened, the number of active cases is still increasing in France, now standing at 60,007.¹⁰³ On July 6, the Louvre Museum reopened after a 16-week shutdown, with visitor numbers capped at 500 per half-hour--along with a compulsory face mask rule.¹⁰⁴ The French Open has been confirmed to start on September 27, with 40% fewer spectators than usual.¹⁰⁵ Prime Minister Edouard Philippe resigned on July 3. President Emmanuel Macron named the less well-known Jean Castex, who coordinated France's COVID reopening strategy, as the country's new prime minister.¹⁰⁶ France's gradual reopening plan has been seen as generally successful so far by the public.

Germany

After containing an outbreak in the North Rhine-Westphalia region, Germany's reproduction rate of COVID-19 decreased to 0.96 over the past week as a 7-day average.¹⁰⁷ The localized lockdown in the region is still in place.¹⁰⁸ To motivate mask-wearing, Chancellor Angela Merkel and other officials are pointing to the US and the UK as examples of the risks and consequences of lax hygiene practices.¹⁰⁹ The country's official app for tracking cases has been downloaded by 15 million people (around 18% of the population), more than any other European country.¹¹⁰ A recent poll showed that around half of Germans are fearful of a second wave, but more people think climate change is a bigger issue for Germany's EU presidency run than the pandemic.¹¹¹ Additionally, German military sniffer dogs are being trained to detect COVID-19 in human saliva by the Bundeswehr and the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.¹¹²

Belgium

On July 1, Phase 4 of Belgium's unlocking strategy came into effect. Contact bubbles have been extended to 15 people and public gatherings are allowed to have a maximum of 200 participants indoors or 400 outdoors. This number is expected to double on August 1.¹¹³ The curfew on restaurants and bars has been extended from 11:00 pm to 1:00 am. Cinemas and theatres can reopen. Also, swimming pools, wellness centres, and amusement parks can reopen. Nightclubs remain closed and are unlikely to reopen until the end of August.¹¹⁴ Despite the EU Council's recommendation to begin lifting travel restrictions for the 15 countries whose citizens would be allowed to make non-essential trips to the EU on July 1, Belgium will not reopen its borders before July 7.¹¹⁵ People who were in close contact with a COVID-19 patient can now request a second test to shorten their mandatory 14-day quarantine to 10 days. If borders reopen on July 7, it is uncertain whether Belgium will follow the EU Council's recommendations.¹¹⁶

Netherlands

On July 1, the Netherlands entered its normalization phase with new rules. These rules were previously set to take effect on September 1, indicating an early success in restraining the spread of the virus. The 1.5m distancing rule no longer applies on public transport. Seating next to each other in coaches is permitted. Non-family groups may now travel in the same car as long as everyone wears a mask. Outdoor events no longer have a limit, as long as social distancing is observed and people are seated. However, indoor events are capped at 100 people, excluding staff; seating is compulsory. Stadiums reopened for events with people are required to maintain physical distancing and avoid singing or chanting. Secondary schools are now able

to provide lessons as normal; students are no longer required to keep a distance from each other, but must still keep a 1.5m distance from the teachers. Cafe terraces no longer need to adhere to the 1.5m rule between tables if protective screens are installed. Sex workers can resume work. Sport schools and gyms are allowed to hold competitive matches.¹¹⁷ Cross-border travel for Netherlands residents is allowed throughout the entire Schengen Area, with the exception of the UK and Sweden (which still remain at 'Code Orange' as of June 30, along with all travel outside of Europe).¹¹⁸ On July 3, the UK unveiled a list of quarantine-exempted countries, which includes the Netherlands: travelers from these countries are permitted to enter England without the need to quarantine on arrival.¹¹⁹

