

Weekly COVID Update:

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

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Foreword

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

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

On our Dashboard, we present unique quantitative data on:

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

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

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

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

Data Visualizations from Dashboard

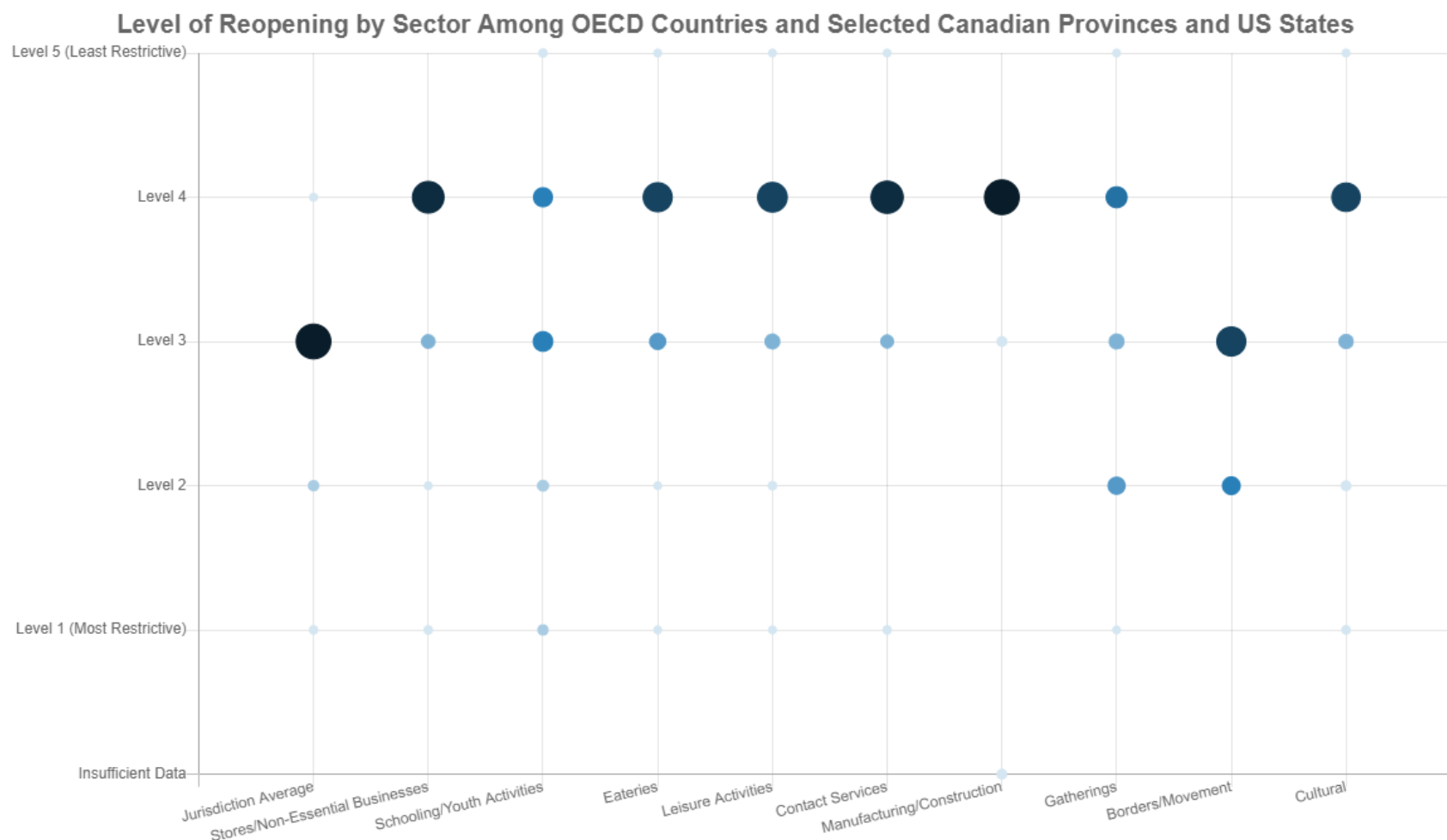


Figure 1 – Level of reopening among 52 different jurisdictions as of July 13. The reopening policies of 52 jurisdictions: 34 OECD countries, 5 US states, 10 Canadian provinces and 3 Canadian territories. For each jurisdiction, we classify a total of 9 different sectors: Stores/Non-Essential Businesses, Schooling/Youth Activities, Eateries, Leisure Activities, Contact Services, Manufacturing/Construction, Gatherings, Borders/Movement, and Cultural. Each sector is assigned a level of reopening from Level 1 (Complete Lockdown) to Level 5 (Unrestricted Access). The larger and darker a dot is, the more jurisdictions are at that level of reopening. For details, see www.reopeningaftercovid.com.

