

PEARL

**POLICY, ELECTIONS &
REPRESENTATION LAB**



Weekly COVID Update:

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

November 9, 2020

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Foreword

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

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

On our Dashboard, we present unique quantitative data on:

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

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

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

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

Data Visualizations from Dashboard

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

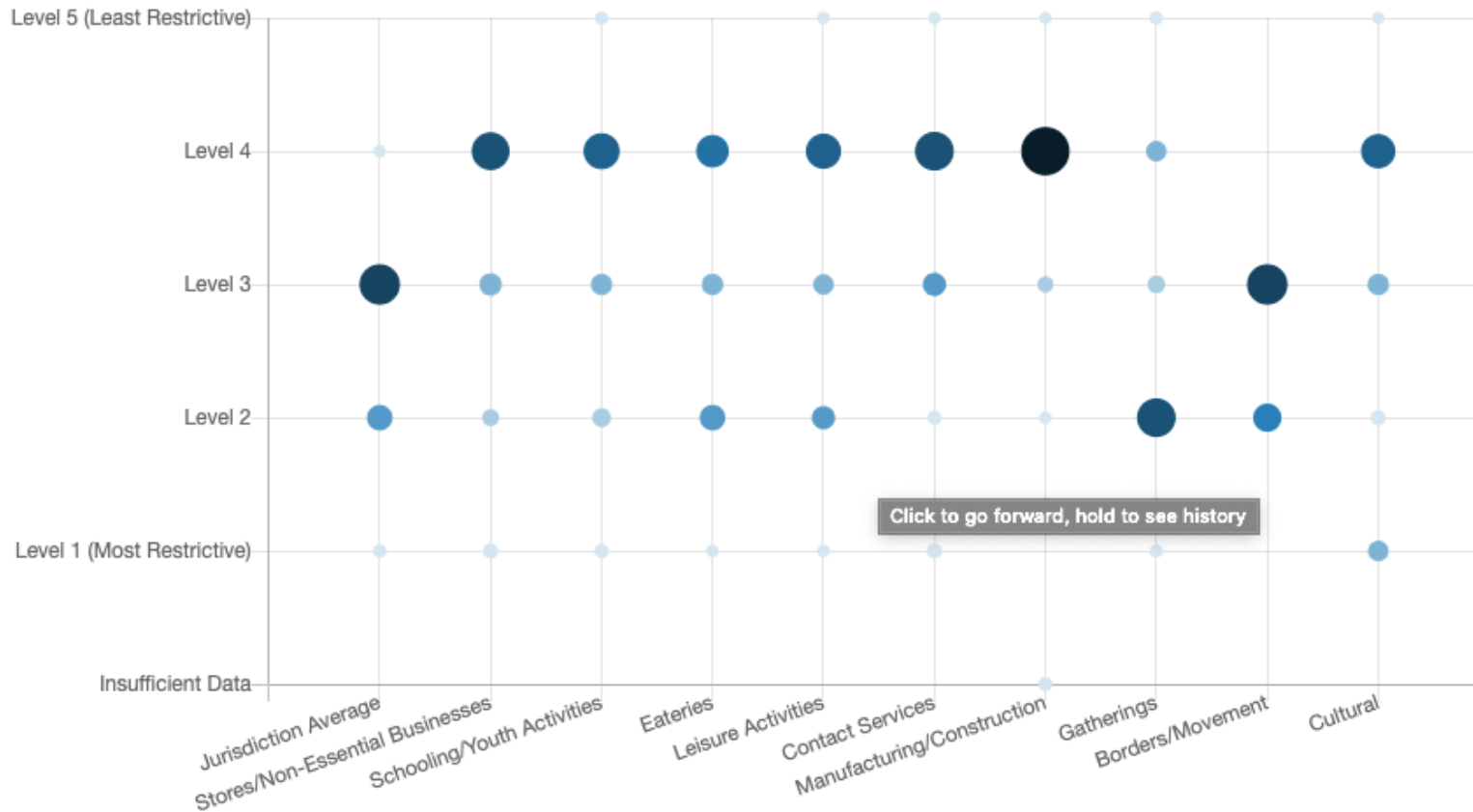


Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 52 different jurisdictions as of November 9. The reopening policies of 52 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses,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

