

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 44 different jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, and 5 Canadian provinces.
- Trends in social distancing in Canada.
- Trends in social media attention to COVID-19 and selected other topics.
- Trends in support for federal, provincial, and local government management of COVID-19.

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

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

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

Data Visualizations from Dashboard

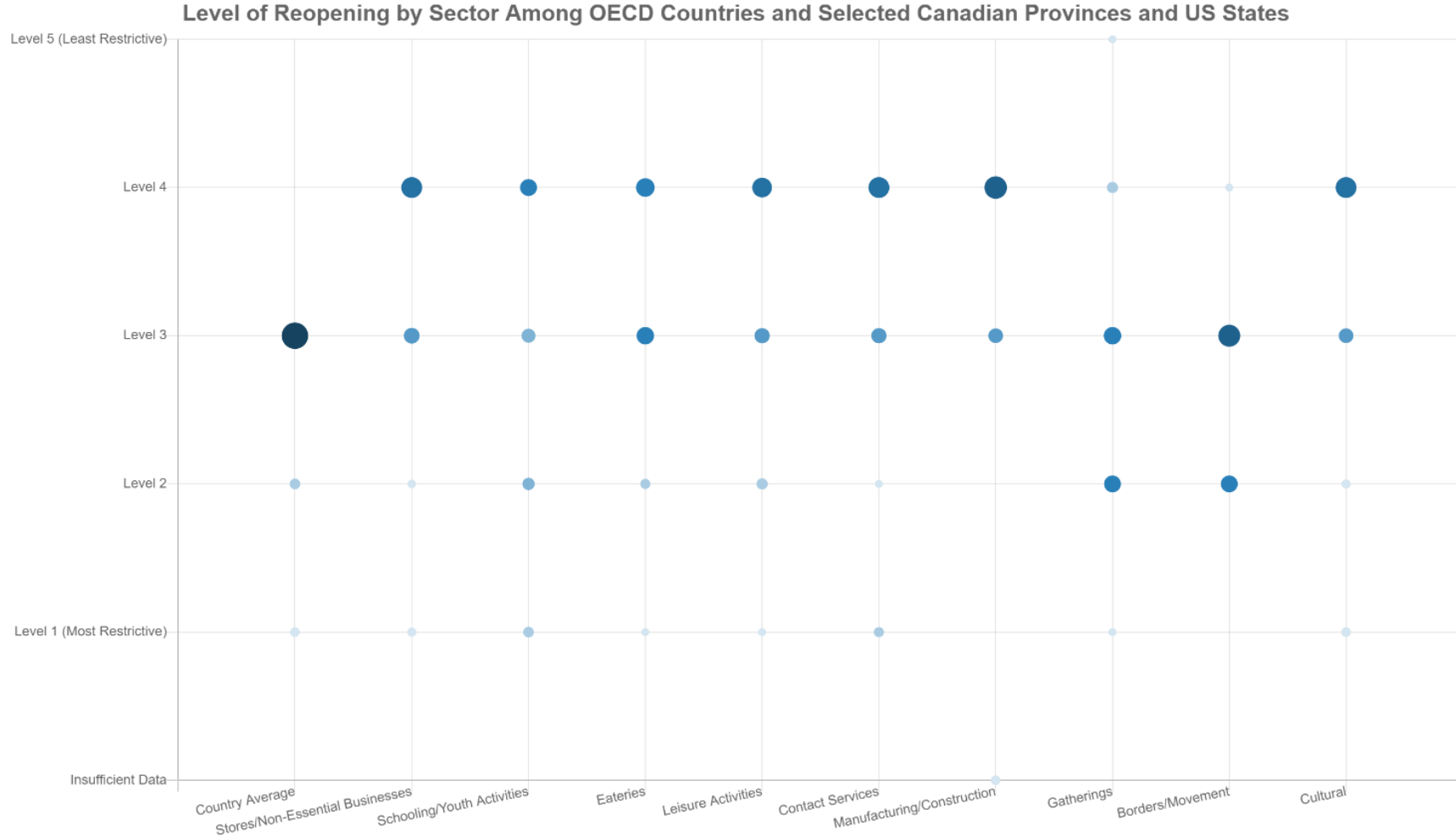
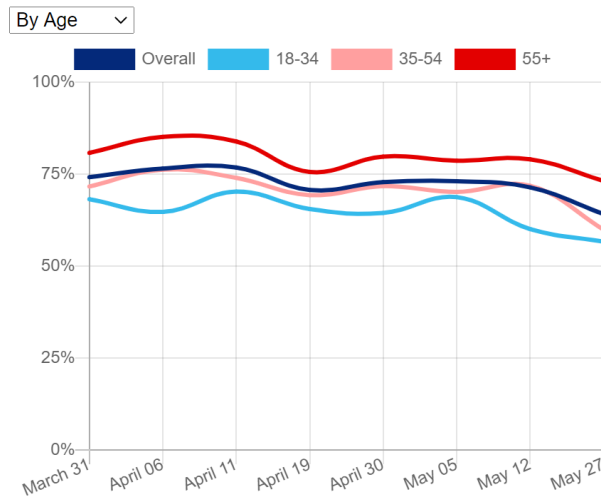
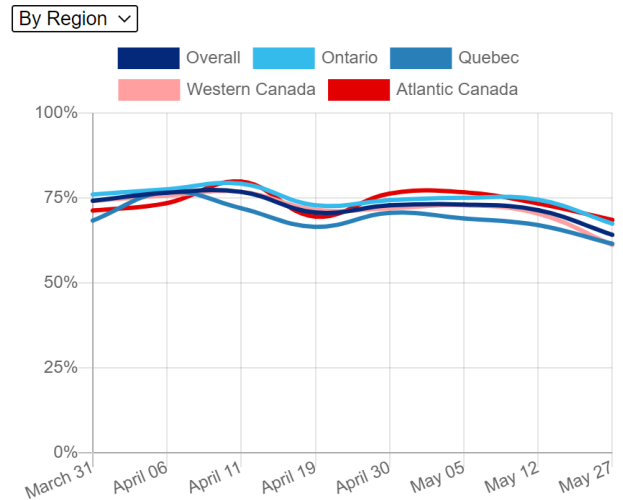


Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 44 different jurisdictions as of June 12. The reopening policies of 44 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, and 5 Canadian provinces. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses, Schooling/Youth Activities, 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.