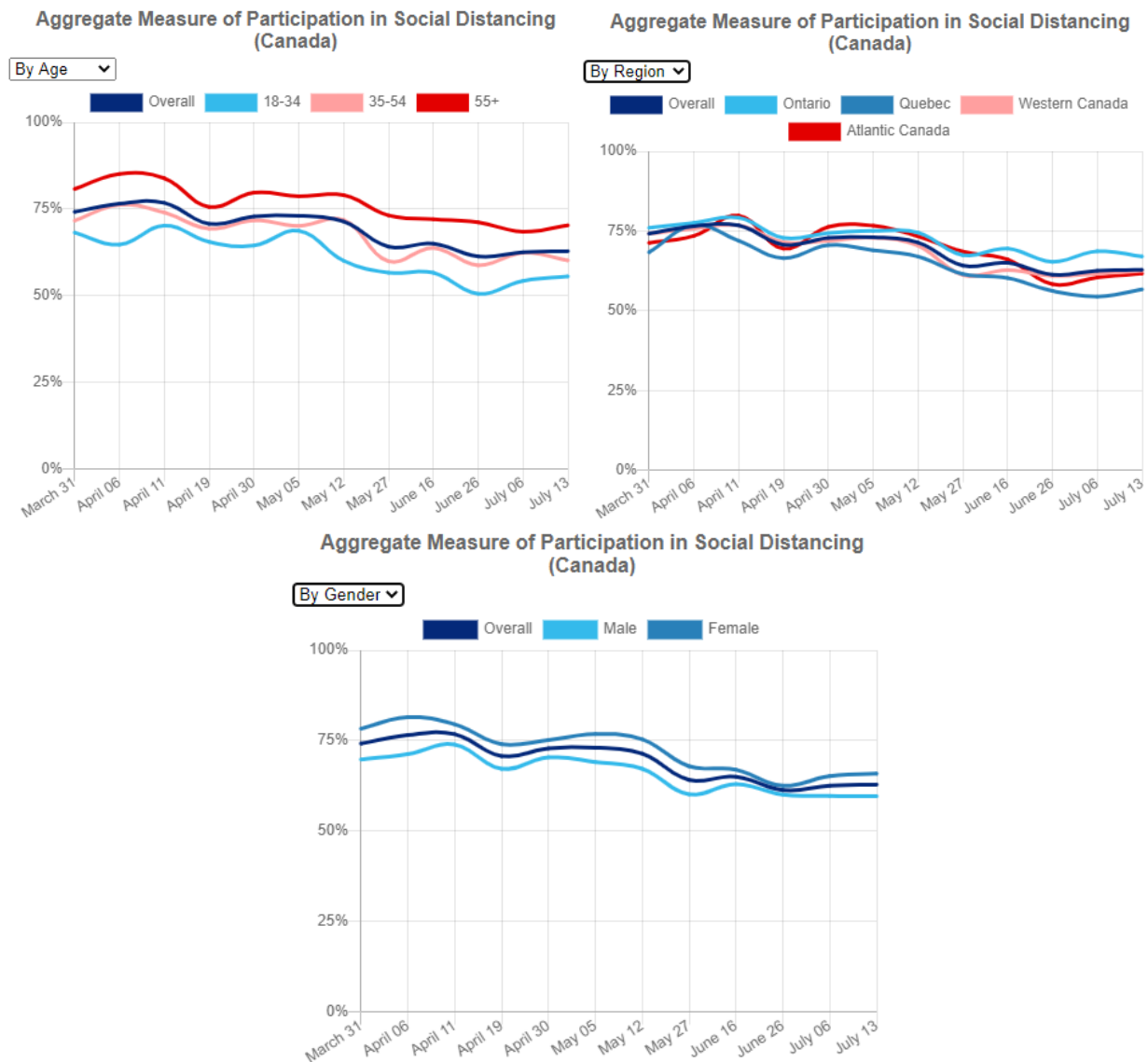


Figure 2 – Aggregate survey measure of participation in social distancing (Canada). We asked Canadians whether, as a result of the pandemic, they had taken any of the 6 following actions: avoided crowded places; avoided in-person contact with friends, family, and acquaintances; maintained 2 metre distance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