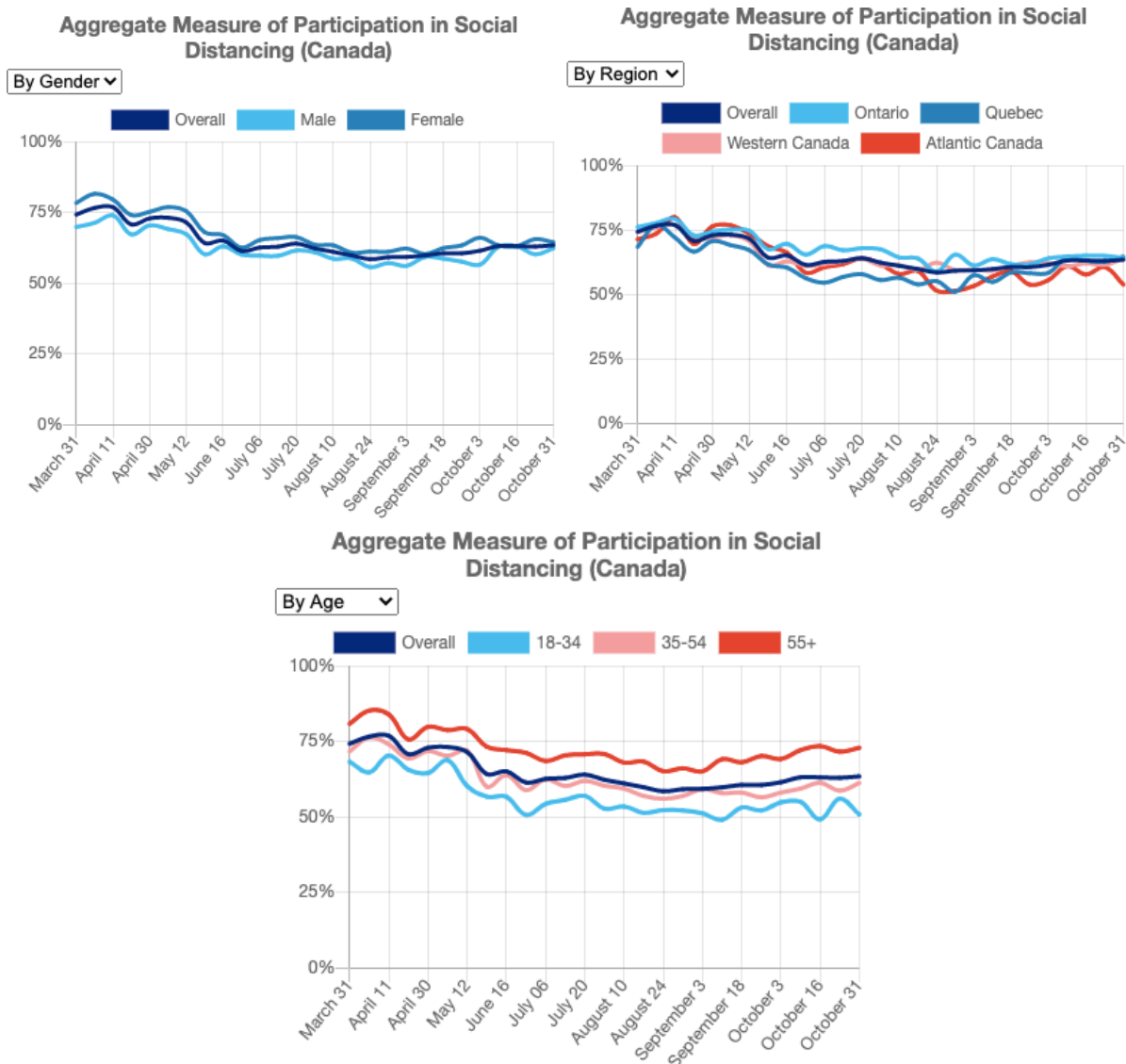


Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada).

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.

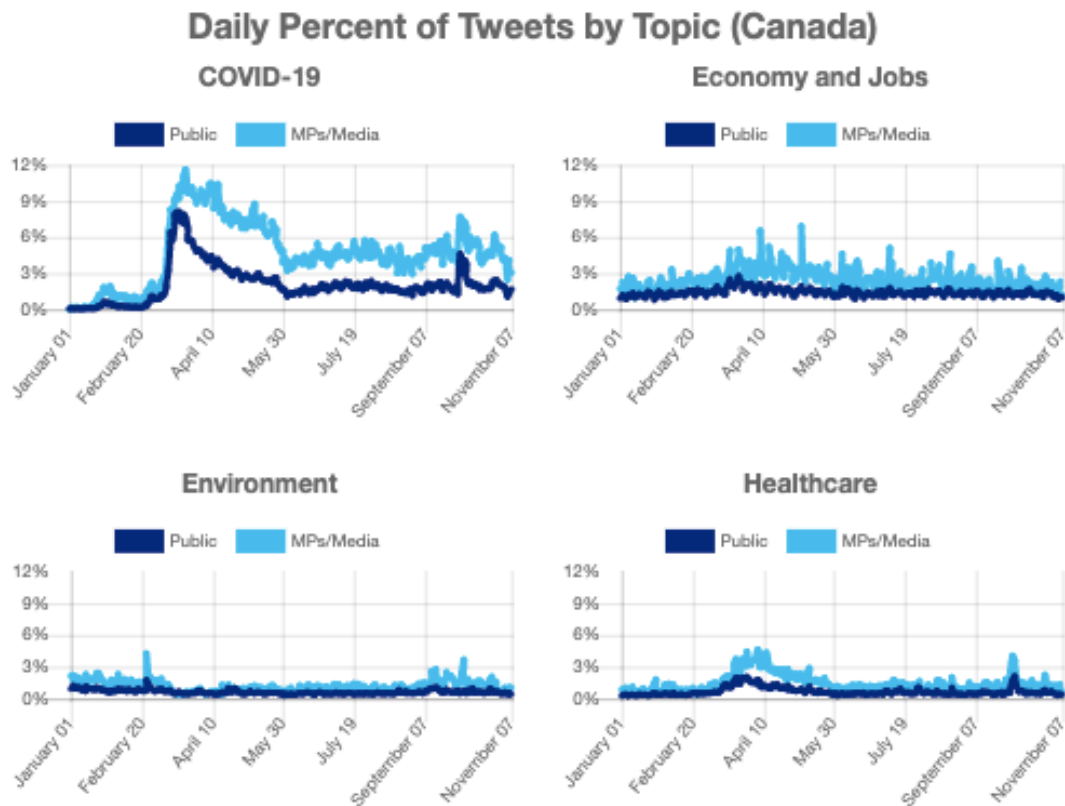
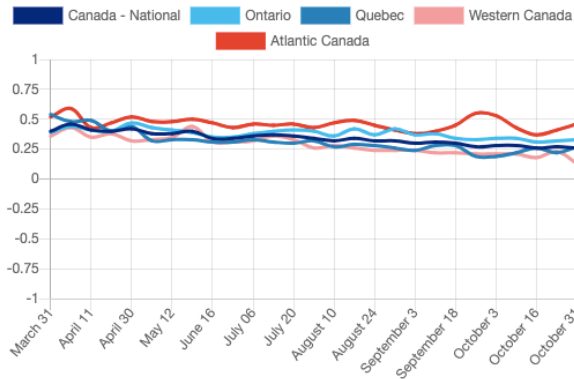


Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada). The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other.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