Aggregate Measure of Participation in Social Distancing (Canada)



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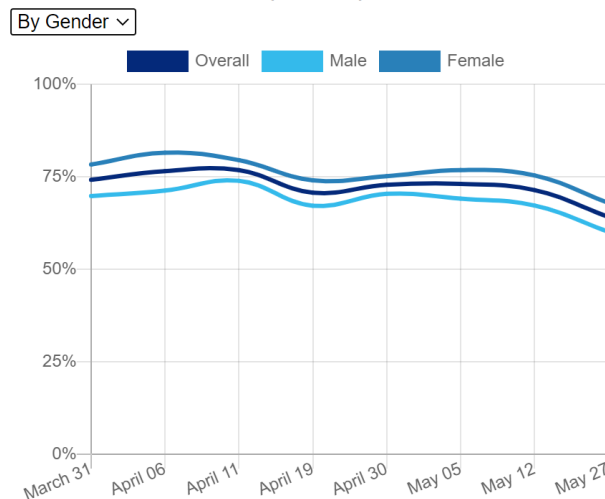


Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada). We asked Canadians whether, as a result of the pandemic, they had taken any of the 6 following actions: avoided crowded places; avoided in-person contact with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintained 2 metre distance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

Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada)

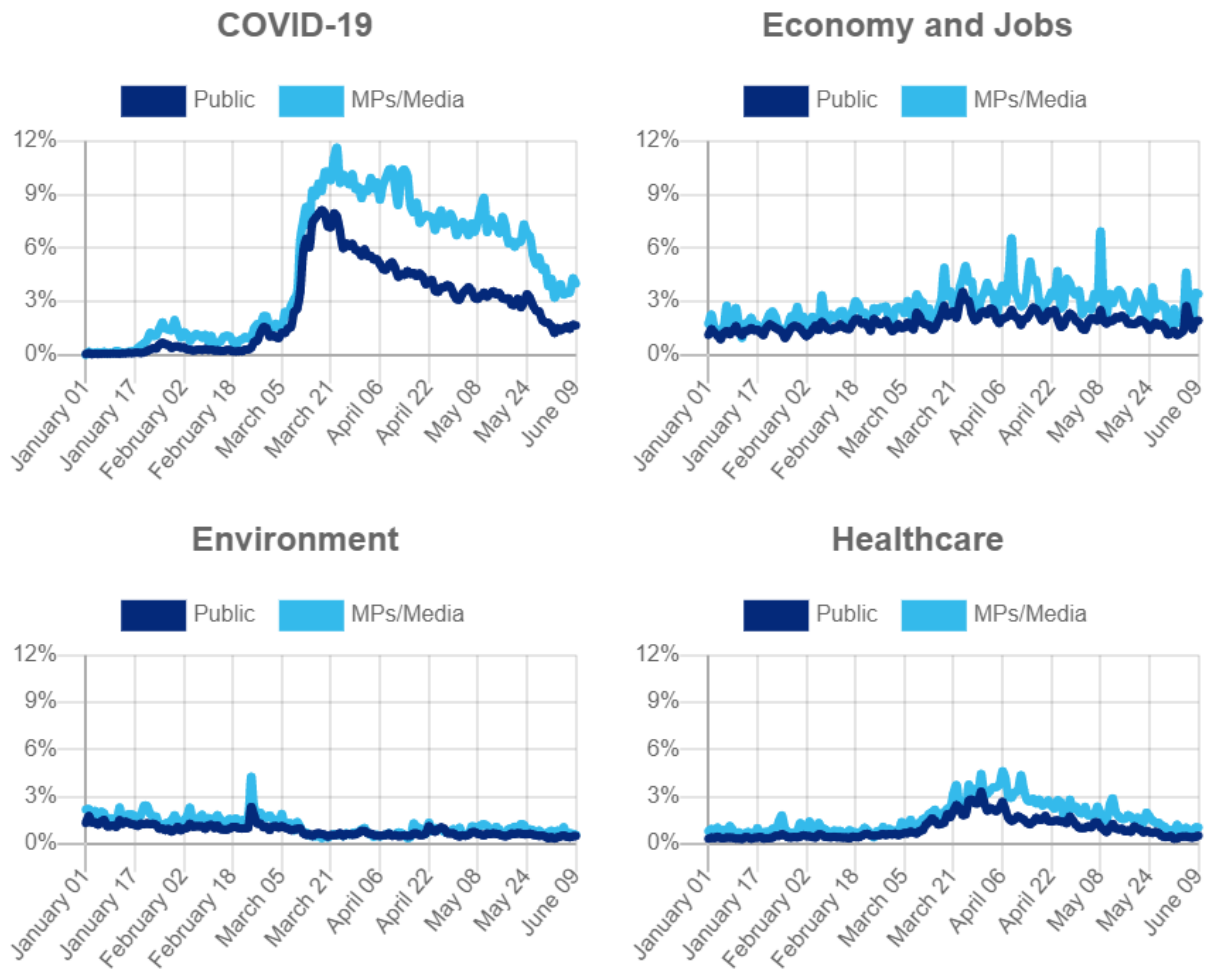
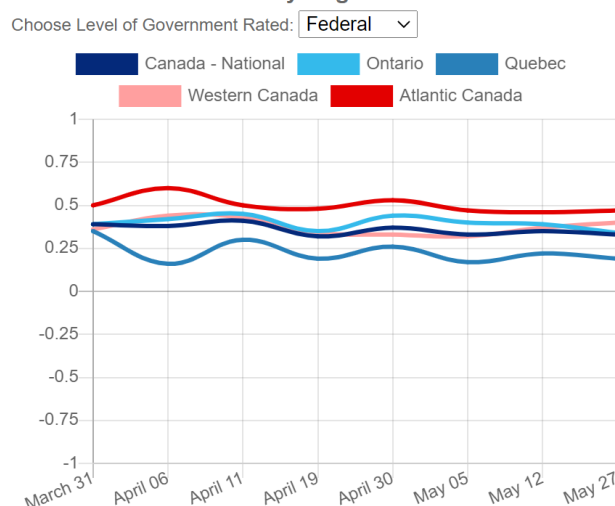
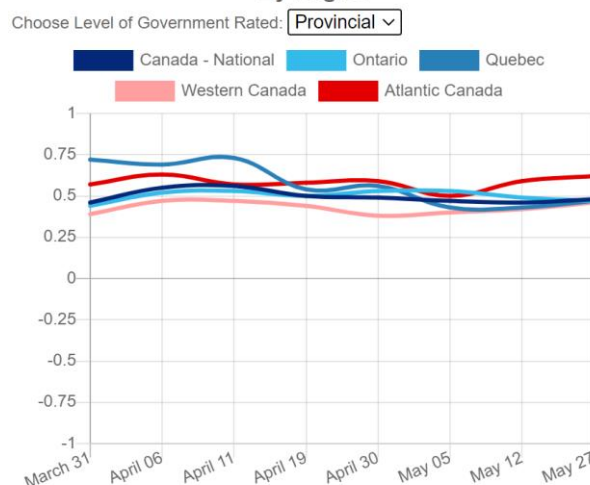


Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada). The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other.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

Net Approval of Government Handling of the Pandemic - By Region



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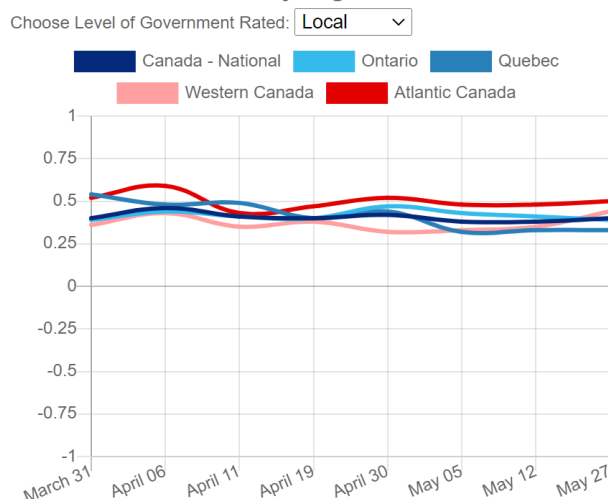


Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region. We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score, 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 purpose of these profiles is to provide a brief overview of the policy changes occurring throughout the week as governments around the world respond to COVID-19. Where warranted, we also note political dissent among governmental and non-governmental actors.

The profiles provided below track policy changes between Friday, June 5, 2020 and Friday, June 12, 2020.

THE AMERICAS

The United States

As experts had predicted, the US surpassed two million confirmed COVID-19 cases on June 11.¹ With increasing urgency to find COVID-19 treatments and vaccines as the government supply of remdesivir will deplete this month, it is unclear how much of the drug Gilead can make this summer.² Regeneron's COVID-19 antibody cocktail is being tested on patients.³ CDC Director Redfield said that stay at home orders may be reintroduced in the winter or fall pending a second wave of COVID-19.⁴ Obama administration scientists published a document condemning how President Trump has handled the pandemic, and suggesting that the government should have restocked medical supplies post-H1N1 and should already be preparing for a second wave by replenishing medical supplies.⁵ Protests continue over the death of black American George Floyd.

→ *The East Coast and Midwest*

Restaurants and bars in Michigan started serving customers on-site, with capacity limits, on June 8. Public swimming pools and day camps were also allowed to reopen on June 8, with up to 50% capacity.⁶ On June 10, northern Michigan (including counties that border Canada) entered phase 5 of reopening, allowing salons, movie theaters and gyms to reopen with reduced capacity.⁷ Exactly 100 days after the first case was confirmed in New York, the City entered phase 1 of its reopening plan on June 8, allowing nonessential businesses, manufacturing, construction and select other industries to continue their work, with a limited capacity of 50%.⁸ Stores allowed customers to pick up goods either curbside or with in-person appointments. If the number of hospitalizations continues its downward trend, the City will follow the rest of the state and move on to the next phase by the end of the month.⁹ In Maine, 13 of the state's 16 counties (all border counties with Canada) reopened gyms, bars and tasting rooms for outdoor service as part of the state's rural reopening plan.¹⁰

→ *The West Coast and South*

As Florida, Texas and other states reopen, they are seeing a rise in COVID-19 cases; as of June 9 Texas reported two consecutive days of record breaking COVID-19 hospitalizations.¹¹ In Washington, counties range from phase 1 to 3, and as of June 8 employees are required to wear masks with exceptions for individuals while customers are also encouraged to do the same.¹² In addition to 110 million surgical masks already sent, California is receiving 150 million N95 masks from BYD North America.¹³ California is in phase 2 of reopening and on June 12 permitted movie theaters, bowling alleys and some other entertainment facilities to reopen with capacity limits and the recommended use of reservations and barriers.¹⁴ Other high risk businesses like some of the entertainment facilities not mentioned above remain closed in California.¹⁵ In California and Kentucky, Amazon is developing labs to test their staff, and considering more temperature checks and pulse oximetry screening, which measures oxygen levels in the blood.¹⁶ On June 11, Orlando SeaWorld, Aquatica and Discovery Cove reopened with reservations and sanitary precautions.¹⁷ With social distancing, masks and other sanitary measures, NASCAR will welcome fans at races in June including at the Dixie Vodka 400 on June 14 in Florida and at the GEICO 500 on June 21 in Alabama.¹⁸

Mexico

Per 100,000 people, Mexico ranked seventh globally for the most COVID-19 deaths and fourteenth for the most cases as of June 9.¹⁹ Four states experienced increases in COVID-19 cases greater than 100%, five states reported downward trends in cases and one state maintained the same level of active cases for two weeks.²⁰ Several hospitals reported themselves at capacity.²¹ On June 9, Deputy Minister of Health Hugo Lopez-Gatell stated that Mexico's daily number of new cases had not peaked and that the country would experience additional weeks of rising daily numbers of cases. In Mexico City, masks are required.²² Although most of the country is in lockdown, as of June 1, with some restrictions being relaxed, general movement in Mexico increased.²³ In lockdown, hotels have limited capacity, personal care services can be in-home with appointments, parks are open in some regions and essential services are open.²⁴ With intergovernmental cooperation, preparations for the tourism sector are underway by exploring travel insurance, discounts and mobile reservations.²⁵ Medical staff protest lack of appropriate PPE.²⁶ The government was criticized for relaxing restrictions while the country is peaking and expert estimates for the COVID-19 death toll increased from 16,000 to between 43,000 and 51,000 this summer.²⁷ Attention towards excessive police force is growing after Giovanni Lopez was killed in police custody while being detained for not wearing a mask.²⁸

