

Weekly COVID Update:

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

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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

Level of Reopening by Sector Among OECD Countries and Selected Canadian Provinces and US States

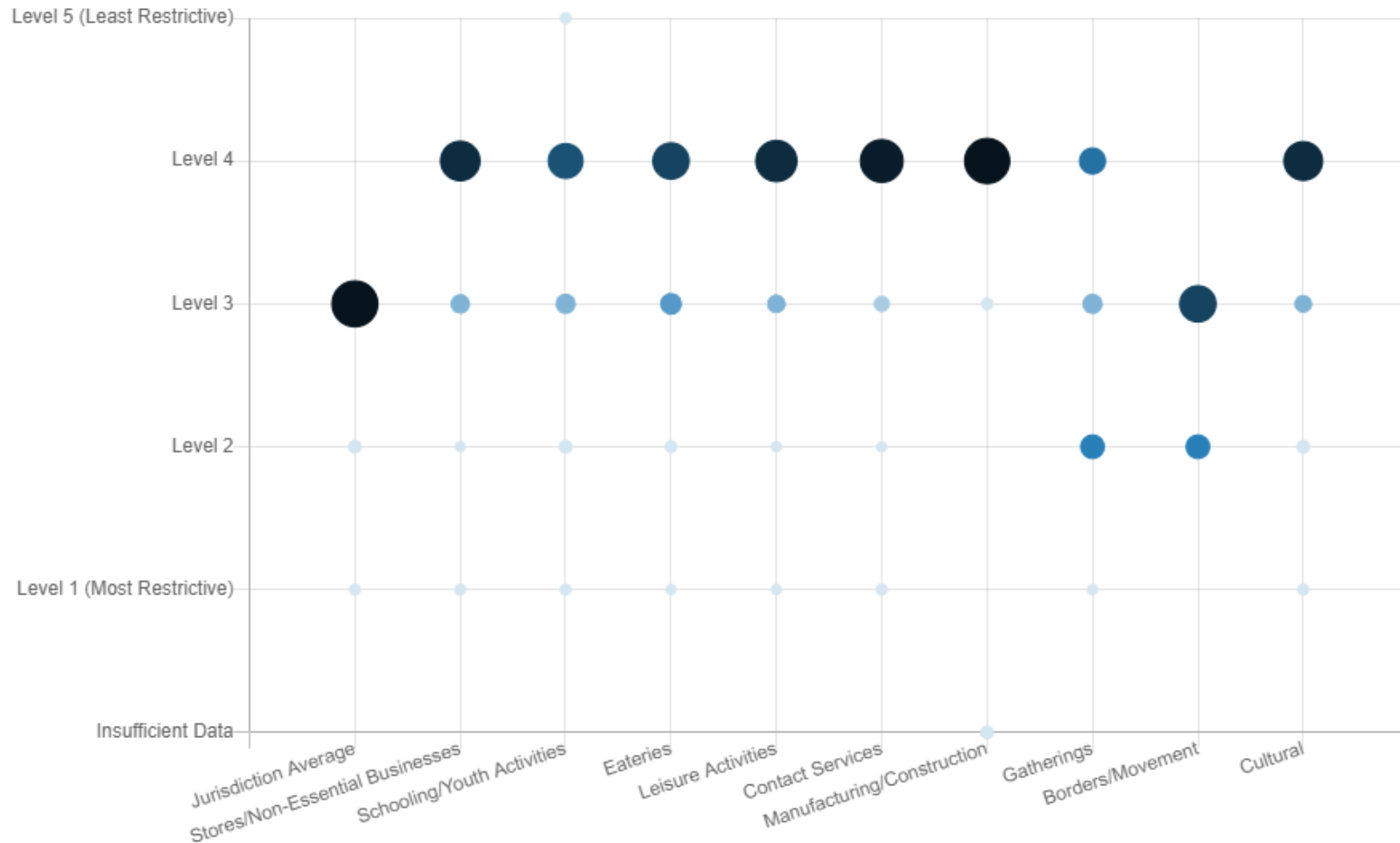


Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 52 different jurisdictions as of September 10. The reopening policies of 52 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses,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

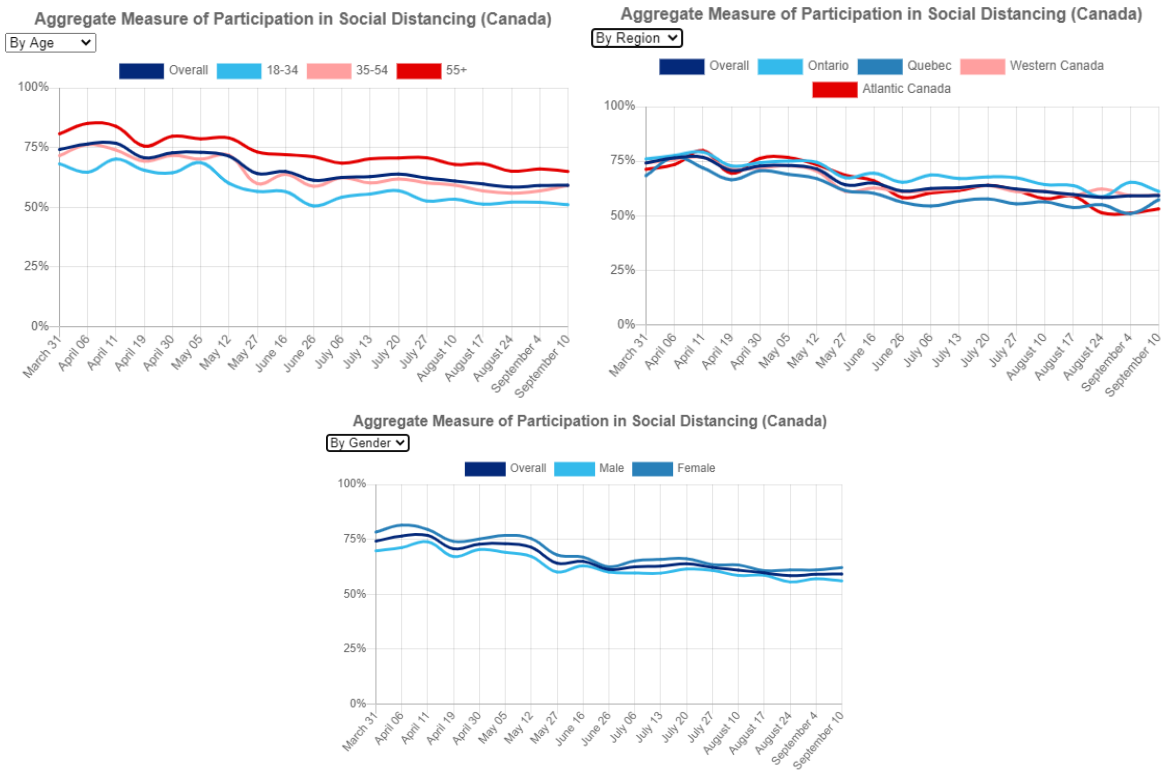


Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada). We asked Canadians whether, as a result of the pandemic, they had taken any of the 6 following actions: avoided crowded places; avoided in-person contact with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintained 2 metre distance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

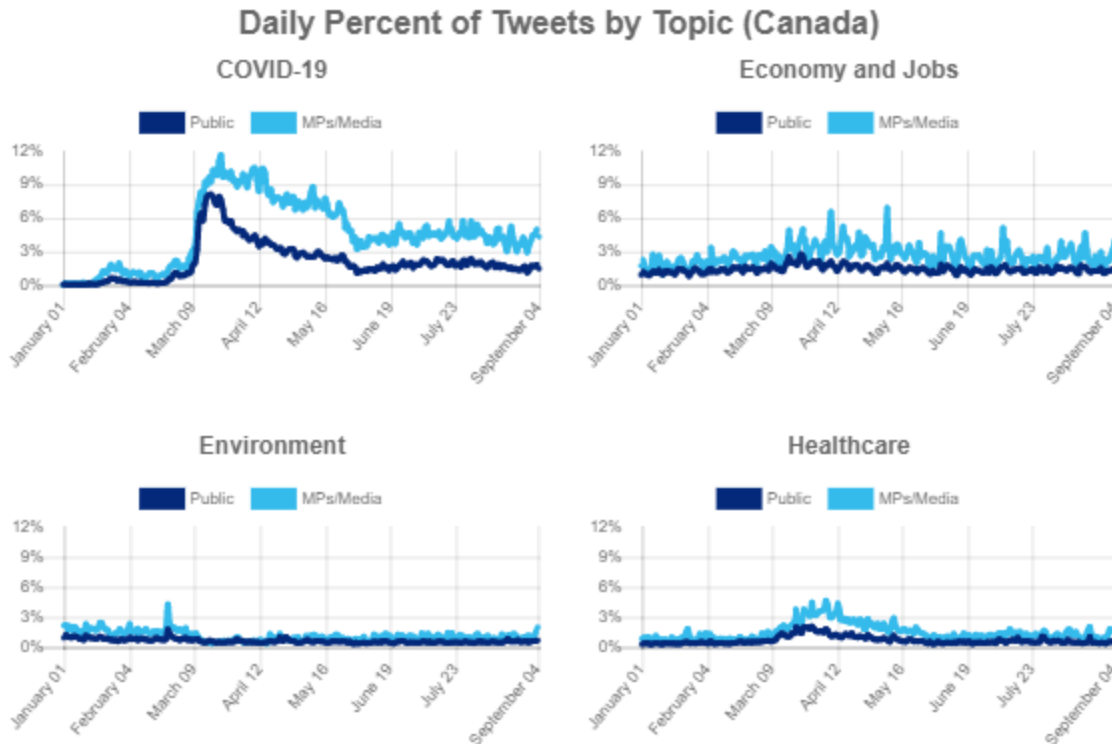


Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada). The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other.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