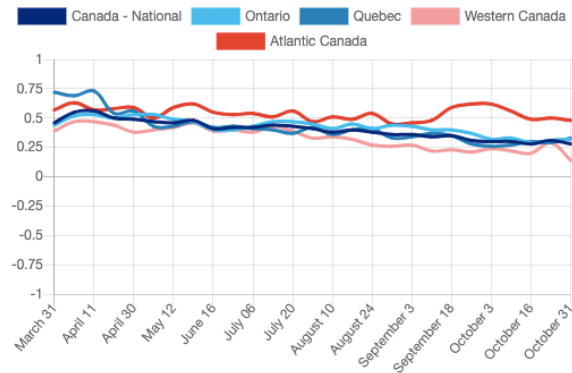
Net Approval of Government Handling of the Pandemic - By Region

Choose Level of Government Rated: **Local**



Net Approval of Government Handling of the Pandemic - By Region

Choose Level of Government Rated: **Provincial**



Net Approval of Government Handling of the Pandemic - By Region

Choose Level of Government Rated: **Federal**

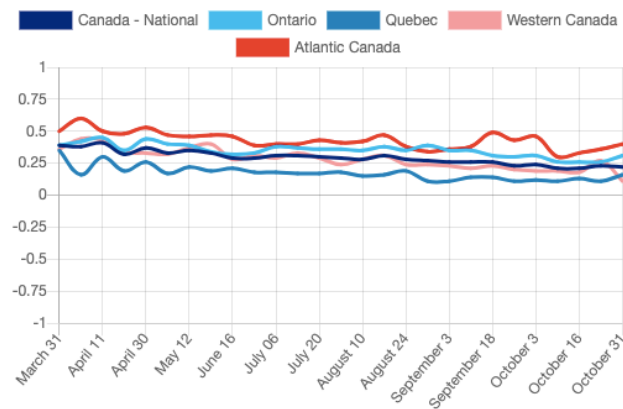


Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region. We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score,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

On November 7, 919 new cases were reported in Alberta -- along with new record highs for hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and active cases.¹ COVID-19 transmission is related to exposure in households or private gatherings but many newly confirmed cases have unknown sources.² Due to high case numbers, contact tracers will no longer be able to notify people in close contact with an infected person. Experts are pressuring the Alberta government to impose new public health measures.³ Alberta has not adopted the national COVID-19 contact tracing app and continues to recommend its own ABTraceTogether app.⁴

→ *British Columbia*

There has been a record-high increase in the number of new cases in British Columbia over the past week. Between November 2 and 7, the number of active cases grew from just above 2,900 to over 3,700. In response to the surge in cases, the provincial health officer issued orders that require “all individuals, places of work and businesses in the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley”, the two worst affected regions, to significantly reduce their level of social interaction and travel. In these regions: social gatherings of any size outside of the immediate household are banned, indoor group physical activities that cannot ensure compliance with social distancing are suspended, non-essential travel in and out of the two regions is restricted, and all workplaces are required to conduct daily health screenings of all onsite employees using the province’s COVID-19 symptom checklist. All restrictions are in place until at least November 23.⁵ All other regions in B.C. are staying at Phase 3 of the provincial reopening plan.

→ *Manitoba*

On November 5, Manitoba recorded 427 new daily cases of COVID-19, with more deaths linked to outbreaks at Winnipeg hospitals and new outbreaks declared in personal care homes.⁶ The government is not considering a curfew in the Winnipeg area. Health officials said that this measure would be premature right now -- given that Winnipeg and the surrounding area are only a few days into the latest heightened public health restrictions. The province plans to increase enforcement, including improvements to its tip line for reporting COVID-19 rule breakers.⁷

→ *New Brunswick*

New Brunswick’s Fredericton region reported one new case on November 8, bringing the province’s total active cases to 24 -- down from 35 active cases on November 1.^{8,9} Most of the province’s active cases are now located in the Fredericton region, which has 11 active cases as of November 8.¹⁰ With just 9 active cases (25 fewer than last week), the Campbellton region has moved back to the “yellow” recovery phase along with the rest of the province.¹¹ Yellow-level restrictions include the reopening of most personal services, gyms, fitness facilities, casinos, cinemas and large performance venues under strict hygienic regimes and limits on capacity.¹² Indoor and outdoor gatherings in yellow-level regions can take place with up to 50 people.¹³

→ *Newfoundland and Labrador*

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there are currently seven active cases. The province remains at Alert Level 2. As Remembrance Day and Christmas approach, the government is reminding the public that outdoor events cannot exceed a maximum of 100 people.¹⁴

→ *Northwest Territories*

There are no active cases remaining in the Northwest Territories. A social media advertising campaign has been launched by the government to encourage residents to wear non-medical masks.¹⁵ The territorial government has not announced any significant changes to restrictions over the past week. NWT is still at Phase 2 of its reopening plan.

→ *Nova Scotia*

Nova Scotia reported four new cases on November 7, bringing the province's total active cases up to 20.¹⁶ Nova Scotia Health has followed up on these confirmations with multiple advisories of potential COVID-19 exposure around the province. The premier has expressed concern over "the recent increase in both the number of cases and public exposure notices."¹⁷

→ *Nunavut*

Nunavut's first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Sanikiluaq. Contact tracing has been initiated and the individual and their family are currently in isolation.¹⁸ A second member of the same household has also tested positive.¹⁹ The government has asked residents of Sanikiluaq to remain at home and avoid contact with people outside their household. All emergency services in the town are operational; masks are mandatory in all grocery stores. The positive case does not affect the territory's travel bubble with the Northwest Territories and Churchill, Manitoba.²⁰ Due to a substantial increase in the number of cases in Manitoba, medical travel from Nunavut's Kivalliq region may be affected.²¹

→ *Ontario*

Ontario's 7-day rolling average has reached a record high of 1,070 cases per day, and the figure is no longer plateauing.²² This week, the Ontario government released a new color-coded approach to introducing restrictions across the province. Health restrictions in red zones, the most restrictive at the moment, include limiting indoor dining capacity and limiting gyms to ten patrons.²³ In comparison, modified Stage 2 had shut all indoor dining. As a result, Peel Region asked that it remain under modified Stage 2, similar to Toronto; the province rejected this request.²⁴ In response, Peel Region is bringing in its own directives, which are stricter than those required for red zones. Ontario says it wants to build capacity for up to 100,000 tests for the novel coronavirus each day by mid-December. The province has never surpassed its current capacity of about 50,000, let alone approached its mid-November target of 68,000.²⁵