Spain

A county in Galicia was placed under lockdown for fear of a COVID-19 outbreak.¹²⁰ On July 3, Madrid declared another outbreak.¹²¹ On July 1, the Spanish-Portuguese border reopened.¹²² Although approved by the EU Council, Spain will not admit Chinese and Moroccan tourists until the countries open their borders to Spanish visitors.¹²³ Spain opened their borders to 13 countries outside the EU and Schengen region, including Canada.¹²⁴ Spain expanded their list of exempt travellers.¹²⁵ As of July 1, Spain eliminated travel restrictions and quarantines for people from the EU, the Schengen area, Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, and the Vatican, but did require passenger location cards and temperature checks.¹²⁶ UK travellers will need to submit a health declaration and will be given a QR code upon arrival to allow the government to trace visitors during their stay.¹²⁷ Spain reopened non-essential businesses, eateries, bars, hotels and personal care facilities with appointments when people wear masks.¹²⁸ Radar Covid, Spain's COVID-19 contact tracing app is being tested in three phases in the Canary Islands; phase 1 will conduct promotion and training, phase 2 will simulate outbreaks in three waves on July 10, 13 and 17, and phase 3 on July 20 will analyze downloads, the number of positive cases and the number of users.¹²⁹ Madrid's progression to new normality will be in two phases; during the week of July 1, Madrid was in phase 1 and on July 6 it enters phase 2, which is the new normality. The new normality includes: wearing face masks until there is a vaccine; regulations for workplaces, hotels and stores; and requiring regional governments to remain prepared with PCR testing, ICU facilities, and isolation facilities to accommodate spikes in cases.¹³⁰

The United Kingdom

The UK's COVID warning rating was downgraded on July 3 from four to three. Under this stage, the virus is now known as "generally circulating" and therefore calls for a "gradual easing in controls" to further relieve the lockdown.¹³¹ On July 4, gradual lifting of lockdown restrictions in England began. Pubs and restaurants can open for indoor dining. Libraries, cinemas and museums can reopen, along with spas and hair/nail salons.¹³² Tattoo parlors and gyms remain closed. Gatherings of up to 30 people will be allowed anywhere in England, except Leicester which is in lockdown after an outbreak was detected last week.¹³³ Religious ceremonies may resume. Physical distancing rules have been halved to 1m between people. Scientists are worried that the government is reopening the economy too fast and that a track-and-trace system meant to quickly stamp out any outbreaks is not fully functional.¹³⁴ However, the four nations of the U.K. are moving at different speeds in terms of reopening.¹³⁵ The restrictions in England, with a population of around 56 million, have been mostly lifted, triggering concerns that Prime Minister Boris Johnson is being unduly influenced by a desire to kickstart Britain's ailing economy.¹³⁶ The UK began lifting the 14-day quarantine requirement for travelers visiting from 73 countries. Canada is not on the quarantine-free list, even though its cumulative cases per capita is lower than some of the other countries on the list.¹³⁷

Ireland

Ireland entered phase three of its deconfinement strategy on June 29, which included allowing travel anywhere within the country. Adult education centers, creches, childminding facilities, pre-schools, summer camps, youth clubs and all indoor and outdoor amenities for children reopened, with the provision of services to be carried out under strict physical distancing measures. Several retail stores reopened, including wellbeing services. Bookies, pubs and hotel bars operating as restaurants reopened at full capacity, along with hotels, hostels, caravan parks and holiday parks. Religious and cultural venues such as cinemas and music venues (but not nightclubs) reopened. Indoor gatherings are only permitted up to 50 people; outdoor gatherings are capped at 200 people. Sport related activities resumed, including team leagues for adults and children. Gyms, exercise facilities and public swimming pools were also given a go-ahead to open up again.¹³⁸ Public transport capacity remains restricted; face coverings are compulsory if travelling by bus, taxi or train.¹³⁹ In terms of international travel, all passengers arriving from outside Ireland are expected to self-isolate for 14 days and complete a passenger locator form. Ireland is not part of the EU deal that permits travel from 15 countries effective July 1.¹⁴⁰ On July 3, the UK also excluded Ireland from its list of 59 countries from which travelers are no longer required to quarantine upon arrival in the UK effective July 10.¹⁴¹

Luxembourg

Elementary and secondary schools reopened on June 29 in Luxembourg, with classes resuming in the pre-COVID-19 format. School canteens remain closed. Pupil groups are separated at break time. Schools are following a 8am-1pm timetable. Staff and pupils are organized into groups of 5 for COVID testing, with one person in each group tested each week. However, following the reopening of schools, a number of secondary school pupils have been quarantined after coming into contact with infected individuals at 4 different secondary schools.¹⁴² After a downward trend in the past weeks, COVID-19 cases started increasing a week ago after an infected person passed the virus to fellow party-goers who attended a large social gathering on 12 June.¹⁴³ Although parliament voted to lift restrictions on private gatherings this week – such as wearing masks and physical distancing – the health ministry reiterated its advice against people meeting in large groups. Fearing the possibility of a second wave, the government is considering imposing restrictions on gatherings in the coming weeks.¹⁴⁴ On July 3, the UK unveiled a list of quarantine-exempted countries, which included Luxembourg. Travellers from countries on the list are permitted to enter England without the need to quarantine on arrival, effective July 10.¹⁴⁵