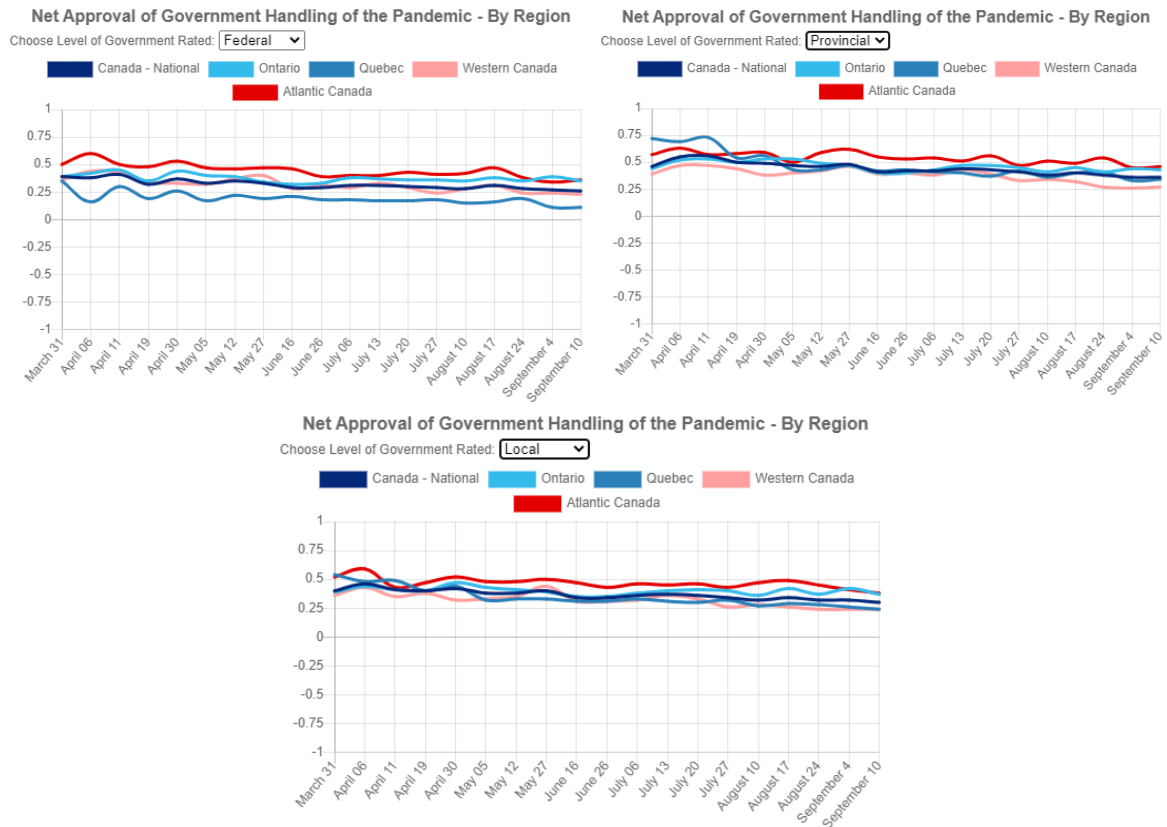


Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region. We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score,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

The number of active cases continues to rise in Alberta but the province does not plan to introduce stricter measures.¹ A few days after students returned to schools, “Alberta has reported its first COVID-19 outbreak at two public high schools in Calgary and Lethbridge.” In Edmonton, schools have cases and several hundred students and staff are in isolation.² Also in Edmonton, COVID-19 fears have led to a citywide bus driver shortage and students are expected to face delays in arriving at school.³

→ *British Columbia*

The average number of daily new infections in British Columbia has climbed above 100. To avoid overwhelming the healthcare system with both COVID-19 and seasonal flu, the provincial government announced an enhanced fall flu immunization campaign with the purchase of 1,965,000 doses of the flu vaccine — 450,000 more than what was planned. The provincial government also plans to hire up to 5,000 new staff across the long-term care system. British Columbia has set aside about \$784 million to implement the campaign, which also includes building out COVID-19 testing capacity for the fall and winter to approximately 20,000 tests per day to help with diagnosis. Surge capacity will also be put in effect at key hospitals, as well as a staged approach to regionally managing surges in demand.⁴ Due to the recent spike in cases, the government ordered the closure of all nightclubs on September 8. Restaurants, pubs and bars are asked to end the sale of liquor at 10 pm and to close by 11 pm, unless serving food.⁵

→ *Manitoba*

Students returned back to school on September 8 in Manitoba. The return to school is mandatory, although remote learning options are available for students who are immunocompromised. Parents who do not wish to send their children back to school must notify the province and home-school them instead.⁶

→ *New Brunswick*

Ahead of New Brunswick’s election later this month – the first to take place in Canada since the start of the pandemic – voters are turning out in high numbers to advanced polling stations, eager to avoid long lines during a pandemic.⁷ A New Brunswick resident from the Edmundston health region has tested positive for COVID-19 while in Quebec, according to the provincial government.⁸ The individual

¹ “No New Restrictions Coming for Bars and Restaurants; New Cases Recorded at Amazon Plant,” Windsor Star, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/live-at-330-p-m-covid-19-briefing-with-albertas-top-doctor>.

² Natalie Valteau · CBC News · Posted: Sep 09 and 2020 10:24 PM MT | Last Updated: 5 hours ago, “1st COVID-19 Outbreaks at 2 Alberta Schools Confirmed in Calgary and Lethbridge | CBC News,” CBC, September 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/covid-outbreak-school-henry-wise-wood-1.5718282>.

³ CBC News · Posted: Sep 07 and 2020 8:35 AM MT | Last Updated: September 7, “What You Need to Know about COVID-19 in Alberta on Monday, Sept. 7 | CBC News,” CBC, September 7, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-covid-coronavirus-september-7-1.5714753>.

⁴ “Coronavirus: B.C. to buy nearly 2 million doses of flu vaccine to prepare for fall,” Accessed September 9, 2020, Global News, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7324452/bc-pandemic-preparedness-plan/>

⁵ “British Columbia imposes fresh curbs on nightclubs as COVID-19 cases spike,” Accessed September 8, 2020, Reuters, <https://ca.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-canada-idCAKBN25Z2XM>

⁶ “Manitoba Students Head Back to School after 6 Months at Home | CBC News,” Accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-back-to-school-covid-19-1.5713184>.

⁷ “Advance voting soars in New Brunswick election,” Global News, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/video/7319784/advance-voting-soars-in-new-brunswick-election>.

⁸ “New Brunswick resident tests positive for COVID-19 in Quebec,” CBC, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/covid-19-cases-new-brunswick-1.5718805>.

was staying in Quebec before they were symptomatic and will remain there until recovered, Public Health said in a release Thursday.⁹ New Brunswick has added the confirmed case to its overall tally, which is now 193. There have been 188 recoveries and two deaths in the province since the onset of the pandemic.¹⁰

→ *Newfoundland and Labrador*

Travel restrictions imposed on non-residents who own property in PEI were lifted on August 31. Property owners may apply for an exemption with proof of ownership and will be required to isolate for 14 days after arrival.¹¹ Effective September 9, isolation rules have been relaxed for rotational workers returning home from outside of the Atlantic bubble to improve mental health outcomes. Moving forward, workers can be tested on Day 5 of their isolation and can isolate for 7 days if the test is negative.¹² Students are back to school in the province and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is still concerned about varying rules between schools, masks not being mandatory for everyone, and large class sizes.¹³

→ *Northwest Territories*

No active cases remain within the Northwest Territories. The territory's Public Health Emergency has been extended until September 15. The COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat has been created for managing the government's response to the pandemic.¹⁴ Health authorities have released a staged plan outlining how COVID-19 patients will be cared for based on the epidemiological situation and the health system capacity.¹⁵ NWT is still at Phase 2 of its reopening plan and is not expected to move on to Phase 3 until the situation of the whole country is well under control. In most cases, indoor gatherings and events can have a maximum of 25 people while 50 are allowed outdoors. Similar limits apply to businesses and services.

→ *Nova Scotia*

Nova Scotia's provincial government is easing restrictions in long-term care homes to allow designated caregivers to help care for and support residents.¹⁶ The province announced on September 8 that designated caregivers can be family members, spouses, friends, or other support people.¹⁷ A designated caregiver must provide the resident with support such as personal care, mobility, or help with eating, and have had an established caregiving relationship with the resident before the COVID-19 pandemic began.¹⁸ Long-term care facilities will work with residents, families and decision-makers to identify up to two designated caregivers per resident. However, only one designated caregiver may visit a resident at a time. Facilities will train caregivers on public health requirements, including the use of masks and good hand and respiratory hygiene, along with facility procedures.¹⁹ They will also establish processes to screen caregivers when they arrive at the facility and identify them while on site.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ "Non-Resident Property Owners Allowed in Newfoundland and Labrador on Aug. 31 | Globalnews.ca," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7299774/n-l-covid-19-update-aug-26/>.

¹² "Mental Health: Newfoundland Loosens COVID-19 Rules for 'rotational' Workers," Kamloops This Week, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.kamloopsthisweek.com/mental-health-newfoundland-loosens-covid-19-rules-for-rotational-workers-1.24197871>.

¹³ "Schools Reopening as N.L. Shifts into a New Phase of Living with COVID-19 | CBC News," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/first-day-of-school-in-a-pandemic-1.5715777>.

¹⁴ "Government of the Northwest Territories Announces Creation of COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat," Accessed September 3, 2020, <https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/government-northwest-territories-announces-creation-covid-19-coordinating-secretariat>

¹⁵ "NWT health authority releases pandemic response plan," Accessed September 4, 2020, Cabin Radio, <https://cabinradio.ca/44788/news/nwt-health-authority-releases-pandemic-response-plan/>

¹⁶ "Family caregivers can return to Nova Scotia long-term care homes," *CBC*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-long-term-care-welcome-family-caregivers-1.5716436>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

→ *Nunavut*

A guard at an isolation hub for Nunavut residents has tested positive for COVID-19.²⁰ 24 of the hub's residents had low-risk contact with the guard, all of whom have since returned to Nunavut. While the territory's Chief Public Health Officer said that the exposed residents pose minimal risk to the public, he asked that all Nunavut residents continue to follow hygiene and social distancing guidelines.²¹ The territory is beginning a pilot project this week that could see testing capacity in Nunavut increase and some restrictions eased. Samples will be analyzed in Iqaluit, with the aim of returning results within 5 days of each test. If successful, the project may eliminate the need for Nunavut residents to self-isolate outside the territory before returning home. However, the government said that some form of isolation period will remain in effect for the foreseeable future.²²

→ *Ontario*

Ontario's 7-day rolling average is 161 cases per day, which is the highest it's been since July. As a result, the Ontario government has hit "a pause of four weeks" before the province considers any further loosening of public health measures or further reopening of businesses, facilities or organizations.²³ Activities that have been paused include expanding social circles, expanding gathering sizes and further increases in the number of people allowed to attend sports events. Premier Doug Ford says he'll support Toronto's move to shut down the city's bars if Mayor John Tory decides to do so; Ford says that it is a municipal issue and does not want to implement a province-wide ban.²⁴ As schools reopen this week and next throughout the province, the government will publicly report all cases of COVID-19 after being pushed by the opposition to do so; outbreaks constitute two or more confirmed cases amongst students/staff in a school within a 14-day period.²⁵

→ *Prince Edward Island*

Prince Edward Island remains in Stage 4, with a low number of daily cases. In the province, primary and secondary schools have reopened. PEI's back to school plan relies on keeping students in small cohorts to reduce the chances of COVID-19 spread.²⁶ Cleaning protocols have increased in schools and on buses. Students and staff at UPEI will be required to wear non-medical masks inside all campus buildings.²⁷

→ *Quebec*

²⁰ Nunatsiaq News, "Guard Tests Positive for COVID-19 at Ottawa Isolation Hub for Returning Nunavut Residents," *Nunatsiaq News* (blog), August 27, 2020, <https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/guard-tests-positive-for-covid-19-at-ottawa-isolation-hub-for-returning-nunavut-residents/>.

²¹ Nunatsiaq News, "Twenty-Four Guests in Isolation Hub Had Low-Risk Contact with COVID-19-Positive Guard," *Nunatsiaq News* (blog), August 27, 2020, <https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/twenty-four-guests-in-isolation-hub-had-low-risk-contact-with-covid-19-positive-guard/>.