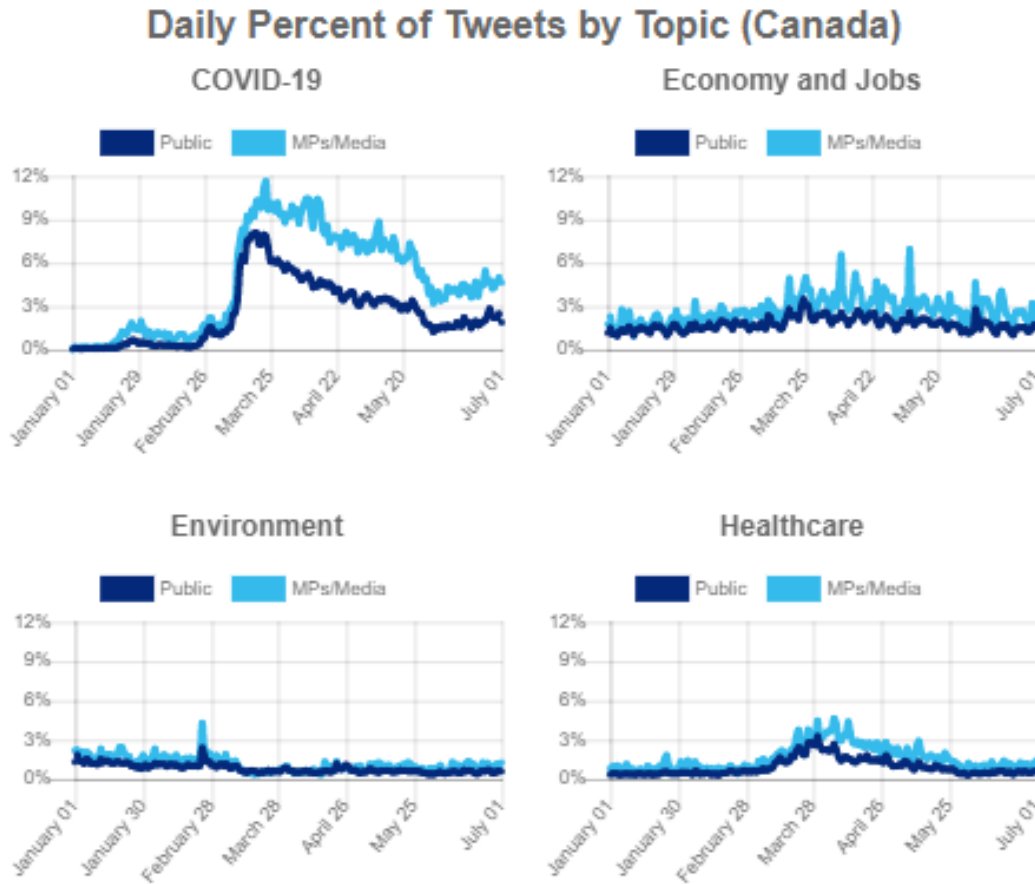


Figure 3 – Daily Percent of Tweets by Topic (Canada). The graphs report the percentage of daily tweets containing one or more keywords associated with the particular topic. The results are presented separately for MPs, senators, and journalists, on the one hand, and for the Canadian public, on the other.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