→ *Prince Edward Island*

Prince Edward Island has two active cases of COVID-19. There are no reported deaths, hospitalizations, or evidence of community spread in the province. Despite this, the province renewed its state of emergency for an additional month. The premier said that the province continues to look ahead to a time when Atlantic borders can reopen.²⁶

→ *Quebec*

On November 7, Quebec reported 1,234 new cases, 11 new deaths and 16 fewer hospitalizations. As of November 7, the province had approximately 10,161 confirmed active cases.²⁷ All of the Gaspésie region will be at the orange level as of November 11 when Caletto-sur-Mer and Maria progress from red, or maximum alert, to orange.²⁸ As of November 10, the North of Quebec will regress from yellow, or early warning, to orange -- due to an increase in cases and recent outbreaks. Restrictions for schools will go into effect on November 11.²⁹ Montreal's Direction régionale de santé publique has asked the government to ease restrictions for individual training at gyms and sports centers in red zones for physical and mental health.³⁰ The premier said that he does not intend to lift restrictions on restaurants, gyms and sports centers in red zones.³¹

→ *Saskatchewan*

Saskatchewan reported 159 new cases of COVID-19 on November 8, the province's largest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic. There are 1,122 active cases, including 32 hospitalizations.³² The provincial government implemented a mandatory mask policy in all indoor public places in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert on November 6. The province-wide gathering limit was also lowered to 10 people, and covers all religious services, weddings, and funerals.³³ High schools in Regina have also been reduced to 50% capacity, with students attending class on alternate days.³⁴ The leader of the opposition said that the government waited until after the provincial election to implement new restrictions in order to pander to residents who may have been opposed to new public health orders. The premier rejected the assertion that political considerations played any part in the timing of the new restrictions and said that any suggestion that they did was insulting to public health officials.³⁵

→ *Yukon*

No new cases have been reported over the past week. Two active cases remain in Yukon as of November 9. Yukon is now in Phase 3 of its reopening plan, with no significant changes to COVID-19 restrictions announced in the past week. Restrictions on the number of people allowed at gatherings -- 10 indoors and 50 outdoors -- remain unchanged.

The United States

→ *California*

As of November 4, California has seen a 13.5% increase in hospitalizations and a 20% increase in ICU patients over the previous two weeks.³⁶ The state's positivity rate also increased from 2.6% to 3.3% over the past two weeks.³⁷ LA County also reported its highest daily number of cases since August, with no connection to the backlog of cases, and expects that the transmission rate is greater than 1.0.³⁸ There has been a rise in northern California COVID-19 cases, so Shasta County regressed to purple and Plumas County regressed to orange on the government's reopening indicators.³⁹ Orange County will also be regressing to purple in response to the rise in cases and an outbreak at a long term care home.⁴⁰ Nevada County may also regress from orange to red, which officials associate with COVID-19 fatigue.⁴¹ Colusa County is progressing from red to orange.⁴²

→ *Illinois*

Illinois' seven-day average testing positivity rate, the metric experts use to gauge how rapidly the virus is spreading, soared to 10.6% on November 8 -- up from 8% one week ago.⁴³ Illinois is averaging about 9,710 new infections each day this month, up sharply from October's average of 3,777 cases per day.⁴⁴ Each of the state's 11 regions is now operating under tightened restrictions, including a suspension of indoor service at bars and restaurants.⁴⁵ According to the governor, the pace of testing is not catching up with how quickly the virus is spreading.⁴⁶

→ *Michigan*

Michigan's seven-day moving average has again drastically climbed to 4,200 new cases per day, compared to 870 cases one month ago.⁴⁷ In response, some districts have returned to online schooling for the foreseeable future due to staff getting increasingly ill.⁴⁸ The governor continues to use her power through the authority of Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) director after last month's Supreme Court ruling that classified as illegal the governor's unilateral executive orders regarding COVID-19 restrictions.

→ *New York*

New York's positivity rate is 3.72% in "focus zone" areas and 2.23% outside those areas.⁴⁹ The governor is concerned with the slight increase since last week: the target is a 1% positivity rate.⁵⁰ The micro-cluster strategy continues to be a success as red zones in Brooklyn and Queens start to reopen. Rockland's red zone has seen its positivity rate decline from 9.8% to 3.6%, meeting the metrics for transitioning from a red zone to an orange warning zone.⁵¹ Last week, the governor announced new guidelines allowing out-of-state travellers to New York to waive the mandatory 14-day quarantine by getting tested on day four after their arrival. If that test comes back negative, the traveller may exit quarantine.⁵² As expected, ski resorts began opening for the season on November 6, with restrictions, such as 50% capacity indoors and capacity on mountains reduced to 25% during "peak" days.⁵³

→ *Texas*

On November 6, Texas reached more than one million confirmed COVID-19 cases. The state reported a 10% increase in COVID-related deaths over the last two weeks.⁵⁴ As of November 6, 94% of Texas' cases and 91% of its COVID-19 deaths have been reported since the end of May and after Texas' reopening began.⁵⁵ A judge upheld an El Paso County official's decision to shut down nonessential businesses. Three Air Force medical teams were deployed to El Paso by state request.⁵⁶ Ten other Texas cities are receiving Department of Defence medical assistance.⁵⁷