²² Nunatsiaq News, "Nunavut Aims to Improve Turnaround Time for COVID-19 Tests," *Nunatsiaq News* (blog), September 8, 2020, <https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/nunavut-aims-to-improve-turnaround-time-for-covid-19-tests/>.

²³ "Ontario forced to pause reopening plan for four weeks as COVID-19 cases spike" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-forced-to-pause-reopening-plan-for-four-weeks-as-covid-19-cases-spike-1.5095876>

²⁴ "Doug Ford says he supports a shutdown of bars in Toronto" Accessed September 9, 2020. https://www.blogto.com/eat_drink/2020/09/doug-ford-supports-shutdown-bars-toronto/

²⁵ "Ontario will publicly report school outbreaks" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.cp24.com/news/ontario-will-publicly-report-school-outbreaks-ford-1.5098179>

²⁶ CBC News · Posted: Sep 08 and 2020 6:00 AM AT | Last Updated: September 8, "'Awesome Start' to P.E.I. Schools Reopening, Some Educators Say | CBC News," CBC, September 8, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-back-to-school-tuesday-sept-8-2020-1.5715154>.

²⁷ "P.E.I. Schools to Reopen September 8," Atlantic, August 5, 2020, <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/p-e-i-schools-to-reopen-september-8-1.5052056>.

As of September 4, approximately 50 schools and training centres reported COVID-19 cases.²⁸ Quebec introduced a colour-coded system of COVID-19 alerts: green, yellow, orange and red levels based on the epidemiological situation, control of transmission and the healthcare system in the province.²⁹ The intervention system will be assessed weekly and will affect the number of people permitted at gatherings, travel between regions and non-essential service operations.³⁰ The majority of regions, including Montreal, are green -- but Quebec City, Laval, Estrie and Outaouais are in yellow.³¹ Montreal's director of public health is worried about increasing small social gatherings amongst friends and family.³²

→ *Saskatchewan*

As of September 9, Saskatchewan has 59 active cases of COVID-19, down from 106 on August 23.³³ The provincial government has released its guidelines for parents and students on what to do if there is a positive COVID-19 case in a classroom. An outbreak will be declared if two persons within the same school test positive, but it does not immediately result in the school moving to distance learning. Schools will only move to online instruction if there are two or more cases in multiple classrooms around the school.³⁴ Voluntary testing centres will be set up at various schools in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert to give students and staff priority access.³⁵ The Chief Medical Health Officer said that Saskatchewan residents should keep close contacts to a minimum as students return to school.³⁶ Premier Moe said the province would use the federal government's COVID alert app, which is expected to be available in Saskatchewan within the next few weeks. The provincial government also advised residents to avoid inter-provincial travel if they can as cases rise in other Western provinces.³⁷

→ *Yukon*

No active cases remain in Yukon. The state of emergency has been extended again -- without a definite duration. Yukon University's Whitehorse campus reopened on September 4 after a three-day shutdown to clean and minimize risk of COVID-19 exposure. The closure was due to two students moving into campus housing without having self-isolated for two weeks.³⁸ Yukon is now in Phase 3 of its reopening plan. The restrictions on the number of people allowed at gatherings — 10 indoors, 50 outdoors — are unchanged. Guidelines on different types of gatherings have been released for people to ensure social distancing, good hygiene, enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection. The government also released guidelines for contact sports. All players, coaches and parents will be required to follow facility plans, in addition to avoiding spitting, handshakes, and blowing noses without a tissue. The number of participants on the field or rink is limited to 30 per game. Larger leagues are being asked to create "mini-leagues" with a maximum of 60 players (not including coaches and officials). Players are

²⁸ Sep 04, CBC News · Posted:, and 2020 6:18 PM ET | Last Updated: September 7. "Nearly 50 Quebec Schools Have at Least 1 Case of COVID-19, but No Outbreaks so Far | CBC News." CBC, September 4, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/covid-19-schools-quebec-list-1.5713145>.

²⁹ Global News. "Quebec Unveils Colour-Coded Regional COVID-19 Alert System as Province Reports 163 New Cases." Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7321055/quebec-coronavirus-september-8/>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Sep 09, CBC News · Posted:, and 2020 6:32 AM ET | Last Updated: 6 hours ago. "COVID-19 in Quebec: What You Need to Know on Wednesday | CBC News." CBC, September 9, 2020.

³³ Guy Quenneville, "COVID-19 in Sask: 1 New Case Reported Wednesday | CBC News," CBC, September 9, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatchewan-covid-19-1.5717678>.

³⁴ "New Guidelines for Positive COVID-19 Cases, Outbreaks and Testing in Sask. Schools | CTV News," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://regina.ctvnews.ca/here-s-how-sask-schools-will-handle-positive-covid-19-cases-1.5082171>.

³⁵ Morgan Modjeski, "Voluntary On-Site Testing Coming This Month to Schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert | CBC News," CBC, September 6, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatchewan-in-school-testing-1.5713983>.

³⁶ CBC News, "COVID-19 in Sask: Chief Medical Health Officer Urges Residents to Keep Virtual Households Small | CBC News," CBC, August 28, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/covid-19-in-sask-numbers-update-august-28-2020-1.5704199>.

³⁷ Morgan Modjeski, "COVID-19 in Sask: Moe Says Province Will Use Federal COVID Alert App | CBC News," CBC, September 2, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/covid-19-update-sept2-1.5709809>.

³⁸ "Students who didn't self-isolate made 'poor choices,' says Yukon University official," Accessed September 4, 2020, CBC News, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-university-campus-reopen-covid-1.5711835>

restricted to involvement in just two mini-leagues at any time. Players and spectators are still recommended to physically distance whenever possible and continue with hand hygiene practices. It is also recommended that equipment and change rooms be disinfected after each use and that players come dressed in full gear when possible.³⁹

The United States

→ *California*

On August 28, California's governor signed an executive order to help the state increase its testing capacity.⁴⁰ The governor also signed an executive order extending state protections for consumers against price gouging.⁴¹ In addition, the governor shared a new plan that will guide counties' reopening called the Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The plan will replace the former County Data Monitoring List.⁴² The Blueprint framework will use tiers to determine the reopening of non-essential indoor businesses and schools in different counties.⁴³ Blueprint tiers in each county are determined by case rates and positivity rates or the percentage of positive tests in a county.⁴⁴ Each county's tier and the colour they are assigned will determine how businesses in that county operate. Counties must wait 21 days prior to progressing to another tier and can only progress through one tier at a time after successfully meeting the qualifications for the new tier for two consecutive weeks.⁴⁵ The mandatory waiting period is a new concept introduced with the Blueprint. Schools in a county may open after that county is out of the Widespread tier, or tier one, with discussions starting at the earliest two weeks after leaving the Widespread tier.⁴⁶ As of September 8, approximately 87% of California's population was in the most restrictive tier.⁴⁷

→ *Illinois*

As of September 9, almost a third of Illinois' counties are considered at a warning level for COVID-19.⁴⁸ The positivity rate for COVID-19 testing surged past the state-imposed 8% benchmark in these counties, which automatically activated mitigation measures.⁴⁹ Most of the new mitigation measures focus on restaurants and bars, including a ban on indoor seating, capacity limits and earlier closing times among others. The measures will be reviewed again on September 15.⁵⁰ Regarding schooling, some districts have opted to return to online learning as the case numbers increase. However, the state has not mandated any closures yet.⁵¹

→ *Michigan*

³⁹ "Current COVID-19 situation," Accessed September 9, 2020, <https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-information/latest-updates-covid-19/current-covid-19-situation>

⁴⁰ California Governor. "Governor Newsom Signs Executive Order to Help Increase State's Testing Capacity," August 29, 2020. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/08/28/governor-newsom-signs-executive-order-to-help-increase-states-testing-capacity/>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Higgins-Dunn, Noah. "California's Newsom Deploys New Coronavirus Reopening Framework, Most Counties under Strict Orders." CNBC, August 28, 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/28/californias-newsom-deploys-new-coronavirus-reopening-framework-most-counties-under-strict-orders.html>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Higgins-Dunn, Noah. "California's Newsom Deploys New Coronavirus Reopening Framework, Most Counties under Strict Orders." CNBC, August 28, 2020.

⁴⁷ Tapp, Tom, and Tom Tapp. "California Coronavirus Update: Gov. Gavin Newsom's New Reopening Guidelines Sow Confusion." *Deadline* (blog), September 8, 2020. <https://deadline.com/2020/09/california-coronavirus-governor-gavin-newsom-reopening-guidelines-confusion-1234572869/>.

⁴⁸ "County Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Adams>

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ "Gov. J.B. Pritzker defends tougher COVID restrictions in letter to Illinois chambers" Accessed September 9, 2020. https://herald-review.com/news/state-and-regional/gov-j-b-pritzker-defends-tougher-covid-restrictions-in-letter-to-illinois-chambers/article_5b4d03c9-a11c-5abc-9ee0-703bdbc611f5.html

⁵¹ "Could Rising Illinois Metrics Force All-Remote Learning? Pritzker Weighs In" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.nbchicago.com/news/local/could-rising-illinois-metrics-force-all-remote-learning-pritzker-weighs-in/2325544/>

The state's seven-day moving average has stabilized at around 700 new cases per day.⁵² On September 9, Governor Gretchen Whitmer allowed indoor services at gyms, fitness centers, bowling alleys, roller rinks, ice rinks, swimming pools and similar businesses to reopen at 25% capacity. She strongly suggested using outdoor fitness classes when available.⁵³ The wearing of face coverings at all times is required except when swimming. Face shields are not sufficient. Businesses who do not enforce these rules could be fined \$7,000 by local law enforcement.⁵⁴ Cultural and entertainment institutions, such as movie theatres, remain closed.⁵⁵

→ *New York*

As the state announced its 33rd straight day with a COVID-19 infection rate below 1%, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has allowed indoor dining in New York City to resume.⁵⁶ Starting September 30, restaurants with indoor seating can reopen with a 25% occupancy limit.⁵⁷ Temperature checks, masks and contact information for tracing will be required, and restaurants must close by midnight. Bar service will not be permitted. If the infection rate does not increase by November 1, the occupancy limit will increase to 50%.⁵⁸ New York City students are scheduled to begin in-person instruction on Sept. 21, but the death of teachers in three other states since school resumed has generated a new wave of concern for school boards across the state.⁵⁹

→ *Texas*

On September 7, Texas' governor extended the state's Disaster Declaration for COVID-19 to ensure necessary access to resources and strategies.⁶⁰ The governor continues to urge Texans to wear masks, social distance and sanitize.⁶¹ Universities in Texas suggest that off-campus parties are the cause behind some of the increase in COVID-19 cases in areas around universities, yet only a few schools have acted to discipline students.⁶² Some of the schools that are disciplining students for violating health and safety measures are fining students, suspending Greek houses and students, increasing university campus police patrols off-campus and encouraging the community to report concerning student behaviour.⁶³

Mexico

COVID-19 cases "declined or remained stable" for six consecutive weeks from mid-July until late August.⁶⁴ A report indicated that Russia's sovereign wealth fund would supply a Mexican pharmaceutical firm, Landsteiner, with 32 million doses of Sputnik-V, the Russian COVID-19 vaccine.