Chile

Chile has one of the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases in Latin America and to ensure comparability and accuracy in their count, they will now include information found on death certificates.²⁹ After approximately 76 days under partial or total lockdown, Chile's hospitals are close to collapsing.³⁰ 75 people, two of whom had tested positive for COVID-19, were detained and face fines for violating lockdown regulations.³¹ Chile is making permits in regions that are under lockdown stricter to deter the abuse of permits and will be extending lockdowns in Chile.³² Chile is increasing the number of hospital transport vans, the number of critical care beds in hospitals and the number of sanitary residences used for self-isolation.³³ The government donated masks, gloves and sanitizer to a group of taxi drivers in the Metropolitan Region.³⁴ The government supported the University of Chile's launch of a free traceability course based on the John Hopkins contact tracing course.³⁵ On July 31, the National Professional Football Association intends to resume football games after three to four weeks of training camp.³⁶

WESTERN EUROPE

France

The number of hospitalizations continues decreasing this week, with 11,678 patients requiring medical attention. On June 9, for the first time since March 19, the number of people in intensive care fell below 1,000, standing at 933 as of June 11.³⁷ In the "orange zone", which is solely the Paris area, most secondary colleges/lycées have remained shut.³⁸ On June 25, the iconic Eiffel Tower is set to open, with a limited capacity and no elevators.³⁹ This week, the government announced that it will end its special powers to restrict civil liberties by decree without parliamentary approval brought in to deal with the pandemic on July 10, though it will retain the ability to curb gatherings and freedom of movement for four months.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the government announced €15 billion (around 22.7 billion CAD) in rescue money for the pandemic-battered aerospace industry, in hopes of saving its hundreds of thousands of jobs and keeping plane maker Airbus and national airline Air France globally competitive. In exchange for aid, however, companies will be required to invest more and more rapidly in electric, hydrogen or other lower-emission aircrafts, since France aims to make its aviation industry the cleanest in the world.⁴¹

Germany

This week, the 4-day average reproduction rate (R) of COVID-19 in Germany continues to decrease, standing at 0.86 on June 10, down from 0.89 reported last week.⁴² Germany has extended its travel advisory warning for Germans wishing to travel abroad until August 31, and Chancellor Angela Merkel's government is campaigning for the EU-wide travel ban for non-EU citizens to be extended until July 1.⁴³ On June 11, Germany allowed 243 ill and under-age refugees from Greece to enter the country, for the first time since the pandemic began.⁴⁴ Each state continues to open up unilaterally, based on federal suggestions regarding the R-naught variable.⁴⁵ Larger stores, markets, malls and restaurants are open across the country. The remaining discrepancies between the states are largely tied to cultural and leisure activities, such as cinemas, museums and fitness centers.⁴⁶ Within the next two weeks, these institutions should be more harmonized with their reopening. On June 10, Chancellor Merkel and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang met virtually to discuss the bilateral trade relations between the countries; Germany is advocating for a more liberated trade market with the Asian nation.⁴⁷

Belgium

On June 6, the Belgian government announced that it would be providing a free 10 journey rail pass to all residents in an effort to boost domestic tourism and the economy. The National Rail Company was concerned about these measures since social distancing on public transport is a key challenge as the country reopens. The lack of consultation raises questions related to safety, social distancing, and sanitation for travellers and staff.⁴⁸ Phase 3 of Belgium's reopening plan began on June 8, and almost all businesses are now operating including hotels, cafes and restaurants. Eateries can operate at 70% capacity and must maintain 1.5 metres between tables. While lakes and ponds are open, swimming pools remain closed across the country.⁴⁹ On June 15, Belgium will reopen its borders to citizens within the Schengen area.⁵⁰ Regional ministers, MPs, and local councillors were among the 10,000 people in Brussels who attended the Black Lives Matter demonstrations on June 7. Scientific experts are asking people who attended to strictly follow hygienic measures for 15 days and are expecting to see an impact on Belgium's figures in the coming weeks from the protests.⁵¹ In response to demonstrations, the cabinet said that leaders will be announcing guidelines for protesting without breaking social-distancing and COVID-19 sanitary rules.⁵²

Netherlands

As of June 8, all primary schools in the Netherlands reopened completely for the first time since mid-March, after operating partially on alternate shifts since May 11.⁵³ Effective June 15, the government also plans to reopen its borders for EU nationals as part of its phase three reopening strategy, in an effort to boost the tourism industry. Tourists from twelve EU states, which contain lower rates of COVID-19 cases, would be eligible to holiday in the Netherlands. These states are Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Italy, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic. As of now, citizens of Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom cannot travel to the Netherlands. According to the Dutch authorities, foreign tourists must comply with all the measures and rules that apply in the country to combat the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, tourists are encouraged to reserve their holiday accommodation before they travel to the Netherlands, without which they may be stopped at the border.⁵⁴

Spain

On June 9, Spain reported 86 new COVID-19 cases, double that from the day before, but overall Spain is experiencing a steady decrease in cases.⁵⁵ Spain's final state of alarm is from June 7 to 21, following which autonomous communities in phase 3 will be governed by the governments in that region.⁵⁶ Madrid will remain in phase 2 of reopening.⁵⁷ On June 15, open air bullrings can resume with capacity limits, and in phase 3 clubs, bars, casinos and game halls will reopen with restrictions. Spain's new norm which will begin in phase 3 for each region requires masks and social distancing, but will introduce free movement

within Spain.⁵⁸ On July 1, foreign tourists may enter, and in the meantime hotels will be cleaned and new procedures will explore video sensors, barriers and apps to control crowds and distancing.⁵⁹ When schools resume in September, classes will have 15-20 students and health guidelines which include social distancing.⁶⁰ In Barcelona, Nissan workers protested a plant's closure, and in Madrid protests occurred over the death of black American George Floyd.⁶¹ The International Criminal Court is investigating a complaint against Spanish Prime Minister Sanchez on behalf of the Spanish Association of Affected and Victims of Covid-19. Their claims are based on government delays in the response to COVID-19, the lack of PPE for medical personnel and staff shortages in nursing homes.⁶²