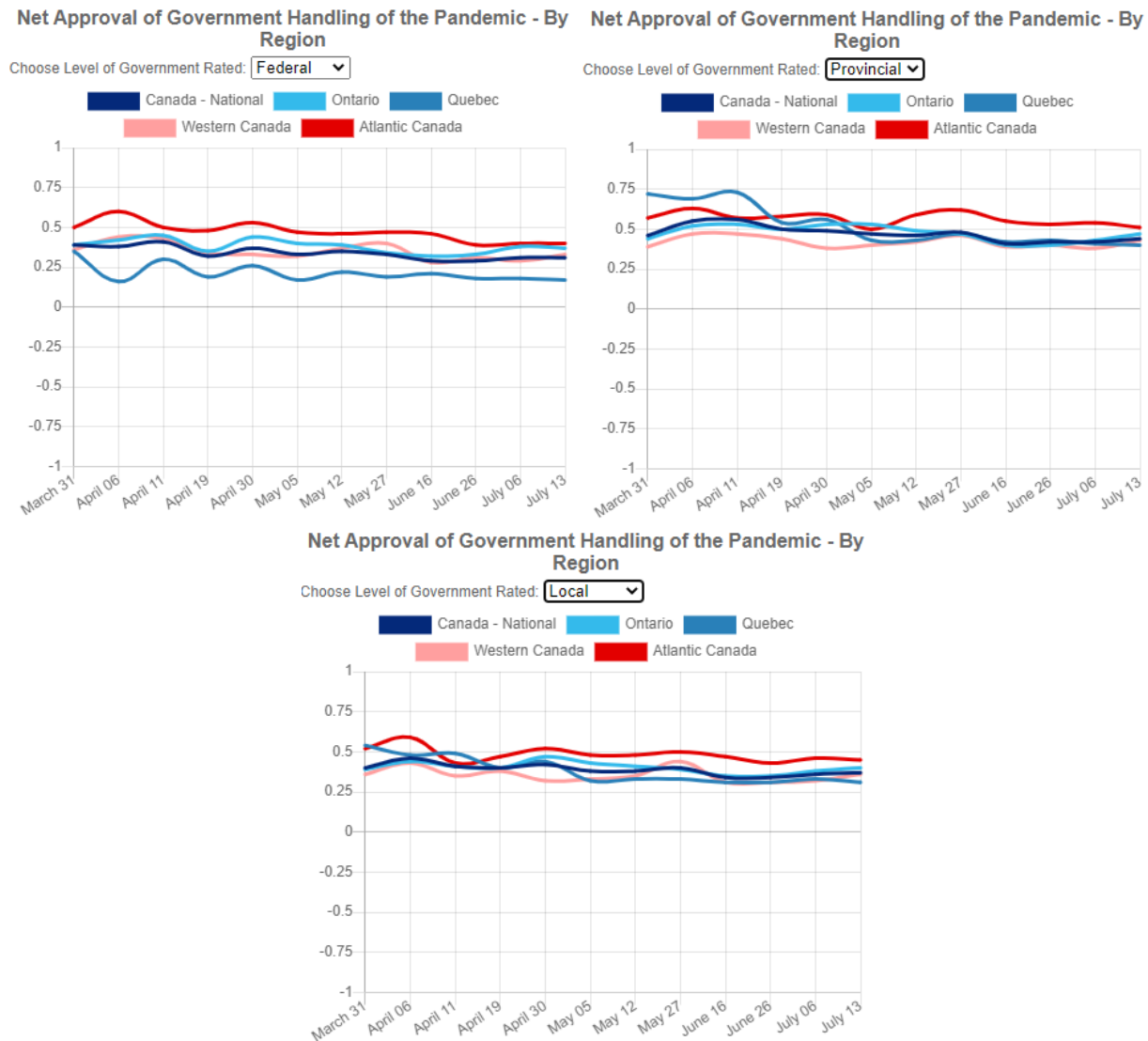


Figure 4 – Net approval of government handling of the pandemic by region. We asked Canadians whether they approved of how each level of government (the federal government, their provincial government, and their local government) was handling the coronavirus pandemic so far. To obtain a net approval score,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

Individual OECD Country Profiles

THE AMERICAS

Canada

→ *Alberta*

Alberta remains in Phase 2 of their reopening plan. On July 13, the second round of the provincial program providing non-medical masks to Albertans through drive-thrus is set to resume after being paused for three weeks. In June, 20 million masks were distributed through restaurants, municipalities, long-term care facilities, and on reserves. Another 20 millions masks will be distributed through 600 A&Ws, McDonalds, and Tim Hortons.¹ New restrictions have been enacted for Siksika First Nations after an outbreak on a reserve. A curfew will be in place from 11 pm to 5 am and public gatherings are being limited to 10 people, despite the province allowing for 200 person gatherings.² Union leaders representing grocery store workers are telling MPs that there is no reason for large grocery chains to cut pandemic pay premiums since COVID-19 has not gone away. The leaders want stricter labour standards and oversight for the sector.³

→ *British Columbia*

British Columbia experienced an increase in new infections last week, though the number of daily new cases remained low. The province is at Phase 3 of its reopening plan. Most businesses are open, subject to public health restrictions. Mass gatherings of more than 50 people are still prohibited.⁴ The government is working with all public postsecondary institutions to support their planning for the 2020/2021 academic year.

→ *Manitoba*

Manitoba entered Phase 3 of its returning safe services plan on June 21, with many health order restrictions eased. However, restrictions on capacities for religious services, clubs and other indoor gatherings still remain in place. Although no new cases have been discovered since the reopening of Manitoba, the provincial chief public health officer is considering the idea of further action on health orders in the coming weeks, possibly including mandatory face masks by fall.⁵

→ *New Brunswick*