⁵² "Michigan coronavirus (COVID-19) cases up to 108,595; Death toll now at 6,552" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.clickondetroit.com/health/2020/09/09/michigan-coronavirus-covid-19-cases-up-to-108595-death-toll-now-at-6552/>

⁵³ "Michigan releases guidelines as gyms, bowling alleys allowed to reopen" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://wwmt.com/news/local/michigan-releases-guidelines-as-gyms-bowling-alleys-allowed-to-reopen>

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "Local movie theatre anxious to reopen with precautions in place" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://nbc25news.com/news/coronavirus/local-movie-theatre-anxious-to-reopen-with-precautions-in-place>

⁵⁶ "Governor Cuomo Announces 33rd Straight Day with COVID-19 Infection Rate Below 1 Percent" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-33rd-straight-day-covid-19-infection-rate-below-1-percent>

⁵⁷ "Governor Cuomo Announces Indoor Dining in New York City" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-indoor-dining-new-york-city-allowed-resume-beginning-september-30-25>

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "2 NYC School Employees Test Positive as Teacher Deaths in Other States Raise Concern" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/2-nyc-school-employees-test-positive-for-covid-19/2610006/>

⁶⁰ "Governor Abbott Extends Statewide Disaster Declaration For COVID-19." Accessed September 8, 2020.

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-extends-statewide-disaster-declaration-for-covid-19>

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Harper, Karen Brooks. "Texas Universities Blame Off-Campus Parties for Rising COVID-19 Cases, but Few Are Disciplining Students." The Texas Tribune, September 8, 2020. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/09/08/texas-universities-coronavirus-parties/>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Mexico News Daily. "Despite Uptick, Health Ministry Sees 6-Week Downward Trend in Virus Cases," September 7, 2020.

<https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/coronavirus/ministry-sees-6-week-downward-trend-in-virus-cases/>.

Deliveries are scheduled for November pending Mexican officials' approval.⁶⁵ The Deputy Minister of Health anticipates that the majority of Mexican states will be in green or stage four of reopening by the end of October; however, he suggests that some states will not enter that stage until November.⁶⁶ On August 31, nine states entered the orange stage, or stage two of reopening, in the Mexican traffic light system for August 31 to September 13.⁶⁷ As of September 4, Mexico City, Nuevo Leon and Quintana Roo were relaxing some of their COVID-19 restrictions. On September 7, Mexico City allowed restaurants, department stores and malls to extend their operating hours with a 30% capacity limit.⁶⁸ Mexico City authorities will begin discussing reopening strategies with gym owners.⁶⁹ Mexico City bars, cantinas and other entertainment places have been open for approximately four weeks with mandatory table service.⁷⁰ Nuevo Leon is in orange, or stage two of reopening, and on September 4 allowed various businesses to reopen. The state's governor will be meeting with mayors in the region to discuss reopening plans for various entertainment facilities, gyms, conventions centres, museums, tattoo parlors and casinos with 30% capacity.⁷¹ Nuevo Leon will allow sports leagues to resume but not party halls, clubs and bars.⁷² Quintana Roo will be in yellow, or stage three of reopening, during the week of September 14 and will reopen beaches, archaeological sites and increase gym capacity to 70% in open areas and 50% in closed areas.⁷³ Hospitals, hotels, theme parks, theatres, cinemas, malls, hair salons and religious places will be permitted to operate at 60% capacity.⁷⁴

Chile

As of September 2, Chile was fourth globally in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people and was second globally in the number of deaths per million people.⁷⁵ Chile wants to offer a free COVID-19 vaccine in 2021.⁷⁶ Chile remains closed to tourism and the government expects to release a reopening plan for tourism sectors soon.⁷⁷ A September 4 report said that five areas in the Metropolitan region and two areas in the Valparaíso region progressed into the Preparation Stage, or stage three, of the Paso a Paso reopening plan -- where people could go outside and restaurants and cafes are permitted to serve people on sidewalks and terraces.⁷⁸ On September 2, bars and restaurants reopened terrace service in some parts of Santiago at 25% capacity.⁷⁹ The majority of schools remained closed to in-person activity as of September 2.⁸⁰

⁶⁵ Inc, Reuters. "Russia's RDIF to Sell 32 Mln COVID-19 Vaccine Doses to Mexican Firm | The Chronicle Herald." Accessed September 10, 2020. <http://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/world/russias-rdif-to-sell-32-million-covid-19-vaccine-doses-to-mexico-firm-source-494652/>.

⁶⁶ Mexico News Daily. "Most States Could Turn Green by October on Virus Map: López-Gatell," September 2, 2020. <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/coronavirus/most-states-could-turn-green-by-october/>.

⁶⁷ "9 States Painted Coronavirus Yellow Begin the Transition to 'the New Normal.'" Accessed September 8, 2020. <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/coronavirus/states-painted-coronavirus-yellow-begin-the-transition/>.

⁶⁸ Mexico News Daily. "States Ease Some Covid Restrictions; CDMX to Remain Orange next Week," September 4, 2020. <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/coronavirus/states-ease-some-covid-restrictions-cdmx-to-remain-orange-another-week/>.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ ReliefWeb. "UNICEF Chile: COVID-19 Situation Report No. 3 (Reporting Period: August 2020) - Chile." Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://reliefweb.int/report/chile/unicef-chile-covid-19-situation-report-no-3-reporting-period-august-2020>.

⁷⁶ "Chile Aims to Acquire COVID-19 Vaccine in Early 2021, Says Health Chief - Xinhua | English.News.Cn." Accessed September 10, 2020. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-09/10/c_139357518.htm.

⁷⁷ Kucheran, Kashlee. "Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Peru Keep Borders Closed For Tourism." *Travel Off Path* (blog), September 1, 2020. <https://www.traveloffpath.com/colombia-argentina-chile-and-peru-keep-borders-closed-for-tourism/>.

⁷⁸ "Five Municipalities in the Metropolitan Region and Two in Valparaíso Move to the Preparation Stage." Accessed September 8, 2020. <https://chilereports.cl/en/news/2020/09/04/five-municipalities-in-the-metropolitan-region-and-two-in-valparaíso-move-to-the-preparation-stage>.

⁷⁹ "Chile Reopens Bars with Terrace after 5 Months Due to COVID-19," September 3, 2020. <https://www.explica.co/chile-reopens-bars-with-terrace-after-5-months-due-to-covid-19/>.

⁸⁰ ReliefWeb. "UNICEF Chile: COVID-19 Situation Report No. 3 (Reporting Period: August 2020) - Chile." Accessed September 10, 2020.

WESTERN EUROPE

France

France's daily new COVID-19 cases rose by more than 8,500 for the third time in six days on September 9. The disease is spreading at its fastest pace since it emerged in the country. France uses hospitalization and ICU capacity as metrics to help with their reopening and lockdown policies.⁸¹ The number of people hospitalized has reached a one-month high of 5,003, with ICU capacity mimicking levels seen at the end of June (600). However, the current metrics remain well below what was seen during the peak in April -- largely due to the recent increase in cases involving younger people.⁸² As of September 9, the government has yet to take additional steps to counter the high infection rates, but the country's scientific council warned that they would have to take multiple unpopular decisions within days.⁸³ They indicated that they are two weeks away from Spain's situation, and the fact that new cases had not yet swamped the health system might have created "a false sense of security."⁸⁴ The council will consider the possibility of introducing local lockdowns, especially in hard-hit areas like Marseille. On September 1, around 12 million students returned to school. If a school reports more than three COVID-19 cases, then it will temporarily close; out of 60,000 schools across the country, 22 have closed within the first week.⁸⁵

Germany

Although Germany is experiencing a slight resurgence in the number of cases, the daily cases have not reached the levels seen in March and April. The country's 7-day R-value -- currently at 0.95 -- is still below the 1.0 target.⁸⁶ The 7-day moving average of new cases is 1,280, a steady decrease from late August. All schools across the country are now open.⁸⁷ Each state has their own rules and regulations regarding mask usage and social distancing. Several states in northern Germany are lifting restrictions on prostitution; North Rhine-Westphalia is now allowing sex workers to resume work. The decision comes in the wake of several court cases filed by sex workers, who argued the restrictions unfairly discriminated against them and noted that it was not clear that the risk of infection was much higher during sexual acts than at private gatherings of up to 150 people.⁸⁸

Belgium

Last week, all students returned to full day in-class learning with restrictions no longer in place on class sizes. In the early stages of the lock-down, class sizes were restricted and students were in small cohorts.⁸⁹ This week, hundreds of students and some staff in Brussels have been quarantined due to a

⁸¹ "France's COVID hospitalisations at 1-month high as cases surge" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://nationalpost.com/pmnh/health-pmnh/frances-covid-hospitalisations-at-1-month-high-as-cases-surge>

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ "What's next for France as 'tough decisions' lie ahead in fight against Covid-19 resurgence?" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20200909/whats-next-for-france-as-tough-decisions-lie-ahead>

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "Days after reopening, France shuts 22 schools after Covid-19 outbreaks" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200904-france-shuts-22-schools-after-covid-19-outbreaks>

⁸⁶ "RKI - Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 - Aktueller Lage-/Situationsbericht Des RKI Zu COVID-19." Accessed September 9, 2020.

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Situationsberichte/Gesamt.html

⁸⁷ "Germany is reopening all schools despite rising coronavirus infections" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.wsns.org/en/articles/2020/09/05/scho-s05.html>

⁸⁸ "Northern German States Agree to Reopen Brothels, Despite COVID-19 Uptick" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/northern-german-states-agree-reopen-brothels-despite-covid-19-uptick>

⁸⁹ Republic World, "Belgium Schools Reopen amid Ongoing COVID-19 Outbreak," Republic World, accessed September 10, 2020,

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/belgium-schools-reopen-amid-ongoing-covid-19-outbreak>

number of detected COVID-19 cases.⁹⁰ In Brussels, social distancing rules have been reduced to 1 metre for both indoor and outdoor culture venues.⁹¹

Netherlands

In the past week, a sharp rise has been recorded in the number of COVID-19 infections. Most of the new cases are among people in their 20s, with an infection rate almost double that of people in their 30s. The start of the new university and college year has been blamed for the rise. The PM announced an extension to the current restrictions in place on September 1, including the sustained closure of night clubs and bars, and stricter rules for gatherings. The so-called “cheering ban” also remains in force, which refers to singing and shouting in crowds -- such as ones that form during demonstrations, protests, sports games, competitions and concerts. Quarantine for those returning from orange-labelled countries will be required to stay at home for a period of 10 days. Children younger than 4 will be allowed to attend childcare facilities and take part in sports activities. Children ages 4 - 12 will be allowed to return to school. In nursing homes, staff are being trained extensively in using protective equipment. Both residents and employees will be tested on a weekly basis.⁹²

Spain

Spain became the first Western European country to have more than 500,000 COVID-19 cases.⁹³ It has been reported that this new wave of COVID-19 cases has a lower death rate than that during the peak in April.⁹⁴ Reports suggest concerns with Spain’s contact tracing program -- where some people who have tested COVID-19+ said that they were not contacted by contact tracers.⁹⁵ In response to the surge in cases, Madrid is limiting social gatherings indoors and outdoors to ten people and will require bars, restaurants, weddings and funerals to implement curb service operations.⁹⁶ Two additional Spanish towns were cordoned on September 8.⁹⁷ Schools in Spain are reopening in September.⁹⁸ Masks are mandatory in schools for anyone over the age of six and there must be social distancing.⁹⁹ Some Spanish parents are concerned and have considered pretending that their child is ill in order to avoid sending them to school. Other parents are concerned that class sizes can be up to 25 students, but gatherings in some parts of the country cannot be greater than 10 people.¹⁰⁰ Parents who do not send their children to school face charges and punishment for absenteeism.¹⁰¹ Spanish authorities arrested a woman who went surfing after testing COVID-19+ despite being told to quarantine.¹⁰² An academic pointed to multiple reasons for Spain's surge in cases: easing the COVID-19 lockdown too quickly; flawed contact tracing; a strong predisposition to gather in-person; and migrant worker living conditions that did not permit social distancing.¹⁰³

⁹⁰ “Belgium in Brief: Breaking Belgium,” accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/130471/belgium-in-brief-breaking-belgium/>.