The United Kingdom

On June 9, the Office for National Statistics said that about 64,000 more people than usual have died in the UK during this year's pandemic, which surpasses the kingdom's COVID-19 death toll of 52,000.⁶³ According to Neil Ferguson, a senior scientist who was advising the government in March, the number of COVID-19 deaths in the UK could have been halved, if the government had introduced the lockdown one week earlier.⁶⁴ PM Johnson is facing increased backlash due to Ferguson's testimony. Additionally, the government's unpopular two-week quarantine on international arrivals was established on June 8, with experts saying it's too late and hence too ineffective, as it will devastate tourism.⁶⁵ British Airways, along with over 500 tourism and hospitality companies, have come together under the title "Quash Quarantine" and are deciding how best to combat the rules including potential legal action.⁶⁶ According to an OECD report, Britain's economy is likely to suffer the worst damage from the crisis out of all high-income countries with a projected slump in the UK's national income of 11.5%.⁶⁷ Although most sectors in the UK remain closed, non-essential retail outlets are expected to reopen on June 15, with a range of social distancing and protective measures.⁶⁸ Johnson is planning to scrap the two metres distancing rule by September at the latest for schools to reopen fully for the start of the new school year.⁶⁹

Ireland

On June 5, the government announced their plan to fast-track its reopening strategy by reducing the number of phases to four, from the initially scheduled five-phase plan.⁷⁰ As Ireland entered the second phase of its reopening strategy on June 8, a number of restrictions were lifted, including an allowance of up to six people to visit a household and meet outdoors for a short period of time, while maintaining strict social distancing rules. All high street shops resumed their businesses, while enforcing social distancing rules and staggered opening times to avoid unnecessary crowds. However all units in the shopping malls are to reopen next week with a restriction on gathering around benches or fountains. Libraries also began a phased reopening along with marts without spectators. Travelling of up to 20km away from home is allowed with the maintenance of social distancing measures and other guidelines in place.⁷¹ Gatherings at funerals and weddings of up to 25 people are extended from the previous set limit of 10. Groups of up to 15 people will be able to meet for outdoor sporting activities, with playgrounds fully reopening for kids. Creches, pre-schools, hotels, restaurants and bars which provide table service, are scheduled to reopen within phase three of the relaxation strategy, effective June 29.⁷²

Luxembourg

After the closure of all educational institutes announced in March, the potential use of a video-surveillance platform was announced by universities in Luxembourg, for their upcoming exam session. However, concerns were raised by student associations over fundamental rights and privacy, following which the University of Luxembourg announced on June 5, that they are yet to make a final decision. The university stated that it will assure that the software used, fulfills all criteria when it comes to data protection. However, because this complex process could not be completed at such short notice, this particular instrument is highly unlikely to be used at this moment. Instead, the university will make use of different approaches

such as oral exams or tests which students can also take home with them.⁷³ While the government has declared an end to the state of emergency, effective June 24, all COVID-19 measures are likely to stay in place until further notice.⁷⁴ Effective June 10, all outdoor playgrounds reopened without any further restrictions. Children below the age of 13 are no longer required to wear a mask while being in public, but they remain mandatory on school premises. Summer activities for children can be reinstated, but groups should not exceed 50 participants. Gatherings of people below 20 are no longer under any governmental restriction. Nonetheless, wearing masks and keeping distance is still in place. In restaurants, up to 10 people can now sit together at a table, and individual sports and competitions resume with no physical contact.⁷⁵

Portugal

Portugal's national airline, TAP Air Portugal, resumed nonstop flights between Lisbon and Newark airport last week, following the completion of the country's three-phase reopening strategy, with the formal allowance of E.U. citizens, except Spain and Italy, to enter via air on June 6. Although the country's land border with Spain will remain closed until June 15, travellers arriving by air will not be required to quarantine but will have to face minimal health controls, in accordance to the country's lockdown rules. Flights to and from selected countries such as the USA, UK, Canada and Brazil are scheduled to resume by mid June.⁷⁶ Unlike some other countries now accepting tourists, mainland Portugal has discarded the requirement of a compulsory two week isolation period for the new arrivals. Upon experiencing a relatively COVID-19 free spring, hotels and other accommodations reopened last week, with local tourism boards awarding a new 'Clean & Safe' badge to hotels and restaurants who have implemented new hygiene measures, including no buffets. Additionally, beaches reopened on June 6, with an app launched to help monitor capacity and aid in maintaining distance between sunbathers.⁷⁷ As of June 9, the government announced its plan to progress to the state of contingency, effective July 1, from the state of calamity, which has been in place since May 3, if cases continue to decrease.⁷⁸

CENTRAL EUROPE

Austria

Effective June 15, masks will no longer be mandatory in shops, schools and tourist areas. However, covering the mouth and nose will remain mandatory on public transit, in health facilities, including in pharmacies and in other service institutions where social distancing is hard to maintain, such as with hairdressers, beauty salons and in restaurants.⁷⁹ Last week, Austria lifted border restrictions with all of its neighbouring countries with the exception of Italy. The Austrian government has since announced that on June 16, it will reopen its borders to more than 24 countries, including Italy. The decision should ease tensions after Austria singled out Italy for its continued high number of infections and deaths. All EU, EFTA (European Free Trade Association), and EEA (European Economic Area) states will be allowed to enter with the exception of Sweden, Great Britain, Spain and Portugal. Travellers entering Austria from other European countries will not be subject to quarantine nor required to show proof of a negative test.⁸⁰

Greece

The Greek Health Ministry has announced 97 new cases since June 5, during which they experienced the largest daily increase since April 23, with 52 new cases in 24 hours.⁸¹ In response, on June 9 the government announced they would increase testing and ensure compliance with protection measures as well as introduce restrictions locally where clusters of new infections have been reported over the past few days.⁸² Of the 97 new cases, 30 involved travellers from abroad. June 15 marks the beginning of the tourist season with flights to the Athens and Thessaloniki airports set to resume. Arrivals from EASA airports will be subject to testing and quarantine. On July 1, flights to all Greek airports and sea arrivals from all countries will resume.