After Service New Brunswick reopened all of its service centres this week, they reminded customers who visit a service centre in person to keep at least two metres of distance between one another, and to wear a mask if that distance cannot be maintained.⁶ All zones in New Brunswick remain in the “yellow” level of the province’s phased recovery plan.⁷ Movement to the “green” level will not occur until a vaccine has become available.⁸ As of July 13, the province has gone 3 consecutive days without reporting any new cases of COVID-19.⁹

→ *Newfoundland and Labrador*

Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be at Alert Level 2, with no detailed timeline for when the province will move to Alert Level 1. Alert Level 1 represents the new normal and a way to move forward until a vaccine for COVID-19 is available.¹⁰ On July 6, the government released a plan with three potential scenarios for reopening schools in September, dependent on the regional spread of COVID-19. School districts will determine which scenario to implement, in consultation with public health authorities in their region. The first scenario is that schools are open and instruction resumes in-class as normal with public health measures in place. The second involves schools being partially opened with the school’s population split up into alternating schedules. The last scenario is full time at-home learning, which may require teachers to be in school to support students with learning or behavioural disabilities. The return to school plan will include a COVID-19 assessment sheet that must be filled out each morning by parents or students asking about their travel history and any symptoms. The PC Education Critic and the NDP Education Critic

said the plan lacked necessary details, and they were both highly critical of the burden placed on school districts to shift through the three scenarios.¹¹

→ *Northwest Territories*

No active cases remain in the Northwest Territories. The territory-wide Public Health Emergency has been extended. The government is working on acquiring another rapid testing device for COVID-19, which is necessary for further reopening.¹² NWT is still at Phase 2 of their reopening plan. In most cases, indoor gatherings and events can have a maximum of 25 people; up to 50 people are allowed for outdoor gatherings. Similar limits apply to businesses and services. Everyone entering the NWT is required to self-isolate for 14 days.