Portugal

On July 1, the majority of mainland Portugal went into alert due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (AML) entered the contingency state; 19 parishes in five municipalities within the AML remained at the calamity state. The restrictions imposed in mainland Portugal include strict observation of social distancing rules. Gatherings are limited to 20 people. However, within the AML, gatherings are limited to 10 people; most commercial establishments are required to close by 8pm and hypermarkets and supermarkets are required to close by 10pm. However, there is no closing time requirement for fuel supply services, pharmacies, offices and clinics. The five municipalities in the state of calamity have stricter restrictions: gatherings are limited to 5 people and fairs and markets remain closed. People are also allowed to leave only for the purposes of work, shopping, playing sports or providing assistance to family members.¹⁴⁶ Despite the situation in Portugal, Spain reopened its borders with Portugal, both by land and air on July 1, with no swab test to be performed at the border.¹⁴⁷ Portugal allows flights to and from its territory to countries of the Schengen Zone, the EU and the UK, effective July 3. However,

travellers from Portuguese-speaking countries and the US are required to present proof of a negative COVID-19 test at the time of departure.¹⁴⁸

CENTRAL EUROPE

Austria

The Austrian government has loosened several restrictions related to restaurants and physical distancing. Waiters are no longer required to wear face masks in restaurants and people no longer have to stay a metre apart while playing a sport. Austria has allowed brothels to resume service as of July 1.¹⁵⁰ Austria has issued its highest level of travel warning for the western Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo) after a spike in cases. The warning will affect all travel to the region and the government recommends Austrians return from these countries immediately. Citizens returning from the region are subject to a 14-day quarantine or must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test. The UK, Portugal, Sweden, and Turkey are also subject to the highest warning level.¹⁵¹ After COVID-19 forced the postponement of the Formula One racing schedule, two races resumed in Austria on July 5. The races are being run under strict health and safety conditions and teams will be operating in bubbles and isolating from one another. Face masks and PPE are required for teams and no spectators will be present at the races.¹⁵²

Greece

Effective July 1, international flights can now arrive at any airport in Greece from other EU member countries and a select group of non-EU countries. However, direct flights from Sweden, Turkey, Russia, and the UK are banned until July 15. Previously, regional airports were not open to international flights. International ports are also open to tourists. Greece will renew the list of countries whose citizens can enter based on guidelines from the EU every two weeks.¹⁵³ In order to enter the country, all travellers must fill out a Passenger Locator Form (PLF) 48 hours before departure--explaining where they came from and where they will be staying on arrival. Also, travellers are subject to random testing upon entry into Greece.¹⁵⁴ Greece reopened 7 of their 14 border crossings on July 1, and government authorities reopened a number of highways which bring Balkan tourists to northern parts of the country.¹⁵⁵

Italy

While most EU member countries have agreed to reopen their external borders to visitors, Italy will be keeping its travel ban in place for tourists outside of the EU and Schengen Area. The decision stems from the government's concern that reopening external borders could lead to another outbreak. Also, there is concern about non-EU travellers arriving in Italy through other Schengen countries, which is possible due to the freedom of movement rules in place. To combat this, the government is considering implementing police checks other than those at the borders, such as in hotels. The government has not given any indication of how long it expects the travel ban to remain in place.¹⁵⁶ The government sent soldiers to a coastal town near Naples to restore order after an outbreak occurred at an overcrowded apartment complex illegally occupied by migrant workers. The entire town may be quarantined after 40 people tested positive, with plans to test 3,000 people living around the occupied buildings.¹⁵⁷

Slovenia

Croatia, France, and Czechia are no longer listed as COVID-19 safe countries based on new assessments by the Slovenian government. Citizens from these countries arriving in Slovenia must go into quarantine for 14 days but Slovenians returning from these countries are not required to.¹⁵⁸ The municipality of