Mexico

On November 7, Mexico reported a daily increase of 6,810 COVID-19 cases and 485 fatalities, bringing the country to 961,938 total cases and 94,808 total deaths.⁵⁸ The US-Mexico land borders will be closed to non-essential travel until November 21.⁵⁹ Beginning the week of November 9, Durango will join Chihuahua in red, or phase one, on the country's federal reopening stoplight system.⁶⁰ All other states are in either orange, stage two, or yellow, stage three.⁶¹ Jalisco imposed additional restrictions set to last up to two weeks.⁶² The restrictions will continue through November 13 and include a curfew on non-essential activity between 7 pm and 6 am Monday to Friday and all day on the weekends. Public transit will stop after 8 pm in Jalisco.⁶³ In Puerto Vallarta, restrictions on non-essential activity will go into effect from 7 pm to 6 am seven days a week. This affects squares, commercial places, religious activity, service activities, mechanics and more. Hotels, with the exception of common spaces, can remain open. Gatherings are limited to ten indoors and 50 outdoors.⁶⁴

Chile

On November 7, Chile reported 1,568 daily new cases and 49 new deaths -- as well as 734 people in the hospital, 584 people on ventilators, and 100 people in critical care.⁶⁵ The country remains in a state of catastrophe with a curfew that comes into force at night.⁶⁶ AstraZeneca received approval to enter clinical trials for its COVID-19 vaccine in Chile.⁶⁷ Chile has conducted the most COVID-19 tests in Latin America and officials claim that it is an important aspect of their COVID-19 traceability plan.⁶⁸

WESTERN EUROPE

France

France's 7-day moving average of new cases has increased again by more than 10,000 cases in one week and is now at 54,000 cases per day.⁶⁹ The nation confirmed a record 87,000 new COVID-19 cases on November 7. As of that day, 87.2% of intensive-care capacity was occupied by patients infected with the virus, an increase from 85.4% on November 6. In mid-August, the rate touched a low of around 7% after peaking at nearly 139% in April. After processing two million tests last week, the average positivity rate of tests stood at 20.6%.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, the health minister is debating whether checks

should be carried out on people who test positive for COVID-19 to make sure they are isolating at home. This came after reports of asymptomatic individuals who knew that they had COVID-19 and were still going to work. The country is currently in an intense lockdown, and the government has not announced more restrictions on top of those implemented last week.⁷¹

Germany

Germany's 7-day R-value has decreased below the 1.0 threshold, and is now at 0.97.⁷² On November 6, the country confirmed 22,250 cases -- a record number. Due to the low R-value, it is expected that the number of cases will decrease this week. Numerous clusters are connected to private gatherings, celebrations, religious events, along with settings like long-term care homes.⁷³ Last week, the federal government announced a "lockdown light," with the aim of decreasing the number of new infections to about 50 cases per 100,000 people over a 7-day period -- so that local public health offices could once again trace all contacts.⁷⁴ There are currently 139 cases per 100,000 over a 7-day period, and the government is unable to trace 75% of new cases.⁷⁵ There have been no added restrictions since last week, but the chancellor is urging Germans to abide by hygiene and distancing rules so that health care services don't collapse as the country records more ICU admissions of COVID-19 patients than at any point since the pandemic began.⁷⁶ German officials condemned the actions of 20,000 people who demonstrated against the new COVID-19 restrictions on November 8 by purposefully jamming together in a city square largely without wearing masks.⁷⁷

Belgium

While the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 is decreasing, hospitalizations and deaths continue to rise in Belgium.⁷⁸ The rates of cases and hospital admissions are double the current European average. Last week, Belgium entered its second national lockdown.⁷⁹ Unions representing retail workers have agreed on a set of rules to better protect shop workers during the second wave.⁸⁰

Netherlands

On November 6, the number of positive COVID-19 cases rose by 288 in the previous 24 hours, for a total of 7,272 cases.⁸¹ The government announced a further tightening of existing measures that came into effect on November 4 and will be in place for two weeks. The measures include a maximum of two people from different households permitted to gather indoors and outdoors. Masks are compulsory in indoor public spaces and on public transport for everyone 13 and older. Amusement parks, cinemas, community centers, museums, and live theaters are closed, along with swimming pools, sex clubs and zoos. However, most fitness centers remain open only for individual training. Starting November 9, weddings cannot exceed 20 people and funerals are capped at 30 people. Retail stores will close at 8 pm but grocery stores can remain open. Between 8 pm and 7 am, no alcohol can be sold or consumed in public spaces. School closures and curfews in high risk areas are under consideration.⁸²

Spain

On November 6, Spain reported 22,516 new daily cases and 347 new daily deaths. This marks the most daily deaths since April.⁸³ With the exception of the Canary Islands, Spain still has a curfew.⁸⁴ Asturias' request to close bars and impose a home confinement was denied on November 2.⁸⁵ Castillas and Leon closed bars and restaurants and requested additional national measures on November 3.⁸⁶ As of November 10, non-essential businesses must close by 6 pm and a curfew will run from 10 pm to 7 am in Asturias -- with the exception of Granada because it is in lockdown.⁸⁷ Bars and restaurants are now allowed open in Madrid, with capacity limits, but must close by 11 pm.⁸⁸ The health minister said that

after two to three weeks of the current restrictions, including the national curfew and other regional restrictions, the government will be able to determine whether additional restrictions are necessary.⁸⁹

The United Kingdom

The UK's 7-day rolling average has plateaued at around 22,000 new cases per day.⁹⁰ On November 4, a national lockdown in England began after British lawmakers approved the measure in parliament.⁹¹ Accordingly, until December 2, people are ordered to stay at home during this period, and should only leave for a limited number of exceptions, including: education if it is not provided online, work if it cannot be done from home, and for exercise as many times a day as they wish. Non-essential shops, leisure and entertainment venues must all close.⁹² In Wales, the 17-day firebreak lockdown ended on November 9 -- prompting the Welsh government to ease restrictions. Groups of up to four people can now meet in cafes, pubs and restaurants. Shops, gyms, hairdressers and places of worship will also reopen. Restrictions in Northern Ireland remain in place, but schools may now reopen. Scotland has the fewest restrictions in place; pubs and restaurants remain open there.⁹³