→ *Nova Scotia*

On July 10, the government of Nova Scotia decided to extend its state of emergency until at least July 26.¹³ As of July 13, the province has gone 4 consecutive days without reporting any new cases of COVID-19, leaving only 3 active cases in the province.¹⁴

→ *Nunavut*

A test result that was meant to confirm the territory's first presumptive case of COVID-19 has come back negative.¹⁵ The sample was sent to a public health lab in Ontario because the testing equipment used initially was not accredited by Health Canada. While the case is still considered a presumptive positive due to the initial tests, the affected individuals and all close contacts are now out of isolation.¹⁶ The government is setting up two machines that can confirm diagnoses of COVID-19 in the territory.¹⁷ The new machines would mean the territory no longer has to send samples to the provinces for confirmation, and would drastically increase testing capacity. Once the devices are set up and approved by Health Canada, the government said it would revisit the requirement that all those entering the territory self-isolate for 14 days.¹⁸ Nunavut has extended its public health emergency order until July 23.¹⁹

→ *Ontario*

As the 7-day average of cases continues to decrease in Ontario, Premier Doug Ford announced on July 13 that the province will adopt a regional approach moving into Stage 3 of its reopening strategy.²⁰ Health Minister Christine Elliott indicated that short of providing a vaccine, Ontario will remain in Stage 3 (within "Phase 2") for the foreseeable future.²¹ The first regions to advance to Stage 3 on July 17 are mostly rural, where nearly all businesses can reopen with hygienic controls, except for high-risk ones including amusement/water parks, buffet-style food services, and nightclubs.^{22A} This past week, many municipalities across the province have enacted bylaws enforcing face coverings inside public spaces, such as shops and other establishments. Some Greater Toronto Area mayors had called on Premier Ford to legislate face coverings, but the province lacks the capacity to enforce mask bylaws.^{23B} After a few instances of aggressive non-compliance were widely publicized, legal experts say that--short of calling police on customers who do not comply--businesses may find they have little power to enforce the policy.^{23C}

→ *Prince Edward Island*

A day after the Atlantic bubble opened, PEI announced it had its first new cases of COVID-19 in months. The premier of PEI believes the outbreak might have been prevented if Canada Border Services had better communication with the Maritime provinces. PEI officials have not connected the outbreak to the Atlantic bubble, but will consider closing the bubble in order to protect public health.²³ The Opposition is calling on the province to create a memorandum of understanding that outlines shared responsibilities among the Atlantic provinces related to COVID-19 and the regional bubble. In the province, borders remain closed to non-essential travellers from abroad. After the education minister released plans for returning back to school in the fall, a Liberal MLA criticized the lack of information provided in the plan.²⁴

→ *Quebec*

Effective July 13, masks will be mandatory on public transit. However, police will not enforce the rule, bus drivers do not want to enforce the rule, and there will not be fines for breaking this rule.²⁵ The Quebec government is considering strategies to test asymptomatic carriers, to investigate regional testing and to implement testing at Quebec-US borders.²⁶ As the military withdrawal from Quebec's care homes is almost complete, 10,000 orderly students hired for medical support during the pandemic have finished school and will now enter Quebec's health sector.²⁷ The health minister warned businesses that if they fail to comply with public health regulations, they will be closed.²⁸ This warning was specifically directed towards bars, and was followed by a threat to reintroduce lockdown measures for that sector. On July 10, the province implemented a number of new rules for bars. Serving hours have been reduced (must close by 1am) and there can be a maximum of 50% capacity. No dancing is permitted, all customers must be seated, and bars must collect a register of customer contact information or have one guest in each group be the contact person for that group.²⁹