⁹¹ “Social distancing in Brussels’ cultural venues reduced to 1 metre,” <https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/art-culture/128585/social-distancing-in-brussels-cultural-venues-reduced-to-1-metre/>

⁹² “Dutch Coronavirus Infections Rise by 5,400 in a Week, Young Adults Dominate - DutchNews.NL.” Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/09/dutch-coronavirus-infections-rise-by-5400-in-a-week-young-adults-dominate/>.

⁹³ Coronavirus. “Spanish Police Arrest Coronavirus-Infected Surfer,” September 9, 2020.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/spanish-police-arrest-coronavirus-infected-surfer-1.5097627>.

⁹⁴ “Despite Strict Lockdown, Spain Sees Sharp COVID-19 Spike | Voice of America - English.” Accessed September 9, 2020.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ “2 More Spanish Towns to Be Cordoned off Due to COVID-19.” Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/2-more-spanish-towns-to-be-cordoned-off-due-to-covid-19/1967121>.

⁹⁸ France 24. “As Covid-19 Cases Soar in Spain, New School Year Comes Too Soon for Some,” September 7, 2020.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ “Risking Jail, Some Parents in Spain Resist Sending Kids Back to School.” Los Angeles Times, September 8, 2020.

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-09-08/coronavirus-spain-parents-resist-back-to-school>.

¹⁰² Coronavirus. “Spanish Police Arrest Coronavirus-Infected Surfer,” September 9, 2020.

¹⁰³ “Despite Strict Lockdown, Spain Sees Sharp COVID-19 Spike | Voice of America - English.” Accessed September 9, 2020.

The United Kingdom

Similar to trends across Europe, COVID-19 cases continue to increase in the UK. The country reported a 7-day moving average of 2,360 daily cases.¹⁰⁴ Prime Minister Boris Johnson has ruled out a nationwide lockdown and has instead opted for local lockdowns with stricter nationwide rules. As of September 14, social gatherings of more than six people in England will not be allowed. The rule does not apply to schools, workplaces, weddings, funerals and organised team sports.¹⁰⁵ Fines up to £100 could be given, but the chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, Ken Marsh, said the new rules were "very flimsy" and would be difficult to enforce.¹⁰⁶ At present, only gathering and social distancing rules have been altered in England; rules in the other nations remain unchanged. The government is developing an ambitious testing plan, which will see every person in the UK tested each week in order to track the virus, and will give out "freedom passes" to those who test negative.¹⁰⁷

Ireland

Ireland's wet pubs --bars that do not serve food -- are set to reopen on September 21. The plan is subject to local restrictions due to varied concerns over social distancing. Wet pubs have been closed since March, the longest closure of pubs in Europe. Under the new draft guidance, table service will be mandatory in all licensed premises and alcohol can only be served until 11:30 pm. The guidelines encourage a reduction of seating and two-metre social distancing between tables. This can be reduced to one metre if additional infection control steps are introduced. Customers will be limited to a 105-minute stay in premises where the one-metre measure is in operation. Only six people can be at any one table and they must not come from more than three households. Face coverings must be worn by staff who engage with customers, unless protective screens are in place.¹⁰⁸

Luxembourg

Universities and schools in Luxembourg are scheduled to reopen on September 11, with multiple restrictions in place. A hybrid system has been set up but, most students will be attending lectures via video conference. Courses requiring students to attend in person will remain in place, but groups will have to be smaller than 20 people. If a class has more students, a rotation system will be established where each week a different third of the class will be physically present. The other two-thirds will participate from home. Universities will also provide COVID-19 tests for staff and students. Should an individual test positive, the whole class will be put in isolation for 14 days. Childcare centres will be able to operate with groups of up to 30 children. School cafeterias will reopen with similar restrictions as restaurants across the country: no self-service and masks to be worn until seated. A maximum of 10 children would be able to sit at one table. Pupils who prefer not to stay inside the canteen may order a pre-packed lunch.¹⁰⁹ The possibility of closing down an entire school for a limited time will not be ruled out if cases rise exponentially, however, such a measure would only be considered as a last resort.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ "Coronavirus: Britain records almost 3,000 cases for a second day — as it happened" Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.ft.com/content/b36d14fd-bd6d-3072-9d23-6011c008d62d>

¹⁰⁵ "We must act" to prevent second lockdown, says PM" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-54093465>

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "Johnson defends new Covid restrictions for England" Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/31ce875b-b2cf-4d00-88a9-ee85ac563ba7>

¹⁰⁸ "Republic of Ireland's Wet Pubs to Open on September 21 - The Irish News." Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://www.irishnews.com/news/republicofirelandnews/2020/09/08/news/republic-of-ireland-s-wet-pubs-to-open-on-september-21-2060362/>.

¹⁰⁹ "New Academic Year: University Reopens with Hybrid System for Its Students." Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://today.rtl.lu/news/luxembourg/a/1576079.html>.

¹¹⁰ "Press Briefing Summary: Claude Meisch Outlines Plan for School Reopening." Accessed September 9, 2020.

<https://today.rtl.lu/news/luxembourg/a/1574951.html>.

Portugal

On September 10, Portugal saw its largest daily increase in COVID-19 infections since April -- part of a recent uptick in coronavirus cases across Western Europe.¹¹¹ The PM warned that the country is entering "a critical phase" due to the change of season, the beginning of the school year, and the resumption of many activities. He said that the country cannot stop for a second time as it did in March and April -- arguing that, from a social and economic point of view, it is not sustainable.¹¹² Next week, over a million school children prepare for a return to school. However, the teachers' union is threatening strike action unless "essential questions" about safety are answered. The first is the scientific basis behind the guideline that pupils can be placed "within a metre distance of each other in the classroom" -- as opposed to the two-meters required in everyday contact elsewhere. The second question concerns school staff in the at risk groups -- whether they will be able to take time off and whether their absence will be filled by replacements. Given that the questions remain unanswered as of September 10, the union plans to launch a pre-strike warning.¹¹³

CENTRAL EUROPE

Austria

In Austria, Chancellor Kurz intends to keep ski resorts operating and schools open throughout the winter. Après ski partying will not be permitted at many ski resorts after a popular resort in Ischgl became a hotspot in early March. Measures at ski resorts will include offering workers and guests tests, making face masks mandatory in cable cars and lifts, and monitoring wastewater to assess the presence of the virus.¹¹⁴

Greece

On September 14, schools reopen for students, with all students and teachers required to wear masks both indoors and outdoors while on school premises. Un-masked demonstrators gathered in cities across Greece to protest mandatory face mask rules in schools.¹¹⁵ Doctors and opposition MPs are accusing the government of inaccurately reporting the number of COVID-19 cases in order to maintain tourism. The Minister for Civil Protection admitted that only regional data about infection rates was given so that specific holiday destinations did not receive negative publicity.¹¹⁶

Italy

Under Italy's COVID-19 state of emergency, a new decree was issued on September 7 and remains in effect until October 7. Masks remain compulsory in enclosed public spaces and outdoor areas between 6 pm and 6 am. An exception has been made to allow for the reunification of international couples. A

¹¹¹ Walsh, Joe. "Portugal Reports Highest Covid Count In Over 4 Months." *Forbes*. Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2020/09/09/portugal-reports-highest-covid-count-in-over-4-months/>.

¹¹² "Prime Minister Warns Portugal Is Set to Enter 'Critical' Covid Phase." Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/prime-minister-warns-portugal-is-set-to-enter-critical-covid-phase/55635>.

¹¹³ "Schools' Return at Risk as Teachers Threaten Strike over 'Essential Questions' - Portugal Resident." Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://www.portugalresident.com/schools-return-at-risk-as-teachers-threaten-strike-over-essential-questions/>.

¹¹⁴ "Post-Ski Partying Dropped at Austrian Resort at Centre of Pandemic - The Local," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.at/20200822/apres-ski-banned-at-austria-resort-at-centre-of-pandemic>.

¹¹⁵ Anna Wichmann, "Greece: 156 New Covid Cases, Nine in Moria Migrant Camp | GreekReporter.Com," accessed September 8, 2020, <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2020/09/07/greece-156-new-covid-cases-nine-in-moria-migrant-camp/>.

¹¹⁶ "Greek Government Accused of Hiding COVID-19 Cases to Keep Tourists Around," *National Post*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/news/world/greek-government-accused-of-hiding-covid-19-cases-to-keep-tourists-around>.

cap of 1,000 people for outdoor gatherings and 200 people for indoor gatherings remains in effect.¹¹⁷ Schools will reopen on September 14 in most regions in Italy, with a few regional exceptions. Teachers unions have agreed to the detailed plans for safely returning to school, as proposed by the Ministry of Education. Measures include mandatory face mask requirements for students over age 6, a 1 metre distance between students, and a plan to hire additional teachers in an effort to reduce class sizes.¹¹⁸ Schools will have the option to alternate in-person with remote instructions, but the government has stressed the importance of getting students back in class, especially at the primary level.¹¹⁹

Slovenia

On September 1, primary and secondary students returned to school for in-class instruction.¹²⁰ Now in the second week, a number of children are in quarantine due to cases among their classmates. In response, the Education Ministry is developing an app and plans to begin publishing relevant information on a weekly basis. Precarious work in Slovenia has increased due to COVID-19 and the Labour Ministry plans to decide on potential measures following a comprehensive analysis.¹²¹

Switzerland

The government extended the period allowed for placing employees on short-term unemployment from 12 to 18 months, to counteract a rise in unemployment.¹²² The Federal Office of Public Health updated its list of countries deemed high risk, removing Belgium, Mexico, and Luxembourg, while adding several others including, Croatia and Ukraine. Countries on this list are subject to a 10-day quarantine on arrival.¹²³ On September 7, the National Council resumed in plexiglass in order to comply with social distancing requirements. These plexiglass dividers were installed to allow for Parliament to resume if a member tests positive, rather than requiring everyone to quarantine.¹²⁴

EASTERN EUROPE

Czech Republic

Following a major resurgence in COVID-19 infections, the Czech government has decided to extend the compulsory use of masks beyond public transit, common areas of schools, and small buildings, as

¹¹⁷ "Italy's Latest Emergency Decree Extends Most Rules until October 7th," September 7, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.it/20200907/covid-19-italy-extends-rules-until-september-30th-with-new-emergency-decree>.