Ireland

The R-rate of COVID-19 transmission in the Republic of Ireland has dropped below 1. The health minister said that the R- rate currently lies between 0.7 and 0.9. This comes two weeks after the Irish government imposed its toughest level 5 restrictions nationwide. The measures, broadly similar to the spring lockdown, are to be in place for six weeks but will be reviewed after four weeks.⁹⁴ Ireland's chief medical officer credited young people, ages 19-24, for the decline in COVID numbers -- saying that they have been very respectful of the measures in place by avoiding large gatherings in the form of parties and events.⁹⁵

Luxembourg

On November 4, the ministry of health recorded 710 new cases of COVID-19 in the country.⁹⁶ Following the rise in cases, the government announced a ban on travellers arriving from Canada, the Republic of Georgia, and Tunisia -- effective November 9. These restrictions will remain in place until December 31. The education ministry announced that pupils and teaching staff will soon be able to benefit from tests administered directly in schools. The ministry is considering imposing a partial remote-learning program for some classes in secondary schools.⁹⁷

Portugal

On November 4, Portugal registered 7,497 new cases -- the highest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic.⁹⁸ Effective November 4, partial confinement came into force in 121 municipalities in mainland Portugal where there is a "high risk of transmission of COVID-19". As a result, there is a duty to stay at home, except for authorized travel such as shopping, work, teaching, and physical activity. The measures will stay in place until November 15. The state of calamity was also extended throughout the national continental territory until November 19. In these territories, all commercial establishments and cultural activities must close by 10 pm -- except for restaurants, which have until 10:30 pm to close. The number of people in each group in restaurants is limited to six, unless they belong to the same household. Events and celebrations cannot exceed five people, with exceptions for larger households. Religious ceremonies and shows are permitted, following the rules of the Directorate General of Health.⁹⁹

CENTRAL EUROPE

Austria

On November 7, 8,241 new daily cases were reported.¹⁰⁰ Austria introduced several new measures that came into effect on November 3 and will remain in place until November 30. Restaurants and bars are closed but can offer takeout services. Hotels are closed to tourists but remain open for business travellers. Events, such as concerts and plays, are cancelled and culture and leisure facilities are closed with the exception of libraries. Shops and client services can remain open -- with at least 10 square metres of space per customer required. A curfew is in place until November 12 from 8 pm to 6 am. Ski resorts and cable cars have closed to the general public but will remain open to professional teams for training.¹⁰¹ Due to the second wave, the health minister reported that there is a high possibility that all the intensive care beds will be full within the next two weeks.¹⁰²

Greece

On November 7, Greece reported 2,555 new daily cases. In response to rising COVID-19 cases, the prime minister announced a three-week national lockdown that will take effect on November 7. Citizens must notify officials by text message prior to leaving their homes and may only do so for work, exercise, and doctor appointments. Non-essential retail businesses will close, and restaurants will only remain open for takeout. Daycares and elementary schools will stay open but high schools will be moved online. The prime minister said that the measures are necessary due to the aggressive increase in cases that will overwhelm hospitals.¹⁰³

Italy

On November 8, Italy reported 39,809 new daily cases of COVID-19. An emergency decree came into effect on November 6 that divides Italy into a three-tier colour-coded system: red (high-risk), orange (medium-risk), and yellow (low-risk). Measures vary within these regions, with the most restrictive measures in red zones, which are in place in the Lombardy, Piedmont, and Calabria regions. In high risk areas, people are prohibited from moving within zones and may only leave their homes for work, health purposes, or to take their children to school. Distancing learning will begin for students in their final two years of middle school; high school and eateries would remain closed.¹⁰⁴ In yellow zones, only national restrictions are in place, which include closure of shopping centres on weekends, a curfew on eateries, and a complete shutdown of theatres, gyms, and pools. "The prime minister is struggling to build a coalition supporting more restrictive measures after protests emerged across Italy from workers and small businesses owners."¹⁰⁵

Slovenia

In Slovenia, the number of daily new infections is decreasing but fatalities and hospitalizations continue to rise.¹⁰⁶ Distance learning will begin for both primary and secondary school students. While kindergartens remain closed, childcare remains available for parents working in essential services. The government extended restrictions on gatherings and on movement between municipalities. Shops and contact services may remain open but there is a one customer per 30 square metres limit in stores. In Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, hundreds of anti-restriction demonstrators gathered inciting violence between people and police.¹⁰⁷

Switzerland

On November 7, there were 10,098 reported daily new infections in Switzerland.¹⁰⁸ Several cantons have begun enforcing additional restrictions that go beyond those mandated by the Swiss Federal Council on October 28. Geneva is currently in a local lockdown and has closed bars, restaurants, non-essential shops, and leisure establishments. On November 2, rapid antigen tests were made available that provided results within 15 minutes.¹⁰⁹

EASTERN EUROPE

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic reported 7,722 new cases of COVID-19 on November 7, three days after setting a new single-day record of 15,731 new cases on November 4.¹¹⁰ On November 9, a new travel regime took effect in the Czech Republic following the end of a broader travel ban that lasted from October 22 to November 3.¹¹¹ Under the new rules, EU citizens will be allowed to enter the Czech Republic, provided that they are entering from an “epidemiologically safe” country. Foreigners from outside of the EU remain banned from entering the country.¹¹² The Czech Republic will remain in a state of emergency until at least November 20.