Tourists will be subject to random testing. Regardless of Greece's plan to maintain strict hygiene protocols in hotels and businesses, it is uncertain how many airlines will be flying to the country or if people are willing to partake in non-essential travel.⁸³

Italy

In Bergamo, a province in northern Italy's hardest hit Lombardy region, 57% of residents who had blood tests were found to have COVID-19 antibodies.⁸⁴ The Italian government released a contact tracing app called *Immuni*, a voluntary app that uses Bluetooth technology to exchange information between users' phones. While the app can already be downloaded, it is being tested this week in four regions before being extended nationwide. The release of the app was delayed due to citizen resistance because of privacy concerns which has since been mitigated with assurances of anonymity. Despite criticism that 60% of the population must download the app for it to be effective, a poll showed that only 44% of citizens are likely to download the app.⁸⁵ The app is intended to act as an early warning system for the virus in order to lower the risk of more serious consequences in the event of a second wave in the fall. Mayors in Florence and Venice are aiming to leverage the current crisis to shift towards emphasizing slow tourism within their cities. These cities intend to cater to tourists that stay in the city and experience the museums and restaurants, rather than to day-trip tourists in the future.⁸⁶

Slovenia

In efforts to improve domestic tourism, the government will be providing vouchers to all permanent residents of Slovenia as a part of a stimulus package.⁸⁷ As of June 8, citizens from 17 EU and non-EU countries are permitted to enter Slovenia without restrictions under new border crossing rules, including Greece, Switzerland, and Norway. Citizens from Austria, Croatia, and Hungary have already been allowed to cross without health restrictions under bilateral agreements. Nationals from other EU and Schengen zone countries are still subject to a 14 day quarantine on arrival, unless they fall under one of the now 16 exemptions. Confirmation of tourist bookings is no longer considered an exemption.⁸⁸ Continuous external pressure is adding to political instability and reducing citizens' trust in government amongst media reports that the primary reason for the announcement of the epidemic's end in mid-May was because of public finances rather than public health.⁸⁹

Switzerland

In Switzerland, the state of emergency is set to officially end on June 19. Effective June 6, several restrictions were eased in the country. Camping sites, pools, and leisure facilities have reopened and summer camps can resume with a maximum of 300 children, as long as attendance is kept. Middle schools, vocational schools, and universities have reopened and all sports can resume except those that are high contact. The Swiss soccer Super League can resume with groups of up to 1,000 people allowed at sporting events beginning in July. In eateries, groups larger than 4 will be able to sit together, but will be required to register each attendee upon arrival. 2 metres distance between each table remains mandatory. Nightclubs will reopen, but establishments must adhere to distancing and hygiene rules which include a 300 person maximum, 2 metre distancing between patrons and a midnight curfew. Public gatherings of up to 300 people are permitted as long as a 2 metre distance is maintained. Demonstrators will need to apply for a permit and explain how they plan to minimize the spread.⁹⁰ On June 15, Swiss borders will reopen to Germany, Austria, and France. On July 6, Switzerland plans to reopen borders with other Schengen zone countries. The National Council approved a Bluetooth contact tracing app aimed at preventing a potential second wave of infections. The app will be optional and no personal data or location information will be collected.⁹¹

EASTERN EUROPE

Czech Republic

On May 25, the Czech government proceeded to the fourth and final phase of its reopening plan, allowing all catering establishments, hotels, spas, and public swimming pools to resume business, subject to detailed sanitary guidelines.⁹² Mass gatherings of up to 300 people are being permitted in both indoor and outdoor settings, while professional and amateur athletes are being allowed to organize training with up to 300 participants.⁹³ On June 5, Prime Minister Andrej Babis announced substantial changes to land border restrictions with a number of European countries.⁹⁴ Czech citizens, as well temporary and permanent residents of the Czech Republic, will no longer have to undergo a mandatory quarantine period or submit a negative COVID-19 test upon entering the country.⁹⁵ Citizens and residents of Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany - as well as EU citizens with a certificate of temporary or permanent residence in any of these countries - are also permitted to enter the republic without a mandatory quarantine period or negative COVID-19 test.⁹⁶ Other activities and business operations are expected to resume throughout the month of June.⁹⁷

Hungary

The Hungarian government has continued easing restrictions related to COVID-19, after its Chief Medical Officer declared that the country has successfully overcome the first wave of the pandemic.⁹⁸ All catering establishments are being permitted to serve and seat customers indoors, and all religious services, funerals, and weddings are being allowed to take place with some restrictions.⁹⁹ Visitation for inpatients of social institutions and long-term care homes was allowed to resume on June 3, provided that both the visitor and the inpatient are healthy, and that a distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained between them at all times.¹⁰⁰ The Hungarian government has also continued easing land border restrictions with neighboring countries demonstrating favourable epidemiological situations. Since June 5, Austrian, Slovak, and Czech citizens - as well as Hungarians residing in any of these countries - have been allowed to enter Hungary without a mandatory quarantine period.¹⁰¹ On June 8, a Hungarian contact-tracing application called *VirusRadar* was made available for download on the iOS app store.¹⁰² According to the Hungarian Ministry of Innovation and Technology, the app has already been downloaded by over 30,000 Android users since it was first released in May.¹⁰³

Latvia

Latvia's nationwide state of emergency was lifted on June 9, along with many of the restrictive measures associated with it.¹⁰⁴ Mass gatherings are now being allowed to take place with up to 50 participants for indoor events, and up to 200 for outdoor events - both increased from the previous limit of 25.¹⁰⁵ Religious services, weddings, baptisms, and funerals can be organized similarly with up to 50 guests for indoor services, and 200 for outdoor services.¹⁰⁶ On June 3, Latvia's Cabinet of Ministers expanded the list of countries from which travellers may enter Latvia without a mandatory quarantine period upon arrival.¹⁰⁷ Latvian nationals, permanent residents, and foreigners who have not visited countries other than Latvia, Lithuania, or Estonia in the last 14 days, can now enter Latvia from over 30 countries, including Italy, France, and Germany. Developed collaboratively by various members of Latvia's IT industry, a contact tracing application called *Apturi Covid* (Stop Covid) was released to the Latvian public for voluntary use on May 29.¹⁰⁸ A number of Latvian officials, including the Prime Minister, have downloaded and publicly endorsed the application in order to encourage its widespread use.¹⁰⁹

Lithuania

The Lithuanian government has continued easing lockdown restrictions after receiving praise from the Deputy Head of the OECD's Health Division for its domestic response to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹⁰ All primary schools and post-secondary institutions were allowed to reopen and hold in-person classes on May 25, while secondary schools were allowed to reopen on May 30.¹¹¹ High-performance athletic competitions have been allowed to take place without the presence of spectators since May 30, while private celebrations are being allowed to take place in public venues with up to 30 guests.¹¹² Most international flights to and from Lithuania remain grounded, with the exception of flights between Vilnius, Frankfurt (Germany), and Riga (Latvia) - which have been allowed since May 13 and May 18 respectively - and regular flights between Vilnius, Oslo (Norway), and Tallinn (Estonia) - which were allowed to resume on May 25.¹¹³ On June 1, the Lithuanian government approved a list of 24 European countries whose citizens will be allowed to enter Lithuania without a mandatory self-isolation period upon arrival, including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, and Poland.¹¹⁴ Travel is still prohibited to and from Belgium, Sweden, Portugal, and the UK.¹¹⁵