Moravče, north-east of Slovenia's capital, has been in lockdown since July 2 after three cases were confirmed. The mayor has banned all public gatherings, made face masks mandatory, and placed strict measures on eateries in order to stop the spread.¹⁵⁹ Despite an investigation into alleged wrongdoing in the procurement of medical supplies and PPE, the economy minister does not intend to resign.¹⁶⁰ The prime minister sent a letter to the state prosecutor saying it is neglecting its legal role with respect to anti-government protests. The letter has been met with strong criticism, especially from the opposition, who cite it as another attack on independent institutions and an encroachment on the legislative branch of power. As a result, the opposition plans to initiate an impeachment motion against the prime minister.¹⁶¹

Switzerland

On July 6, the limit on public gatherings will be expanded to 1,000 people, with plans to reevaluate on August 31.¹⁶² Effective July 6, everyone over the age of 12 will be required to wear masks on Swiss public transport. Until now, it was recommended but compliance was poor. Those refusing to wear a mask will now be fined. Beginning July 6, travellers entering Switzerland from a list of 29 countries must self-isolate for 10 days. This list will be updated regularly and travellers entering from these countries must register with the Federal Office of Public Health. This list includes the US, Sweden, and Serbia. Quarantine requirements for people entering Switzerland from regions at high risk of the virus has changed in response to rising numbers of infections and demands from the cantons. While the government acknowledged the EU Council's recommendation to lift external border restrictions to third-country residents on July 1, Switzerland will keep its current entry ban in place until July 20.¹⁶³ Despite rising infection numbers, the borders with Italy, Germany, France, and Austria remain open.¹⁶⁴

EASTERN EUROPE

Czech Republic

Despite experiencing a large spike in COVID-19 infections last week, the Czech government has continued easing restrictions related to the virus.¹⁶⁵ Effective July 1, Czech residents are no longer required to wear a mask in public places, and all catering establishments can now accept customers between the hours of 11pm and 6am.¹⁶⁶ Also starting July 1, mass gatherings - including various artistic performances, sporting events, religious services, and weddings - may take place with up to 1000 participants in both indoor and outdoor settings.¹⁶⁷ As many as 305 cases of COVID-19 were reported on June 28, the country's highest single-day increase since its peak of 381 cases on April 4.¹⁶⁸

Hungary

The Hungarian government has continued easing restrictions related to COVID-19 this week, after reopening all land-border crossings between Hungary and Ukraine on June 25.¹⁶⁹ On July 2, Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that - following a proposal from the EU that member states reopen their borders to 14 non-European countries - Hungary's borders will remain closed to all non-EU citizens, with the exception of Serbia.¹⁷⁰

Latvia

On June 30, Latvia's cabinet decided to partially reduce certain measures restricting the spread of COVID-19--given the country's favourable epidemiological situation with respect to the virus.¹⁷¹ Effective July 1, the use of face coverings on public transport is no longer mandatory, but is still strongly recommended.¹⁷²

Up to 100 people may gather in indoor premises with an area less than 1000m², up to 500 people in larger premises, and up to 1000 people outdoors.¹⁷³ In order to increase testing rates and detect potential outbreaks in a timely manner, all Latvian citizens and permanent residents have the opportunity to be tested for COVID-19 for free at given times throughout the week.¹⁷⁴

Lithuania

As of June 30, EU+ citizens and permanent residents can travel to Lithuania from 29 European countries without restrictions, including the United Kingdom, France, and Spain. Travellers from Sweden and Portugal remain prohibited from entering Lithuania until the incidence of COVID-19 in those countries has fallen below 25 cases per 100,000 people in the past 14 days.¹⁷⁵

Poland

Effective July 1, Polish airlines are permitted to operate at full capacity and assign 1 passenger per seat.¹⁷⁶ The second round of Poland's presidential election is set to take place on July 12 through mail-in voting. Incumbent president Andrzej Duda is expected to win after achieving 42% of the vote in the first round.