→ *Saskatchewan*

The province's Office of Residential Tenancies will begin accepting applications from landlords to evict their tenants on August 4, five months after they were suspended. The Minister of Justice said that tenants will be given the opportunity to pay back unpaid rent over the course of several months, and the eviction process will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.³⁰ The provincial government announced that public schools will be in-person in the fall, but has yet to release guidelines for immunocompromised students, teachers, and staff on how they should proceed if there is another outbreak.³¹ Elections Saskatchewan says it is working to source \$500,000 worth of PPE in preparation for the provincial election on October 26. All residents are expected to be able to vote by mail, but current plans are to have polling stations open for anyone who wants to cast a ballot in person.³²

→ *Yukon*

No active cases remain in Yukon. The border is open to residents of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and B.C. as long as they travel directly from those jurisdictions, without the need to self-isolate. Yukon is still at Phase 2 of its reopening plan. The territory could enter Phase 3, which has been dubbed the "new normal," as early as August. Details of Phase 3 will be released in two weeks.³³ Outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people are now permitted. Restaurants and bars can operate at full capacity if they follow social distancing regulations. The plan for the 2020-2021 school year has been announced. Under the new plan, all students from kindergarten to grade 9 and the students in grades 10 to 12 outside of Whitehorse will receive full days of in-class instruction, five days a week. Older students in Whitehorse will only attend half-days at school. The other half of each school day for these students will involve studying at home or somewhere else outside of the classroom. The arrangement would be monitored during the first semester to guide plans for the second semester.³⁴

The United States

→ *California*

California, Texas, Arizona and Florida account for 50% of cases in the US.³⁵ Over the past two weeks, California has had a 44% increase in hospitalizations and a 34% increase in ICU patients. The governor says the state is prepared for increasing hospitalizations.³⁶ On July 8, Los Angeles reported increasing infection rates and hospitalization rates as high as they were in April, which made them a high risk level city.³⁷ On July 7, California reported 114 deaths in 24 hours. On July 9, California reported 149 deaths in 24 hours, a record high compared to the last high of 155 set on April 22.³⁸ UC Berkeley reported 47 new cases in one week and connected some of them to sorority and fraternity parties.³⁹ Most sectors now have a guide for their reopening. Prior to pausing California's reopening last week, most of the state was in phase 3--leaving only Alameda County and Imperial County not in phases 2.5 or 3.⁴⁰ While phase 4 allows

concerts, festivals, convention centres and sports events with audiences, experts do not expect this to happen until there is a vaccine.⁴¹ Schools are planning to reopen in September using hybrid models; however, every school district from K-12 is required to create a distant learning plan in the event that reopening in-person classes is delayed.⁴²

→ *Illinois*

This weekend, the number of confirmed cases in Illinois increased by 1,000 each day, raising concerns about the state's reopening strategy.⁴³ However, most counties were below the benchmarks for re-closing in most risk metrics. These include: under 50 new cases per 100,000 people per week, decreasing deaths and ICU admissions, and under 10% positivity rate for tests per week.⁴⁴ Even though wearing face masks is mandatory, some health experts are calling on Governor JB Pritzker to re-close indoor dining at bars and restaurants, which can be fertile ground for transmission.⁴⁵ The Illinois State Department of Education issued a 60-page document this week with guidelines that schools can follow to reopen safely, offering three scenarios: fully onsite, fully remote, and a mixture of the two.⁴⁶ Depending on the situation, it is possible that schools would move between these three scenarios, even during the school year.