Poland

On May 30, the Polish government proceeded to the fourth phase of its plan for lifting restrictions related to COVID-19, reopening cinemas, theatres, gyms, massage parlours, and hair salons.¹¹⁶ Polish residents are no longer required to use a mask in outdoor spaces, provided that they can maintain at least two metres of distance between each other.¹¹⁷ Masks will still be required in many confined spaces and indoor venues, such as shops, churches, buses and streetcars.¹¹⁸ Limits on the number of people allowed to enter various indoor venues have been lifted, including catering establishments, churches, and government service centers, all of which are being allowed to operate at full capacity, provided that they are able to maintain a safe distance between patrons.¹¹⁹ Limits on mass gatherings have increased, with weddings, outdoor concerts, and other public gatherings now being limited to 150 guests.¹²⁰ Hotels were allowed to fully reopen all of their facilities - including gyms, swimming pools, bars, and restaurants - on June 6.¹²¹ Poland has experienced a resurgence in cases following its latest steps towards reopening, reporting 599 new cases of COVID-19 on June 8 - its largest single day increase since the start of the pandemic.¹²²

Slovakia

On June 1, the Slovak government proceeded to the fifth stage of its plan for easing restrictions related to COVID-19.¹²³ While kindergartens and daycares were already permitted to reopen, primary schools are now also allowed to resume teaching for grades one to five.¹²⁴ On June 3, secondary schools were allowed to reopen for final examinations.¹²⁵ All retail and catering establishments have been allowed to reopen fully, provided that they are able to maintain a safe distance between patrons and adhere to a strict sanitary regime.¹²⁶ All shopping centres, theatres, cinemas, spas, swimming pools and gyms are allowed to reopen according to similar standards.¹²⁷ General guidelines on hygiene and physical distancing, such as the obligatory use of facemasks in all public places, continue to apply to most residents.¹²⁸ On May 24, the Slovak government announced the release of its contact tracing app, *eKaranténa*, available on all Android smartphones.¹²⁹ Effective immediately, everyone arriving at Slovakia's border looking to enter or travel throughout the country is required to download and register for the application.¹⁴¹ iPhone users will be able to download the application after Apple's approval.¹³⁰

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark

Denmark lifted a number of restrictions this week as the country moves towards a full reopening of its economy. The gathering limit increased to 50 people, and fitness centres and swimming pools could reopen on June 8. Some events of up to 500 people may be allowed under an as-of-yet unreleased set of guidelines, including weddings and sports events. While these events may be permitted to occur, they must follow the guidelines set out for nightlife, meaning they must end by midnight and limit alcohol sales.¹³¹ Opposition parties railed against this policy, saying that the government was treating Danish citizens like children.¹³² The government later reached an agreement with opposition parties to raise the gathering limit to 100 people on July 8 and 200 people on August 8, however, there is no timeline for the other restrictions still in place.¹³³ The government is advising that the 15,000 people who took part in an anti-racism protest in Copenhagen this week be tested for COVID-19 due to fears of a mass spread of the virus.¹³⁴ PM Frederiksen has conceded that her decision to lockdown Denmark in March was largely political after facing criticism that she ignored the advice of public health officials in the early days of the crisis.¹³⁵

Estonia

Estonia has experienced its largest single day increase of new COVID-19 cases since April 29, with 21 new cases diagnosed on June 5.¹³⁶ The uptick in new cases has caused the government's Science Council to postpone its recommendations for further easing of restrictions for at least two weeks. The postponement comes even as the Council acknowledges that they were expecting an increase in cases due to the loosening of restrictions over the past few weeks.¹³⁷ Foreign Minister Ursas Reinsalu has said that he has begun discussions with his Finnish counterpart to open their borders to tourists from their respective nations. Currently, Finns may travel to Estonia for tourism but Estonians cannot do the same in Finland.¹³⁸ The government has extended its flight ban to high-risk European countries to June 21, while permitting travel to and from any European country whose infection rate in the past two weeks has been below 15 cases per 100,000 people.¹³⁹

Finland

The Finnish government will lift all border restrictions for Nordic and Baltic countries, excluding Sweden, from June 15. The Foreign Ministry continues to advise against unnecessary international travel, and has said that border restrictions to the rest of the Schengen area will remain in place until at least July 14. Additionally, the government announced that large public events of more than 500 people will be permitted to take place starting on July 1, subject to certain restrictions.¹⁴⁰ PM Marin has said that the government is looking to propose amendments to the Infectious Diseases Act to allow them to introduce lockdown measures as fast as possible in the event of a second wave of the virus. Minister of Justice Anna-Maja Henriksson has said that the government is hopeful that many of the remaining restrictions will be lifted in the coming weeks.¹⁴¹

Iceland

Nurses in Iceland have voted overwhelmingly in favour of indefinite strike action from June 22 if their union is unable to come to an agreement with the government.¹⁴² As a result, numerous hospital administrators have warned the government that they will be unable to operate if their nurses go on strike, complicating the plan to open borders to tourism on June 15.¹⁴³ Iceland has altered its COVID-19 testing plan for tourists, rescinding the ability of international arrivals to provide their own certificate of a negative test to avoid self-isolating. Tourists will need to be tested upon arrival, or must submit to a mandatory two-week quarantine.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, Iceland has announced that it will not permit tourism for people from

outside the EU/EEA until restrictions to the Schengen area as a whole are clarified. Those restrictions were previously scheduled to be lifted concurrently with Iceland's, but the European Commission recently extended their duration until at least July 1.¹⁴⁵ At the same time that border restrictions are loosened on June 15, Iceland will raise its gathering limit to 500 people (previous limit was 200).¹⁴⁶

Norway

Health authorities in Norway are concerned that an anti-racism protest in Oslo that drew nearly 15,000 people could lead to a surge in COVID-19 cases. In contrast to a protest the week before in Sweden, police in Oslo allowed the protest to go ahead despite clear violations of gathering limits and social distancing regulations. The government is encouraging all those who attended the protest to get tested for the virus if they show any symptoms within the next few days.¹⁴⁷ These concerns come as Oslo has seen its number of new COVID-19 cases triple in the last week. Public health officials downplayed the seriousness of the rise in cases as the total infection rate in the country remains very low.¹⁴⁸ The Public Health Agency is recommending that testing guidelines be changed to allow those with extremely mild symptoms to access testing. Additionally, public health officials said that their current testing capacity of 100,000 is nowhere close to being reached, and could even be increased relatively easily if given the resources.¹⁴⁹