Slovakia

Following the end of its nationwide state of emergency on June 13, the Slovak government has continued easing restrictions related to COVID-19. Effective July 1, events over 1000 people are permitted and sports stadiums can hold events at 50% capacity.¹⁷⁷

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark

After the EU offered a list of 15 countries that the continental bloc considered safe for entry into the Schengen Area, Denmark said that they would allow non-essential entry to only six of them: Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and Thailand.¹⁷⁸ While the government said the other countries on the EU's list were not safe enough for entry into Denmark, the government did not reveal why. Travellers from permitted countries will likely have to quarantine for two weeks on arrival, as Danish travellers are required to do the same in those countries.¹⁷⁹ The Danish government is still strongly recommending against travelling to these countries unless necessary.¹⁸⁰ The final month of the Danish Superliga season will be played in front of up to 10,500 fans, depending on stadium capacity. After three successful test matches with 3,000 fans, the government decided that there is minimal risk of infection and up to 500 fans will be allowed in each section of a team's stadium--as long as physical distancing is maintained.¹⁸¹ However, a recent match had to be stopped for nearly 20 minutes after fans of both clubs refused to abide by the physical distancing rules; 50 fans were expelled from the stadium.¹⁸²

Estonia

Estonia dramatically loosened its gathering limits on July 1, allowing up to 1000 people to gather outdoors, and up to 500 people indoors (or at 50% capacity, whichever is lower).¹⁸³ Croatia and the Czech Republic were added to the list of EU countries where travellers from them must self-isolate on arrival in Estonia.¹⁸⁴ The government will allow unrestricted travel between all the third countries deemed safe by the EU, and will not require travellers to quarantine on arrival. Estonia is not requiring reciprocity from those governments, but negotiations are ongoing with each of them in an attempt to secure unrestricted travel for

Estonians.¹⁸⁵ Estonia will no longer be checking in on people who are expected to self-isolate when they enter the country. Travellers found to be violating the rules may be fined, but the government said that this measure was a last resort.¹⁸⁶ Third country nationals coming to Estonia to work or study will be allowed to enter the country.¹⁸⁷ Employers must arrange transport, testing and accommodation for their employees, and there is a mandatory two-week quarantine for all those coming from countries where the infection rate is greater than 16 new cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks. In contrast to other travellers, seasonal workers will be checked on by the state to ensure they are following quarantine protocols.¹⁸⁸ Another prominent member of Estonia's Health Board has resigned this week after detailing a fraught relationship with the government. However, the Minister of Social Affairs said the government preferred that he stay in office--in contrast to the outgoing Chief of the Health Board.¹⁸⁹

Finland

Outdoor gatherings of more than 500 people are now permitted in Finland, though physical distancing requirements remain. Indoor events can have no more than 500 people, with the restriction expected to be lifted on August 1.¹⁹⁰ The country's top soccer league resumed play on July 1, with rules for fans similar to those in Denmark. A varying number of fans will be let into each stadium, depending on capacity, and will be required to maintain physical distancing.¹⁹¹ The Minister of the Interior said that, for Finland to even consider lifting border controls on Swedish residents, Sweden's infection rate would need to drop to the level seen in other Nordic countries. Finland is considering harsh restrictions on regions near the Swedish border due to recent outbreaks connected to cross-border travel.¹⁹² The President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, said that border controls on Sweden are not aimed at Swedes, but are meant to protect Finland against COVID-19. Niinistö told Swedish reporters that he did not anticipate any long-term impact on relations with Sweden, while some Swedish government officials disagreed.¹⁹³

Iceland

A new outbreak in Iceland is connected to an Icelandic woman who flew from the US, tested negative at the border, and then tested positive eight days later after coming into close contact with numerous people.¹⁹⁴ As a result, the Chief Epidemiologist said that a planned expansion of the gathering limit to 2000 people from 500 on July 13 would likely be delayed.¹⁹⁵ The Chief Epidemiologist also recommended that all travellers to Iceland undergo two tests, once at the border on arrival, followed by a four or five day quarantine and then another test to prevent false negatives. The Minister of Health will make the final decision on any policy changes, and it is unclear whether she will accept the recommendation.¹⁹⁶ No transmissions have been identified related to the woman arriving from the US, after fears that a party she attended might have become a new outbreak.¹⁹⁷ Arriving passengers began to be charged for their PCR tests at the border on July 1, after the government paid for all tests for the first two weeks after borders opened. The test will cost each traveller between \$65 and \$80 USD, much less than originally planned.¹⁹⁸

Norway

Despite the EU's release of safe third countries, Norway continues to ban travel from non-EU/EEA countries until at least August 20. It is unclear whether the changes announced by the EU will alter Norway's timeline; the continental bloc left it up to each Schengen Area country to implement the changes they see fit.¹⁹⁹ A German family was deported after they were found entering the country illegally.²⁰⁰ Norway is currently only open to tourists from Denmark, Iceland and Finland. The country is set to open to some Schengen Area countries on July 15, and will publish the list of safe countries on July 10.²⁰¹ Several staff and students at a school outside Oslo have tested positive for COVID-19 in the country's worst outbreak since lockdown was lifted. All those affected and their contacts are now self-isolating.²⁰² Norway's top public health official was reportedly informed of the Minister of Health's decision to close schools in