¹¹⁸ "Covid-19: Italy calls summit on school reopening after teaching staff tests positive." The Local, <https://www.thelocal.it/20200826/covid-19-italy-calls-summit-on-school-reopening-after-teaching-staff-test-positive>.

¹¹⁹ "Covid-19: These Are the Health Measures for Italy's Schools from September." August 6, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.it/20200806/how-will-italy-schools-change-when-they-reopen>.

¹²⁰ "UPDATED 14:30: All Slovenian Primary, Secondary Students Will Go Back to Classrooms 1 September," accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/lifestyle/6785-all-slovenian-primary-secondary-students-will-go-back-to-classrooms-1-september>.

¹²¹ "Morning Headlines for Slovenia: Tuesday, 8 September 2020," accessed September 8, 2020, <https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/news/6911-morning-headlines-for-slovenia>.

¹²² "Coronavirus: The Situation in Switzerland - SWI Swissinfo.Ch," accessed July 14, 2020, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/covid-19_coronavirus--the-situation-in-switzerland/45592192.

¹²³ "Switzerland Takes Belgium and Mexico off Covid-19 'high Risk' List | MENAFN.COM," accessed September 8, 2020, <https://menafn.com/1100760047/Switzerland-takes-Belgium-and-Mexico-off-Covid-19-high-risk-list>.

¹²⁴ "IN PICTURES: Swiss Parliament Resumes in Plexiglass 'Aquariums' - The Local," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.ch/20200909/in-pictures-swiss-parliament-resumes-in-plexiglass-aquariums>.

previously expected from September 1.¹²⁵ On September 9, the Health Minister announced that face masks will be required in all indoor spaces outside of home from September 10 until further notice.¹²⁶ There are 25 exceptions to that requirement, including when eating or drinking in restaurants, exercising in gyms, or working in an office environment where it is possible to maintain at least two meters of distance from others.¹²⁷ Health officials have revealed that most areas of the Czech Republic will move from “white” (zero or negligible risk) to “green” level (low-risk, preventative measures in effect) on the Health Ministry’s regional COVID-19 map.¹²⁸ Currently, Prague is the only region at the “orange,” medium-risk level.¹²⁹ As of September 10, the number of new COVID-19 infections in the Czech Republic has exceeded 1,000 for two days in a row, and has stayed above 400 new cases every day since the beginning of September.¹³⁰ Before August 21, the highest number of COVID-19 cases reported on a single day was 377 on March 27.¹³¹

Hungary

Hungary’s government has imposed a number of precautionary measures in recent days in order to prevent a major resurgence of the COVID-19 in the coming weeks and months. Among the most significant of these measures are new restrictions at Hungary’s border, which came into effect on September 1. Hungarians returning from abroad will now have to self-quarantine for 14 days, or until they produce two negative tests taken two days apart.¹³² Foreign nationals with permanent Hungarian residency (and their close family members), as well as those who hold a permit of stay for more than 90 days, will be treated the same way as Hungarian citizens.¹³³ Foreigners are banned from entering the country, with the exception of Czech, Polish, and Slovak citizens who have booked accommodation in Hungary before September 1 and who are able to produce a negative COVID-19 test within five days of their arrival in Hungary.¹³⁴ Exceptions to the ban will be made for foreigners on official business involving state organizations, those certified to receive healthcare, students with proof of student status, lorry drivers returning home, visitors taking part in family events such as weddings, and participants of international sporting, cultural, or religious events.¹³⁵ In addition to the travel restrictions, Hungary’s Chief Medical Officer has ordered a nationwide ban on visits to hospitals, effective September 8.¹³⁶

¹²⁵ “Extraordinary measures - what currently applies,” *Government of the Czech Republic*, accessed September 10, 2020, https://www.vlada.cz/cz/epidemie-koronaviru/dulezite-informace/mimoradna-opatreni-_co-aktualne-plati-180234/.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ “Degrees of alertness and measures resulting from the current epidemiological situation in the Czech Republic,” *Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://onemocneni-aktualne.mzcr.cz/covid-19/stupne-pohotovosti>.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “Czech Republic coronavirus updates, September 10: 1,161 new cases, masks back on, travel restrictions,” *expats.cz*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://news.expats.cz/coronavirus-in-the-czech-republic/czech-republic-coronavirus-updates-september-10-1161-new-cases-masks-back-on-travel-restrictions/>.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² “Coronavirus: Latest Update on Entry Restrictions in Hungary,” *Hungary Today*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://hungarytoday.hu/coronavirus-hungary-entry-travel-restrictions-update/>.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ “Chief Medical Officer Orders Nationwide Ban on Hospital Visits,” *Hungary Today*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://hungarytoday.hu/coronavirus-chief-medical-officer-nationwide-ban-hospital-visits/>.

Latvia

On September 2, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers approved a number of changes to regulations governing the transport, education and health sectors.¹³⁷ According to certain criteria, shipments to and from countries that have so far been included on Latvia's list of "high-risk" countries will be allowed to resume, but international passenger services will not be available.¹³⁸ On September 4, in response to an increase in COVID-19 cases in Lithuania and Estonia, Latvia's Cabinet also made changes to the legal framework governing the mobility of persons between neighbouring countries.¹³⁹ Considering the close integration between Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the Latvian government exempted those persons who work, study or attend kindergarten on a daily basis in any of the aforementioned countries from mandatory 14-day self-isolation upon arrival.¹⁴⁰ Persons accompanying a minor or an adult student with special needs shall also be exempted from self-isolation.¹⁴¹ In all the above-mentioned cases, travellers will be required to take precautions and use mouth and nose covers in public places.¹⁴² Travellers will be allowed to visit shops, but will not be allowed to receive guests and visit social and public places, as well as rooms with a large number of people -- with the exception of places of work.¹⁴³

Lithuania

Despite a recent resurgence in COVID-19 infections, the Lithuanian government has continued easing restrictions meant to limit the spread of the virus, and will continue to allow most mass events to take place without limits on the number of participants in attendance. As of September 1, organizers of mass events held in closed and open spaces in Lithuania will be allowed to complete electronic ticket sales in order to simplify registration procedures for both organizers and participants.¹⁴⁴ Where organizers of an event are unable to ensure safety, a maximum of 300 spectators and/or participants will be admitted to the event.¹⁴⁵ The Lithuanian Cabinet of Ministers has also approved a Ministry of the Interior proposal to facilitate the arrival of foreigners attending the funeral of a family member.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁷ "The Cabinet reduces restrictions on the spread of Covid-19 in the interests of the economy by setting strict epidemiological safety requirements," *Cabinet of Ministers*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/aktualitates/cabinet-reduces-restrictions-spread-covid-19-interests-economy-setting-strict>.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ "The Cabinet of Ministers adopts a legal framework that ensures the mobility of persons between neighbouring countries," *Cabinet of Ministers*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/aktualitates/cabinet-ministers-adopts-legal-framework-ensures-mobility-persons-between-neighbouring>.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ "The Government simplifies registration procedure for mass events," *KoronaStop*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://lrv.lt/en/news/the-government-simplifies-registration-procedure-for-mass-events>.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Poland

In anticipation of a resurgence of the COVID-19 in the coming weeks and months, Poland's government has announced a number of new rules and regulations aimed at preventing the spread of the virus. From September 8, hospitals exclusively responsible for treating coronavirus patients will be divided into three levels.¹⁴⁷ Patients with suspected COVID-19 symptoms in all hospitals belonging to the hospital network will remain in the facility until the test results are received or, if necessary, life-saving procedures are implemented.¹⁴⁸ In infectious diseases hospitals, separate floors will be provided for the treatment of people infected with COVID-19.¹⁴⁹ Patients already diagnosed with the virus will be referred to specialist hospitals. People who require highly specialized treatment will also be sent to these centers.¹⁵⁰ Changes have also been made to mandatory quarantine requirements. Mandatory quarantine imposed for people crossing the border has been reduced to 10 days, and people who do not have symptoms will not be tested.¹⁵¹

Slovakia

On September 5, Slovakia reported a record single-day increase of 226 new cases of COVID-19.¹⁵² Slovakia's death rate from COVID-19 remains one of the lowest in Europe: 37 fatalities in total since the start of the pandemic.¹⁵³ In order to manage the spread of COVID-19, as of September 10, people who return to Slovakia by air, and have visited a high-risk country during the previous 14 days, are obliged to register electronically by filling an online form.¹⁵⁴ Slovak citizens who return from Ukraine by car are also obliged to register electronically.¹⁵⁵ Upon arrival, travellers should be able to prove to the police their successful registration.¹⁵⁶

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark

Denmark registered 179 new cases of COVID-19 on September 3 in the country's highest daily increase since April. Many of the new cases are linked to a teacher training college, which has since switched to remote learning while more than 1000 students and staff are self-isolating.¹⁵⁷ In response to the new outbreaks, restrictions have been reintroduced in the Copenhagen area. The private gathering limit has been reduced from 100 to 50 people, and no fans will be allowed at any sporting events. All eateries in Copenhagen must close by midnight, and social activities connected to schools must be cancelled.¹⁵⁸ Public sector employees in the region will return to working from home for at least the next two

¹⁴⁷ "Plans for the fall - a strategy to combat the coronavirus pandemic," *Gov.pl*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/plany-na-jesien--strategia-walki-z-pandemia-koronawirusa>.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² "Slovakia reports record spike in coronavirus cases," *The Chronicle Herald*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/world/slovakia-reports-record-spike-in-coronavirus-cases-493497/>.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ "COVID-19: Passengers Returning to Slovakia Should Register Electronically," *schengenvisainfo*, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/covid-19-passengers-returning-to-slovakia-should-register-electronically/>.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ "Denmark Registers Highest Daily Covid-19 Cases since April," September 3, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200903/denmark-registers-highest-daily-covid-19-cases-since-april>.