Hungary

The Hungarian government reinstated a national state of emergency on November 4¹¹³ after reporting a single-day record of 4,219 new cases of COVID-19 on the same day.¹¹⁴ On November 6, 4,709 new cases were reported, followed by another 5,318 on November 7.¹¹⁵ Hungary’s renewed state of emergency will last for up to 90 days and will include several new restrictions related to movement, hygiene, and the economy.¹¹⁶ On November 4, a national curfew was imposed, requiring all residents to be at home between midnight and 5 am.¹¹⁷ Masks are required at all times in most public places, including on public transport, at outdoor public events, and in cinemas, shopping malls, and restaurants.¹¹⁸ Entry restrictions for most travellers from abroad remain in force.¹¹⁹ Additional ongoing restrictions include a ban on visiting hospitals and elderly care homes.¹²⁰ Hungarian police will strictly monitor compliance with these rules, impose fines, and close locations where regulations are not followed.¹²¹

Latvia

A national state of emergency was declared in Latvia on November 9, which will remain in effect until at least December 6.¹²² Under the renewed state of emergency, all in-person public events are cancelled and banned.¹²³ No more than 10 people may participate in private meetings, and no more than 50 people may participate in public gatherings.¹²⁴ Gambling venues and bars, skating rinks, entertainment and amusement centres, and playgrounds will be closed.¹²⁵ Public nature paths will be available for individual visitors. Museums, exhibitions, libraries and other cultural venues will remain open.¹²⁶ No sporting events will be allowed to take place, and no more than 10 people may participate in outdoor sporting events.¹²⁷ The use of change rooms will be prohibited, and all athletic venues and sports clubs must close by 10 pm.¹²⁸ Food service venues may only serve food as take-out.¹²⁹ Beauty, piercing and tattoo parlours will be closed. Hairdresser services will be allowed, subject to prior appointment.¹³⁰ Teaching for Year 1 to Year 6 will be in person.¹³¹

Lithuania

All Lithuanian municipalities were moved to the red “quarantine” zone on the country’s three-tiered risk classification system on November 4 -- effectively putting the country in a state of lockdown.¹³² From November 7 to 29, all commercial and non-commercial cultural, entertainment and sporting events in public places will be prohibited in the country -- with the exception of high-level professional sports competitions (without spectators) and funerals with a maximum of 10 participants.¹³³ Visits to cultural, leisure, entertainment, and sports facilities are also prohibited -- with the exception of libraries and some individual physical activity sessions.¹³⁴ Catering establishments will not be able to serve visitors on site, but will be able to provide takeaway and delivery services.¹³⁵ It is forbidden to gather in public places in groups of more than five people, except for family members, and it is mandatory to keep a distance of at least two metres from other people or groups of people.¹³⁶ Pre-school children and primary school pupils will be able to continue attending educational establishments, while older students will begin remote learning.¹³⁷

Poland

Poland's Health Ministry reported a record 27,875 new cases of COVID-19 on November 7.¹³⁸ There have been over 10,000 new infections in Poland every day since October 21, and over 15,000 every day since October 27.¹³⁹ The entirety of Poland moved to the red zone on October 24, which means that all Polish Powiats are now subject to the same restrictions.¹⁴⁰ All secondary, post-secondary, and primary school students above grade 3 have moved to remote learning.¹⁴¹ All sporting events must be organized without spectators.¹⁴² Cultural events must take place with fewer than 25 people, provided that they are able to maintain at least 1.5 metres distance between each other.¹⁴³ All restaurants and catering establishments are prohibited from operating, except for takeout and delivery services.¹⁴⁴ Swimming pools, theme parks, spas, and fitness facilities are prohibited from operating.¹⁴⁵ Public gatherings are limited to 5 participants.¹⁴⁶ Wedding and funeral services are prohibited.¹⁴⁷ Masks must be worn at all times outside of the home.¹⁴⁸ Contact services are allowed to continue, subject to a strict hygienic regime and staggered appointments.¹⁴⁹

Slovakia

Slovakia’s government has tested 4.5 million people out of its 5.5 million population for COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks using rapid antigen tests.¹⁵⁰ The tests are voluntary and free of charge.¹⁵¹ Just over 1%, or 38,000, of the tests administered so far have come back positive.¹⁵² The government declared a state of emergency earlier this month in response to this surge in infections.¹⁵³ Secondary schools have switched to remote learning. All mass events, including church services, are banned. Fitness centres and pools are closed and restaurants can only serve clients outdoors.¹⁵⁴

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark

Denmark reported 1,427 new cases of COVID-19 on November 7 in the country’s largest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic. This is the third consecutive week that Denmark has experienced its largest number of daily new cases.¹⁵⁵ The government announced that it planned to cull all of the country’s nearly 17 million minks after a mutated strain of COVID-19 found in the animals has since spread to humans. The prime minister said that the mutation poses significant risks for the efficacy of a future vaccine and that the euthanization was necessary.¹⁵⁶ However, talks with opposition parties regarding the plan have since stalled after they characterized the plan as an overreaction.¹⁵⁷ Due to a high concentration of mink farms in the region, the government has asked residents of North Jutland

not to leave their home municipalities and has closed all restaurants, bars, leisure and cultural activities, and public transit. Most schools in the area have moved to online learning.¹⁵⁸ Public health officials are preparing to perform mass testing of the entire population of the region.¹⁵⁹

Estonia

Estonia reported 241 new cases of COVID-19 on November 6 -- the country's largest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁶⁰ As of November 9, the 14-day average of new cases is 137.1 per 100,000 people.¹⁶¹ The foreign minister said that Estonia is currently in the "active growth" phase of the pandemic, with the high number of daily new cases likely to continue even if the government introduces restrictions.¹⁶² The government will likely re-introduce mandatory social distancing orders next week, and will meet to discuss implementing other new restrictions on November 10.¹⁶³ All travellers entering Estonia must quarantine upon their arrival, though exemptions remain for some travellers from Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹⁶⁴ Public health officials will be unable to provide detailed regional data moving forward due to the high number of cases.¹⁶⁵

Finland

As of November 9, the two-week average of new cases in Finland is 50 per 100,000 people.¹⁶⁶ Public health officials have said that the COVID-19 infection rate is on a slight upward trend in the country, though the situation is much less dire than in the rest of Europe. Contact tracing has been able to find the origin of 60% of the new cases -- an improvement over the past few weeks. Most new infections have been found in young people.¹⁶⁷ The mutated strain of COVID-19 found in minks in Denmark has prompted Finnish officials to ramp up the testing of animals at fur farms around the country. Testing will commence at all farms within the next few weeks.¹⁶⁸