March only one hour before the announcement.²⁰³ The closures went against the recommendations of her agency. A number of other top officials were also uninformed and were left scrambling to update their policies following the announcement.²⁰⁴

Sweden

Restaurants, bars, and cafes in Sweden must now guarantee that each group of patrons has at least one metre of distance between themselves and adjacent groups.²⁰⁵ Members of the same group from different households should also have at least an arm's length between them. The new restriction comes as local councils have taken over enforcement of restrictions against overcrowding at eateries, empowering them to issue shutdown orders.²⁰⁶ Sweden will exempt all countries on the EU's safe third country list from its ban on entry by travellers from non-EU/EEA countries, which was recently extended to August 31.²⁰⁷ A law that granted the Swedish government emergency powers expired on June 30 without ever being used.²⁰⁸ State epidemiologist Anders Tegnell has fought back against the WHO's assessment of Sweden as a country that is at 'special risk' of COVID-19, saying that it was a 'total misinterpretation' of Swedish case numbers and testing figures. The WHO's European branch later acknowledged that Sweden had made progress, but said that the infection rate remained very high.²⁰⁹

ASIA/PACIFIC

Japan

Japan has experienced a steady increase in new infections since the end of June. Tokyo has reported more than 100 new cases per day for 4 consecutive days starting July 2, with residents asked to be careful and refrain from travelling to other prefectures. Despite the worrisome resurgence, the government is not considering reintroducing a state of emergency. More efficient testing equipment has been approved to supplement the existing testing regime.²¹⁰ The supply of masks has doubled in Japan since February, due to a combination of resumed imports and increased domestic production. Antibody testing was conducted in three prefectures at the beginning of June and the results suggested that the actual infection rate of the sample was lower than 0.2%.²¹¹ Most businesses and services have resumed under physical distancing and hygiene rules. Japan and Vietnam have reached an agreement to mutually ease entry restrictions in stages. The first border crossings between the two countries were permitted on June 25.²¹²

South Korea

South Korea's daily new infections have stayed above 60 for the past few days and the number of new cases outside the Seoul Metropolitan Region continues to grow. 522 schools, or 2.5% of all schools nationwide (except for postsecondary institutions), have been closed as of July 2 due to outbreaks.²¹³ The ninth edition of the COVID-19 response guidelines went into effect on June 25, adding the symptom-based isolation release criteria. Asymptomatic patients will be released from quarantine if they show no symptoms for 10 days after having tested positive.²¹⁴ A mandatory entry log system using QR codes was formally launched on July 1 at some 80,000 high-risk venues such as entertainment facilities. Owing to a recent outbreak related to a Russian ship, entry screening at sea ports will be tightened starting July 1 and temporary landing will be minimized.²¹⁵ To ensure a clinical evidence-based response, the Korean Center for Disease Control and Prevention has decided to share the anonymized clinical epidemiological information of about 5,500 cases with specific institutions.²¹⁶ The restrictions reintroduced in the Seoul Region, such as restricted gatherings at high-risk venues and closing public facilities, have been extended until the situation improves. In the other areas, people have returned to their everyday life following basic infection prevention measures. Spectators were allowed to attend sports events last week if observing physical distancing and hygiene rules, with a 30% capacity limit.²¹⁷ Safe domestic tourism is being promoted, which includes elements like

non-contact tourist attractions. South Korea announced on June 28 that it would adopt a three-level social distancing scheme based on the level of daily new cases. A move from Level 1 (the current level) to Level 2 would be triggered if daily infections exceed 50 for 14 straight days, and indoor gatherings of 50 or more and outdoor gatherings of over 100 would then be prohibited.²¹⁸