Sweden

Sweden will lift all of its recommendations on limiting domestic travel on June 13. The government had previously recommended that asymptomatic people limit their travel to a one-to-two hour car ride away from their home.¹⁵⁰ While those from outside the EU/EEA are still not allowed to enter Sweden, several clarifications have been made about exemptions to the rule. Immediate family members (spouse, partner or child) of Swedish citizens and residents will now be allowed to enter the country. The exemption applies even if the person does not have an "established home" in Sweden, as was previously the case. Extended family members cannot visit family in Sweden if they are not an EU/EEA citizen, though exceptions can be made in individual cases. Foreign seasonal workers in agriculture, forestry and horticulture industries will also be permitted to enter the country from June 8.¹⁵¹ Swedish police have said that they will be stricter in granting permits for demonstrations after a number of anti-racism protests around the country violated the gathering limit of 50 people.¹⁵²

ASIA/PACIFIC

Japan

Although there are emerging sporadic outbreaks, Japan has seen an overall low level of new infections over the past weeks. Tokyo continues to be the hotbed of new cases. While saliva-based tests were approved on June 2, targeted testing will replace blanket tests in the future. Reopening progresses nationwide. Most businesses and services have already reopened with rules of physical distancing and hygiene. Professional sports must wait until June 19 to resume. Japan is now considering reopening its borders to business travellers from countries with low levels of infections and strong economic ties such as Thailand, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand, all of which are Trans-Pacific Partnership members.¹⁵³

South Korea

South Korea is still grappling with a resurgence of COVID-19 where they are seeing new transmissions occurring through various venues. On June 10, QR code-based entry logs were implemented in entertainment facilities and some auditoriums across the country. Private educational institutes, religious facilities, hospitals and other venues are also encouraged to adopt this contact tracing measure.¹⁵⁴ Starting June 8, the virus test has been free for all Seoul residents, including those without respiratory symptoms,

but with some testing restrictions. Remdesivir has been granted emergency approval for treating critical COVID-19 patients. South Korea's first clinical trials of a COVID-19 vaccine will begin this month, and target a total of 160 adults in two stages.¹⁵⁵ Although some restrictive measures like gathering bans were reintroduced in the Seoul Metropolitan Region, most businesses and services continue to operate across the country while following infection prevention requirements. Schools have reopened to all students while many students in lower grades are alternating between in-person classes and online teaching.¹⁵⁶

New Zealand

With no active cases within its borders, New Zealand moved to a "Prepare" alert level on midnight June 8. There have been no new cases for more than 2 weeks. Intensive testing will continue. Border controls will be enhanced to better handle imported cases. Beginning the week of June 8, anyone entering New Zealand has to be tested twice during their mandatory two-week quarantine.¹⁵⁷ With physical distancing and mass gathering restrictions completely lifted, people can now return to their normal life despite the need to stay vigilant and practice good hygiene. Schools and workplaces are fully opened. Businesses and individuals are still recommended to keep track of those they come in contact with. Domestic transport can operate at full capacity with no restrictions. New Zealand borders remain closed to all foreign travellers, however, with the film industry returning to work, special permissions are granted to a limited number of foreign crew members.¹⁵⁸

Australia

Australia has managed to maintain a low level of case increases with new infections emerging in only two states. On June 8, the country also recorded zero new locally acquired cases for the first time since the pandemic's peak. Most of the increases in cases are imported now. An estimated \$131.4 billion will be invested in public hospitals over the next five years as additional funding to strengthen the capacity of the health system and enhance national coordination.¹⁵⁹ In terms of the protests inspired by the death of George Floyd, large rallies were held at multiple locations despite concerns and warnings from health authorities. States and territories are proceeding in their reopening plans at varied paces. Most states set their maximum number of people attending gatherings at either 10 or 20 people, which is expected to increase in the following weeks. Businesses continue to operate with limited capacity.¹⁶⁰ As of June 9, all students would have physically returned to school. Intrastate travel is now unlimited everywhere. While interstate borders have mostly been opened, Queensland is determined to keep its borders closed to other states. The ban on most international cruise ships has been extended until mid-September.¹⁶¹ Borders will remain closed to foreigners for the foreseeable future.

Turkey

After suspending all international flights on March 28, amid COVID-19-related travel restrictions worldwide, Turkey announced the resumption of international flights to 40 countries on June 10. The resumption of flights began with flights to the Netherlands, Germany and London on June 11 and will be followed by flights to Belgium and France on June 15, and later Austria on June 16.¹⁶² Resumption of domestic flights began on June 1. Passenger entry into the terminals is regulated with temperature checks at the entrance and only allows passengers with valid tickets to enter. Social distancing is required for passengers and airport personnel.¹⁶³ After a week of easing lockdown measures, there was a surge of COVID-19 cases in Diyarbakır, one of the biggest cities in Turkey's southeast region, so the health authorities increased the number of COVID-19 clinics in the city from one to five and launched two pandemic hospitals. Diyarbakır's Governor announced on June 8, that the city's residents must wear masks in public effective June 10. He lamented that the city was not at the desired level of mask use or social distancing which contributed to an increase in the number of positive cases. Several neighborhoods and districts in the city are already under lockdown after a large number of cases emerged this week.¹⁶⁴

Israel

After a sustained drop in the daily infection rate, Israel has seen a surge of infections by more than 800 new cases in the past week, especially in schools. Increased enforcement has been ordered to stop large gatherings and mandate mask-wearing. On June 9, the Israeli Health Minister set the daily test target at 30,000. At the same time, serological tests have been formally launched this week, aiming at testing 70,000 citizens. There has also been rising concern about simultaneous waves of COVID-19 and influenza infections this winter, due to a global race for flu vaccines.¹⁶⁵ The involvement of a national spy agency in contact tracing and monitoring has been halted without another bill legislating how it would continue to operate after three months. Seeing a spike in new cases, the government has decided to freeze plans for further reopening, while the number of participants allowed at events was raised to 250 people.¹⁶⁶ Concert venues will resume later. The scheduled return of train services on June 8 is postponed. People are urged to stick to three basic principles: physical distancing, wearing masks and hygiene. The government has decided that the resumption of in-person schooling will not be affected even with recent outbreaks. While many university studies are online, some foreign university students have been returning, dependent upon following the mandatory two-week quarantine on campus. Borders remain closed to foreign travellers.

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Links

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

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