Iceland

Public health officials in Iceland are optimistic as the number of daily new domestic cases has continued to fall over the past week. However, the chief epidemiologist said that it is not the time to ease restrictions because the hospital system is still under strain. Iceland has now reported more deaths from COVID-19 over the past month than they did during the initial wave of the pandemic in the spring. The government has encouraged all Icelandic residents to stay home as much as possible.¹⁶⁹ The government announced that it will test for COVID-19 at all mink farms in the country due to the mutated strain found in the animals in Denmark. There is no suspicion of any infection in the animals at this time, and authorities will decide on next steps if any infection is found.¹⁷⁰

Norway

Norway reported 705 new cases of COVID-19 on November 3 -- the country's largest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁷¹ As a result, the prime minister announced that social distancing from people in at-risk groups is mandatory and that the gathering limit was lowered to 20 for private events, 50 for indoor non-seated public events, and 200 for indoor seated public events. All travellers from high-risk countries must present a negative test result upon their arrival, and those without an address or employer in Norway must spend their quarantine period at an isolation facility.¹⁷² Local officials in Oslo have banned all indoor events, closed all cultural and leisure activities, and banned the serving of alcohol at all restaurants and bars.¹⁷³ The city of Bergen also issued significant local restrictions: working from home is now mandatory, all leisure and cultural facilities must close, restaurants and bars must close at 10 pm, and the gathering limit was lowered to 20 people in all circumstances.¹⁷⁴

Sweden

Sweden reported 4,034 cases of COVID-19 on November 4 in the country's largest daily increase since the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁷⁵ The government announced that no more than 8 people may share a table at any restaurant nationwide.¹⁷⁶ The local recommendations -- avoid high-risk activities, stay at home as much as possible, and avoid crowded indoor public places, among others -- outlined by the government a few weeks ago have since been introduced in ten regions covering over 70% of the population of Sweden.¹⁷⁷ The government has extended its recommendation against travelling to countries outside the EU/EEA until January 31, 2021.¹⁷⁸ The prime minister is self-isolating after he was exposed to an individual who later tested positive for COVID-19.¹⁷⁹ Outbreaks of COVID-19 have been found at several Swedish mink farms, but the mutated strain of the virus found in Denmark has not been present.¹⁸⁰

ASIA/PACIFIC

Japan

The number of daily new cases in Japan is now on the rise, topping 1,000 over the past weekend. Multiple regions are reporting increases in new cases, adding to the sense of pressure. The northern prefecture of Hokkaido has decided to raise its alert level from 2 to 3 on a scale of five. From November 7 to 27, bars and nightclubs in the major entertainment district are asked to close at 10 pm, while karaoke shops and restaurants will stop serving alcohol by 10 pm.¹⁸¹ The transport ministry has approved a measure allowing 10 taxi operators in Tokyo to reject passengers who refuse to wear face masks without proper reasons. Other taxi operators and public transport systems may follow suit.¹⁸² Japan and China have agreed to resume round-trip business travel between the two countries from mid-November, applying to both short-term and long-term trips.¹⁸³

South Korea

South Korea has been reporting around 100 new cases a day over the past week. While the overall situation seems under control, the government is on alert over a potential resurgence. According to public health officials, "the infections are spreading faster than contact tracing."¹⁸⁴ Health authorities have expanded the availability of COVID-19 tests for patients and staff at nursing facilities across the country. A test kit has been approved that can diagnose both COVID-19 and seasonal influenza.¹⁸⁵ As South Korea moves to formally impose fines on people who fail to wear masks in public, the government is preparing extra masks for public facilities to distribute.¹⁸⁶ South Korea shifted to its revised 5-tier social distancing scheme on November 7. As of November 9, the entire country is at Level 1 except for the South Chungcheong province, where social distancing rules were raised to Level 1.5 due to a surge in cases there. Under Level 1.5, multi-use facilities are restricted.¹⁸⁷

New Zealand

Single-digit new community cases were reported in New Zealand over the past week, all of which have been linked to government-managed isolation facilities. An 8-week wastewater pilot program is being rolled out across the country to detect the possible existence of COVID-19 in the community.¹⁸⁸ A new ministerial-level position in New Zealand's cabinet has been created for its COVID-19 response. The minister will be responsible for the pandemic and other health challenges at the same time.¹⁸⁹ The whole country remains at alert level 1, with no restrictions on movement, gathering, businesses, or activities.

Australia

Australia reported almost no new locally acquired cases this week. Victoria has been recording no new cases or new deaths for more than a week. Residents of Melbourne are allowed to move beyond 25 km from home and enter regional Victoria as of November 9. State-level restrictions now apply equally across Victoria: hospitality venues may seat 70 people outdoors or 40 indoors, gyms and fitness studios can reopen for up to 20 people, religious gatherings and funerals can have 50 people outdoors or 20 indoors, non-contact indoor youth sports can resume, and indoor pools can operate with up to 20 swimmers at a time. The Victorian government is working on a plan to accept international flights.¹⁹⁰ The gathering limit in the Australian Capital Territory was raised to 500 people (from 200), and customers no longer have to be seated while eating and drinking as of November 13.¹⁹¹ The Australian government announced a \$1.5 billion investment in two potential COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Novavax -- giving it 4 candidates to choose from.¹⁹²

Turkey

On November 7, Turkey registered 2,213 new COVID-19 patients over 24 hours.¹⁹³ Turkey is reluctant to implement tough measures to combat the spread of the virus. However, effective November 3, all restaurants, bars, hairdressers, barbers, cinemas, entertainment venues, and businesses are advised to close by 10 pm. Flexible working hours across both the private and public sectors are encouraged. However, mosques and schools remain open. The new measures have been criticized by Turkish healthcare workers' and doctors' unions for not being strict enough.

Israel

Israel reported a dramatic decrease in its number of daily new cases, and the situation appears to be stabilizing. Cases have been increasing by around 700 a day over the past two weeks. The health ministry announced that an Israeli-developed system to expedite PCR-test processing would be rolled out in the coming weeks.¹⁹⁴ Despite objections from top public health officials, the Israeli cabinet voted to allow street-front stores to reopen in areas with the lowest infection rates as of November 8 -- subject to capacity limits and other public health regulations.¹⁹⁵

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