¹⁵⁸ "Denmark Announces New Restrictions as Coronavirus Cases Increase," September 7, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200907/denmark-announces-new-restrictions-as-coronavirus-cases-increase>.

weeks.¹⁵⁹ The Danish government has advised against travel to France and Croatia as both countries experience a resurgence in new cases.¹⁶⁰ Testing capacity at the Copenhagen Airport will be doubled in the coming days, and new testing centres will be set up throughout the capital region.¹⁶¹ Despite the concerning rise in cases, a new poll showed that the Danish government has among the highest approval ratings in the world concerning its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶²

Estonia

An outbreak in Tallinn has caused local officials to reintroduce some restrictions on schools. All secondary schools in the Estonian capital will move to distance learning, while schools for other age groups should continue to monitor the situation.¹⁶³ However, the head of the government's Scientific Council, Irja Lutsar, has said that she disagrees with the new restrictions -- calling them 'disproportionate' to the situation. Lutsar said that the local government in Tallinn should focus on limiting private parties, since most new cases are linked to them, not schools.¹⁶⁴ The Mayor of Tallinn said that his decision was based on guidelines offered by the Health Board, the country's public health agency. The Mayor said that he believed the city was attempting to anticipate the situation worsening.¹⁶⁵ Officials in Estonia have been negotiating with Latvian and Lithuanian authorities over the maintenance of a 'Baltic Bubble' allowing free travel between the three states.¹⁶⁶ After the infection rate in Estonia and Lithuania rose above the Latvian threshold for travel restrictions, the Estonian foreign minister said that the terms of the agreement need to be adjusted. In addition, a rise in cases around the world has caused the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to advise against all international travel indefinitely.¹⁶⁷

Finland

The Finnish government is considering a rule requiring all travellers present a negative COVID-19 test from their country of origin on arrival and then get tested again once they are in Finland. PM Marin said Finland is looking for ways to allow visitors to enter the country, without easing current restrictions, in order to aid the tourism industry.¹⁶⁸ All remaining restrictions on eateries, including the requirement that every customer have a seat, were extended through the end of September.¹⁶⁹ Confusion surrounding a typo in a press release from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs resulted in some regions tightening their gathering limits.¹⁷⁰ The Ministry kept the gathering limit at 500 people, but a missing zero saw some regional agencies move their limits to 50. The regional agencies said they

¹⁵⁹ "Danish Public Sector Employees to Work from Home Due to Increase in Covid-19 Cases," September 8, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200908/danish-public-sector-employees-to-work-from-home-due-to-increase-in-covid-19-cases>.

¹⁶⁰ "Denmark Advises against Travel to France Due to Increase in Coronavirus Cases - The Local," accessed September 9, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200827/denmark-advises-against-travel-to-france-due-to-increase-in-coronavirus-cases>.

¹⁶¹ "Copenhagen Airport Expands Covid-19 Testing to Meet Demand," September 9, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200909/copenhagen-airport-expands-covid-19-testing-to-meet-demand>.

¹⁶² "Danes Approve of Government Response to Coronavirus Crisis," August 28, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20200828/denmark-scores-highest-public-approval-for-governments-covid-19-response>.

¹⁶³ ERR, "Tallinn Moves Some Classes to Distance Learning," ERR, September 9, 2020, <https://news.err.ee/1132806/tallinn-moves-some-classes-to-distance-learning>.

¹⁶⁴ ERR News |, "Lutsar: Tallinn's New Coronavirus Measures Are Disproportionate," ERR, September 9, 2020, <https://news.err.ee/1132855/lutsar-tallinn-s-new-coronavirus-measures-are-disproportionate>.

¹⁶⁵ ERR | ERR, "Mayor of Tallinn: Move to Distance Learning Based on Health Board Advice," ERR, September 10, 2020, <https://news.err.ee/1133607/mayor-of-tallinn-move-to-distance-learning-based-on-health-board-advice>.

¹⁶⁶ BNS | ERR, "Latvian PM: 'Baltic Bubble' to Cease to Exist This Friday," ERR, September 2, 2020, <https://news.err.ee/1130228/latvian-pm-baltic-bubble-to-cease-to-exist-this-friday>.

¹⁶⁷ ERR News |, "Ministry Recommends Avoiding Foreign Travel," ERR, September 3, 2020, <https://news.err.ee/1130567/ministry-recommends-avoiding-foreign-travel>.

¹⁶⁸ "PM Marin Worried about Rise in Covid Cases as Finland Considers Travel Rule Changes," Yle Uutiset, accessed September 10, 2020, https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/pm_marin_worried_about_rise_in_covid_cases_as_finland_considers_travel_rule_changes/11536464.

¹⁶⁹ "Restaurant Restrictions Extended through September," Yle Uutiset, accessed September 10, 2020, https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/restaurant_restrictions_extended_through_september/11515312.

¹⁷⁰ "Confusion as Ministry and Regional Agencies Differ over Crowd Limits," Yle Uutiset, accessed September 10, 2020, https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/confusion_as_ministry_and_regional_agencies_differ_over_crowd_limits/11513827.

understood that the press release was a mistake, but they intended to keep the lower limit due to increasing infection rates across Europe.¹⁷¹ Nearly one-third of Finland's population downloaded the government's contact tracing app in its first week of availability, totaling 1.8 million downloads.¹⁷²

Iceland

The Chief Epidemiologist of Iceland said that he believes the country is mostly finished with its second wave of COVID-19. As of September 7, Iceland has 76 active cases, and most new cases have been people already in quarantine due to a known exposure point.¹⁷³ As a result, the government eased a number of restrictions. The gathering limit was increased from 100 to 200 people, and Icelanders only need to keep one-metre of distance from one another, not two. Pools and gyms are also able to move from 50% to 75% capacity, while restaurants and bars must continue to close at 11 pm.¹⁷⁴ At least three people have tested positive on their second test after initially testing negative since Iceland introduced their new border testing scheme a few weeks ago. The Chief Epidemiologist said that this means the testing requirement will likely be in place indefinitely -- even as domestic restrictions are eased.¹⁷⁵ All members of the government who were exposed to COVID-19 at a hotel in August have since tested negative twice, allowing them to leave self-isolation.¹⁷⁶

Norway

The per-capita rate of new cases is now higher in Norway than it is in Sweden for the first time since the beginning of April. Public health officials said that two localized outbreaks have driven much of the increase in cases and that the rate in most of the country remains low and stable.¹⁷⁷ The high number of new cases in Norway over the past two weeks have pushed the country above its own quarantine criteria for international travel. Authorities said they did not anticipate dividing Norway into 'green' and 'red' regions as they do internationally, but may implement local restrictions.¹⁷⁸ Norway has since added Hungary, Slovakia, one Danish region, and two Swedish regions to its quarantine list for travellers.¹⁷⁹ The government said that police would issue larger fines for those caught hosting parties that violate the gathering limit. The Justice Minister said police would be given the resources that would allow them to perform these inspections more frequently.¹⁸⁰

Sweden

Public health officials warned Swedes that some self-testing kits have been linked to nearly 4000 false positive tests in the country since the beginning of the pandemic. The test kits were unable to distinguish

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² "Almost One-Third of Finland Downloads Covid Tracing App within a Week," Yle Uutiset, accessed September 10, 2020, https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/almost_one-third_of_finland_downloads_covid_tracing_app_within_a_week/11532166.

¹⁷³ "Iceland Has Tamed Second Wave, Says Chief Epidemiologist," *Iceland Review* (blog), September 7, 2020, <https://www.icelandreview.com/society/iceland-has-tamed-second-wave-says-chief-epidemiologist/>.

¹⁷⁴ "Icelanders Allowed to Move One Meter Closer?," Iceland Monitor, accessed September 10, 2020, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2020/09/04/icelanders_allowed_to_move_one_meter_closer/.

¹⁷⁵ "Three Have Tested Positive: Second Testing 'Imperative,'" Iceland Monitor, accessed September 10, 2020, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/news/2020/08/31/three_have_tested_positive_second_testing_imperativ/.

¹⁷⁶ "Government Members Test Negative for Coronavirus," Iceland Monitor, accessed September 10, 2020, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2020/08/25/government_members_test_negative_for_coronavirus/.

¹⁷⁷ "Norway Coronavirus Infections Outstrip Sweden for First Time since April," September 7, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.no/20200907/norway-coronavirus-infections-outstrip-sweden-for-first-time-since-april>.

¹⁷⁸ "New Covid-19 Cases Make Norway 'red' Country by Own Criteria," September 8, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.no/20200908/new-covid-19-cases-make-norway-red-country-by-own-criteria>.

¹⁷⁹ "Norway Adds Danish Southern Region to Coronavirus Quarantine List," September 8, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.no/20200908/norway-to-add-new-danish-region-to-coronavirus-quarantine-list>.

¹⁸⁰ "Norway to Crack down on House Parties That Break Coronavirus Rules," August 27, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.no/20200827/norway-to-crack-down-on-house-parties-that-break-coronavirus-rules>.

between low levels of COVID-19 and negative samples.¹⁸¹ The Public Health Agency approved the Swedish government's plan to allow some seated events of up to 500 people to take place from October 1. Organizers must comply with social distancing regulations, and further restrictions may be implemented for larger events.¹⁸² However, Swedish police said they would have difficulty monitoring compliance with restrictions if only certain events are permitted to take place. Police officials suggested allowing all events at a lower maximum to take place to more effectively perform inspections.¹⁸³ Sweden met its COVID-19 testing goal for the first time last week, carrying out over 100,000 tests. The goal had been set in mid-April, but various delays pushed back efforts to reach 100,000.¹⁸⁴ The government's advice against non-essential travel to the EU has been extended until September 23 -- and until November 15 for non-EU countries.¹⁸⁵

ASIA/PACIFIC

Japan

Japan has seen a downward trend in daily new infections for the past two weeks. However, Typhoon Haishen may have significantly disrupted the situation in the country. The government has reportedly been unable to use the new information-sharing system for COVID-19 data that was introduced in May, as it is "not yet fully developed."¹⁸⁶ Due to fears about the upcoming flu season coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, health officials are planning to call on elderly people to get a flu vaccination before a possible shortage. The Health Ministry is also boosting virus testing systems before the flu season begins.¹⁸⁷ The Japanese government announced on August 28 that all foreign residents who left Japan before August 31 with a valid re-entry permit were eligible to re-enter Japan from September 1.¹⁸⁸ The government is also easing entry restrictions for long-term residents from Taiwan, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar from September 8. Negotiations are ongoing with other Asian countries.¹⁸⁹

South Korea

The level of daily new infections has dropped from over 300 to below 200 in South Korea over the past two weeks, but authorities remain cautious. As hospital beds filled up in Seoul, public health authorities have been expediting bed turnover by recommending that patients with mild symptoms recover at home. South Korea plans to mass-produce an antibody-based therapy for COVID-19 later this month, with its Phase 2 and Phase 3 clinical trial plans under review.¹⁹⁰ To prevent simultaneous spread of

¹⁸¹ "Sweden Raises Alarm after 3,700 People Test False Positive for Coronavirus," August 25, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200825/sweden-raises-alarm-after-3700-people-test-false-positive-for-coronavirus>.

¹⁸² "Swedish Health Agency Gives Green Light to Seated Events of up to 500 People," August 27, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200827/breaking-sweden-to-allow-public-events-for-up-to-500-people>.

¹⁸³ "Swedish Police Would 'lack Resources' to Enforce Proposals for Larger Events," August 28, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200828/swedish-police-would-lack-resources-to-enforce-proposals-for-larger-events>.

¹⁸⁴ "Sweden Just Met Its Coronavirus Testing Target for the First Time," September 9, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200909/sweden-just-met-its-coronavirus-testing-target-for-the-first-time>.