New Zealand

New Zealand has had very few cases in the past few days, none of which were acquired locally. The Health Minister resigned on July 2 over personal lockdown breaches.²¹⁹ A COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group was established on July 1 under the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to coordinate the future response to the pandemic, following the deactivation of the National Crisis Management Centre.²²⁰ Domestically, the testing criteria have been altered to prioritize people with symptoms who have had contact with overseas travellers or confirmed cases. The government-managed quarantine and isolation facilities will be increased from 24 to 27 this week as more Kiwis return to the country.²²¹ The government is once again allowing people to leave government-managed quarantine earlier on compassionate grounds, under a tighter process.²²² People are advised against overseas travel despite the European Union's decision to reopen its borders to New Zealand travellers. The Prime Minister has suggested that those who choose to take non-essential international travel should be ready to bear the cost of their quarantine hotel stay upon return, while the co-payment scheme is still being discussed.²²³ The government also stated that it will remain cautious and has no plans to alter the existing border control measures. This comes despite an appeal to speed up border reopening by influential New Zealanders in the scientific community, the administration, and the business world.²²⁴ New Zealand has joined the global facility COVAX to co-invest in vaccine candidates and incentivize manufacturers to produce more.²²⁵

Australia

Australia has experienced a sudden spike in the past week: its daily new infections approach 100. Victoria continues reporting double-digit new cases, with a significant portion of these from community transmission. The local outbreaks in Victoria are spreading to other states through interstate travellers. The Northern Territory recorded its first new case, who was previously released from quarantine in Victoria after 42 days with no active infection. A one-month stay-at-home order was put in place for 36 suburbs of Melbourne on July 2. The premier of Victoria has also expressed his intention to divert all international flights from Melbourne for two weeks.²²⁶ The recent outbreaks have mostly been related to extended family gatherings and failures of hotel quarantine management. Victoria is still ramping up its number of testing sites. Checkpoints have been set up by police officers in the COVID-19 hotspots to help enforce the localized lockdowns. The national Cabinet has agreed on a coordinated, cross-jurisdictional response to the local outbreaks, which will be based on cooperating on transmission surge management and enhancing public health capacity. Further testing will be conducted for those in hotel quarantine both at the beginning and in the last few days in quarantine.²²⁷ While the situation in Victoria has disrupted the reopening locally, the other states continue to ease their restrictions at varied paces. The federal government has said that, by the end of July, all states and territories will remove attendance caps for indoor venues if physical distancing is practised. Three states already scrapped the limit on the number of people for gatherings outdoors and at restaurants. Interstate borders will be mostly reopened by mid-July except to Victoria.²²⁸

Turkey

After entering the normalization phase on June 1, the health ministry released a 28-day detailed COVID-19 report on June 28. The report highlighted an increase in the number of new cases occurring in Istanbul. Men make up the majority of the cases and fatalities across the country.²²⁹ Turkey was excluded from the EU's "safe country" travel list on June 30.²³⁰ However, Turkey was included in the 59 countries that are

exempted from the 14-day quarantine requirement upon travel to England effective July 10.²³¹ A special center for conducting COVID-19 tests was established at the Istanbul airport on July 2; tests will be processed in the labs located at the airport terminal. Results are delivered within two hours in both Turkish and English. The center has the capacity to conduct 38,000 to 40,000 tests per day.²³² On July 3, Turkey also announced plans to carry out high-level visits to several countries with the aim of explaining the health and safety measures it took to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and enable foreign tourists to experience a safe vacation.²³³ Schools are scheduled to reopen by the end of August under strict rules laid out in a guide released by the country's Health Ministry on July 6.²³⁴

Israel

The number of daily new infections reached 1,130 on July 3, having doubled from a week prior. More neighborhoods have been designated as “restricted areas” and placed under partial lockdown. The prime minister urged public health officials to reduce the time needed for an epidemiological investigation to 48 hours and to shorten the period of test delivery to 12 hours. The system for epidemiological investigation is reported to be overwhelmed by the surge of infections.²³⁵ On July 1, the Israeli parliament approved a proposal to have the national intelligence agency track the cellphones of virus carriers for the next three weeks. The new law allows the agency to access an individual's phone location data for the 14 days prior to their diagnosis.²³⁶ The government decided to tighten some restrictions on June 29. Outdoor gatherings of more than 50 individuals and indoor gatherings of more than 20 are now prohibited, with the exception of cultural events capped at 250. All businesses and services continue to operate when complying with physical distancing and hygiene rules. People are asked to refrain from visiting their relatives in high-risk groups. University and college exams will be held remotely, and at least 30 percent of employees in the public sector must work from home.²³⁷

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