¹⁸⁵ "Here's the New List of Countries Sweden Warns You Should Avoid Right Now," September 9, 2020, <https://www.thelocal.se/20200909/sweden-extends-travel-warning-for-uk-and-parts-of-eu-update>.

¹⁸⁶ "Problems with COVID-19 data-sharing system," Accessed August 26, 2020, NHK, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20200827_01/

¹⁸⁷ "Elderly encouraged to get flu vaccine early," Accessed August 26, 2020, NHK, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20200826_36/

¹⁸⁸ "Re-entry of foreign nationals with the status of residence," Accessed August 28, 2020, https://www.mofa.go.jp/ca/fna/page4e_001074.html

¹⁸⁹ "Japan eases entry rules for Taiwan, 4 nations," Accessed September 7, 2020, NHK, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20200908_04/

¹⁹⁰ "S. Korea to mass-produce antibody treatment of COVID-19 this month," Accessed September 8, 2020, The Korea Herald, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200908000868&np=3&mp=1>

COVID-19 and influenza, free flu shots will be offered to children, the elderly, and pregnant women through November. Children under 9 years old can receive their flu shot from September 8.¹⁹¹ After weeks of clashes with the government, striking interns and resident doctors are now set to return to work while medical students continue boycotting the licensing examination. The government has promised to reconsider the contested medical reform policies but shows no intention of addressing student demands.¹⁹² Amid political and social controversy over the right to protest, Seoul has banned most of rallies planned for National Foundation Day on October 3.¹⁹³ The nationwide Level 2 social distancing scheme will be in place until September 20, while the Seoul Metropolitan Region will be at the so-called Level 2.5 through September 13. Under Level 2.5 social distancing, only takeout and delivery services are available between 9 pm and 5 am at restaurants, bakeries and bars. Private cram schools and indoor sports facilities were shut down. One-third of all employees working in the government, state-run agencies and public institutions are required to work from home. Dining-in is completely banned at franchise coffee chains, bakeries and ice-cream shops starting September 14. All schools in the Seoul Metropolitan Region will continue offering remote classes, with the exception of classes for high school seniors, until September 20.¹⁹⁴

New Zealand

New Zealand's resurgence of COVID-19 has started to decline, with low levels of daily new infections reported. Health authorities have been working to boost testing capacity in Auckland. As of September 7, all border workers must undergo mandatory testing for COVID-19. 97% of staff in government managed isolation facilities were tested between August 21 and 27 and none returned positive results. Trials of CovidCard, the Bluetooth-based contact tracing device, are still ongoing despite some major contributors pulling out of development.¹⁹⁵ Almost 700 workers at private medical laboratories went on strike last week for better pay, with some impact on the testing turnaround time expected. Partial strikes also happened among primary healthcare workers.¹⁹⁶ Out of caution, Auckland has moved down to Alert Level 2.5 on August 31, with some new restrictions introduced. Most gatherings are limited to 10 people, with authorized funerals and tangihanga limited to 50 people. On the same date, masks were made mandatory on public transport and planes across the country for everyone over the age of 12.¹⁹⁷ Starting September 4, public transport operators are required to display QR codes to facilitate entry logging for passengers.¹⁹⁸

Australia

Australia has experienced a promising few days in its fight against a resurgence of COVID-19. The level of daily new infections in the state of Victoria has dropped to around 100 in recent days. The positivity rate of testing has fallen below 1%. Due to fears of another resurgence, Victoria revealed its roadmap to easing restrictions -- which is dependent on a daily average of 30 to 50 new cases in the

¹⁹¹ "Free flu shots for children under 9 offered starting Tuesday," Accessed September 8, 2020, The Korea Herald, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200908000779&np=4&mp=1>

¹⁹² "Trainee doctors to return to work, but students defiant," Accessed September 7, 2020, The Korea Herald, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200907000990&np=4&mp=1>

¹⁹³ "Seoul bans rallies on Oct. 3 amid controversy," Accessed September 7, 2020, The Korea Herald, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200907000809&np=5&mp=1>

¹⁹⁴ "S. Korea extends Level 2.5 social distancing campaign in Greater Seoul area," Accessed September 5, 2020, The Korea Herald, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200904000288&np=9&mp=1>

¹⁹⁵ "Covid-19: What happened in New Zealand on 1 September," Accessed September 1, 2020, RNZ, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/424993/covid-19-what-happened-in-new-zealand-on-1-september>

¹⁹⁶ "Hundreds of private lab workers go on full-day strike over pay," Accessed September 4, 2020, RNZ, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/425225/hundreds-of-private-lab-workers-go-on-full-day-strike-over-pay>

¹⁹⁷ "Level 2.5' for Auckland comes with specific instructions," Accessed August 31, 2020, RNZ, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/424823/level-2-point-5-for-auckland-comes-with-specific-instructions>

¹⁹⁸ "Covid-19 updates from New Zealand and the world on 26 August," Accessed August 26, 2020, RNZ, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/covid-19/424440/covid-19-updates-from-new-zealand-and-the-world-on-26-august>

state by September 28. Stage 4 restrictions will be extended for another two weeks in Melbourne, with some modifications.¹⁹⁹ All the states and territories aside from Western Australia have come to an agreement to negotiate a uniform definition of COVID-19 hotspots and open up interstate borders by December. However, Western Australia did agree with another plan to boost the number of international arrivals allowed into the country.²⁰⁰ An agreement has been reached between the Australian government and pharmaceutical companies to provide more than 84.8 million vaccine doses -- almost entirely manufactured in Melbourne -- for the Australian population. Early access will be available by February 2021, if trials are successful.²⁰¹ With the improvement in the national situation, states have again started to gradually relax their restrictions at varied paces. Victoria parents can now spend one hour a day outside with their children in addition to one-hour exercising. South Australia eased gathering restrictions on weddings and funerals, eating and drinking at bars, and football attendance from September 5. Employees are also being encouraged to return to their workplaces if safe to do so.²⁰²

Turkey

Turkey announced strict new measures to fight COVID-19 infections on September 7, as the daily infection numbers in the country crossed the 1,000-mark. In all provinces, passengers cannot stand on public transport, and cafes and restaurants will be subject to stricter inspections. The government does not plan to reintroduce a full lockdown but has urged Turks to follow social distancing and hygiene measures. Food and entertainment establishments have also been prohibited from having live or recorded music after midnight.²⁰³ On September 8, Turkey announced that it is scaling back plans to reopen schools later in September, with only the youngest pupils beginning classes at first for up to two days a week. Both in person and remote learning are encouraged.²⁰⁴ Effective September 8, Turkey also mandated the wearing of masks in all public areas including streets, parks, gardens, picnic areas, beaches, public transportation vehicles, workplaces and factories.²⁰⁵

Israel

The level of daily new infections has continued to climb up in Israel. The public health system is seriously overwhelmed by the growing number of COVID-19 patients, especially those in critical condition. The Health Ministry has reportedly sought an immediate nationwide full lockdown lasting for at least a month, but some small businesses and self-employed workers have said they will go against any lockdown order that is implemented.²⁰⁶ After multiple delays, a “traffic light” plan that differentiates between municipalities based on their local infection rates was approved by the government and went into effect on September 6. “Red” municipalities face the strictest restrictions – outdoor gatherings capped at 20 people and gatherings indoors at 10. “Green” municipalities can have gatherings of 250 people outdoors and 100 indoors. However, different restrictions on schools were

¹⁹⁹ “Daniel Andrews reveals Victorian roadmap out of Melbourne lockdown and stage 3 coronavirus restrictions,” Accessed September 7, 2020, ABC News, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-06/victoria-roadmap-from-stage-4-coronavirus-restrictions-melbourne/12634546>

²⁰⁰ “National Cabinet,” Accessed September 4, 2020, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-cabinet-040920>

²⁰¹ “Australia secures onshore manufacturing agreements for 2 COVID-19 vaccines,” Accessed September 7, 2020, <https://www.health.gov.au/news/australia-secures-onshore-manufacturing-agreements-for-2-covid-19-vaccines>

²⁰² “South Australia eases coronavirus restrictions on weddings, funerals, bars and football crowds,” Accessed September 4, 2020, ABC News, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-04/sa-eases-coronavirus-restrictions-on-weddings-funerals-football/12630704>

²⁰³ Hürriyet Daily News. “Turkey Announces Stricter Measures to Curb Spread of Virus - Turkey News,” Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-announces-stricter-measures-to-curb-spread-of-virus-158061>.

²⁰⁴ National Post. “Turkey Scales Back School Reopening amid Rise in COVID-19 Cases,” Accessed September 10, 2020. <https://nationalpost.com/pm/news-pmn/disaster-pmn/turkey-scales-back-school-reopening-amid-rise-in-covid-19-cases>.

²⁰⁵ “Turkey Mandates Mask-Wearing in All Public Areas,” Accessed September 9, 2020. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/health/turkey-mandates-mask-wearing-in-all-public-areas/1966671>.

²⁰⁶ “Small businesses, self-employed threaten ‘anarchy’ if new lockdown imposed,” Accessed September 9, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/small-businesses-self-employed-threaten-anarchy-if-new-lockdown-imposed/#gs.f85mt1>

rejected by the Ministers in order to keep schools open everywhere.²⁰⁷ Despite backlash from ultra-Orthodox leaders, a curfew from 7 pm to 5 am will be in effect in 40 towns and neighbourhoods throughout the country. The curfew started on September 8 and will be in place for at least one week. The curfew closes schools and most businesses.²⁰⁸ Amid reports of widespread public violations of social distancing, mask-wearing and other health guidelines on the first night of the curfew, the acting police chief has ordered enhanced enforcement of the restrictions.²⁰⁹ A controversial phone tracking scheme by the national security agency was extended for 10 days on September 6, less than the 21 days requested by the government. An 8-day strike by technicians at publicly funded testing labs ended on September 6 after an agreement was reached with the government.²¹⁰ At present, non-Israeli passport holders who do not come from countries with low infection rates are banned from entering the country until at least October 1.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ “Ministers okay virus czar’s pandemic plan, but block it from applying to schools,” Accessed August 30, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-okay-virus-czars-pandemic-plan-but-block-it-from-applying-to-schools/#gs.f890ly>

²⁰⁸ “A charade: Nightly curfew in ‘red’ cities mocked as measures go unenforced,” Accessed September 9, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-charade-nightly-curfew-in-red-cities-mocked-as-measures-go-unenforced/#gs.f85w41>

²⁰⁹ “Widespread reports of public flouting health directives as cases shoot up,” Accessed September 9, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/widespread-reports-of-public-flouting-health-directives-as-cases-shoot-up/#gs.f898jo>

²¹⁰ “Virus lab workers end strike as agreement reached with treasury,” Accessed September 6, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/virus-lab-workers-end-strike-as-agreement-reached-with-treasury/#gs.f89g4f>

²¹¹ “Entry ban for non-Israelis extended to October 1,” Accessed August 24, 2020, The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/entry-ban-for-non-israelis-extended-to-october-1/#gs.f89lwv>

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).

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Links

<https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/>

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