→ *Michigan*

The number of confirmed cases have continued to increase in Michigan, prompting Governor Gretchen Whitmer to enact an executive order on face masks. This took effect on July 13.⁴⁷ Under the order, Michiganders are required to wear a face mask in indoor public spaces and crowded outdoor spaces, where it is not possible maintain proper social distancing. Those who violate the order will face a \$500 fine.⁴⁸ At least 4,000 students have signed up for voluntary summer school in Detroit, with more than half choosing the face-to-face option.⁴⁹ On July 13, Detroit Public School Board became the first school board in the state to try a combination of in-person and remote learning. For K-8, classes will be made up of 15 students per in-person class and 25 students per virtual classroom.⁵⁰ Students will arrive at staggered times to ensure as little contact as possible. High school students will primarily stick to virtual learning for recovering credits lost by a school year cut short earlier in 2020. Critics say that the Superintendent, Mayor, and Governor are using Detroit public school students--mainly Black, Arab and Latino--as an immunity experiment, increasing their risk of contracting the virus.

→ *New York*

Once considered to be the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, on July 12 New York reported zero COVID-related deaths for the first time since March.⁵¹ Although most metrics (including ICU admissions) remain stable or are improving, Governor Cuomo is warning New Yorkers that the state will likely experience a slight resurgence in cases as the virus moves back north.⁵² At this point, New York City is still in Phase 3; all other counties are in Phase 4. New York City's public libraries reopened on July 13.⁵³

→ *Texas*

California, Texas, Arizona and Florida account for 50% of cases in the US.⁵⁴ The rate at which people are testing positive is 26% in Texas.⁵⁵ Texas set a new record for its COVID-19 deaths in one day on July 9,⁵⁶ and reported 9610 hospitalizations--which is 46% higher than the week of June 29.⁵⁷ The south Texas county of Brooks made it legal to arrest COVID-19 patients who appear in public before being cleared for reasons other than medical attention.⁵⁸ In Texas' plan for reopening schools, masks will be mandatory for students and teachers in counties with more than 20 cases; school districts must have in-person instruction for students, but parents may opt for virtual learning. The guidelines also refer to having hand sanitizers at every entrance and encouraging social distancing and handwashing at least twice daily. Educators and the teachers association are unhappy that they were not consulted in establishing the guidelines for schools and were not provided with an option to teach remotely.⁵⁹

Mexico

The Mexican government received 88 ventilators from China.⁶⁰ The regional government in Nuevo Leon is hiring 500 additional medical staff, including doctors and nurses.⁶¹ In reopening regionally, Nuevo Leon opened 100% of essential factories and commerce and services, 50% of non-essential factories, and reduced hours for shopping centers and restaurants. But gyms, casinos, cinemas, large events, museums, pools, sports, stadiums, spas, bars, villa rentals and bike routes will remain closed.⁶² In Mexico City, which is at the orange level in Mexico's reopening plan, they will reopen 601 shopping centers and department stores--which will allow approximately 66,490 people to return to work.⁶³ Federally, for the first week since its release, the government did not update their reopening stoplight map and blamed the states for inconsistent data collection.⁶⁴ A health official was concerned about the case increases in Quintana Roo, Campeche and Yucatan, which could have resulted from opening quickly.⁶⁵ Quintana Roo is at the orange level in federal reopening, but the region has designated the southern part of the state at the red level.⁶⁶ It will allow offices, hotels and restaurants to operate at a limited capacity while closing bars, clubs and cinemas.⁶⁷ An official from the Pan American Health Organization said that the spotlight map is confusing Mexicans; another official from the WHO said that reopening amid intense community transmission could be dangerous.⁶⁸

Chile

On July 6, Chile had the sixth-most COVID-19 patients globally: 3000 new cases and 76 dead in 24 hours.⁶⁹ The innovative PPE that won an April COVID-19 innovation challenge⁷⁰ and a newly designed ventilator⁷¹ will be tested in health centers. Latin American and Caribbean representatives, the IMF and the World Bank are collaborating on pandemic response.⁷² From July 7 to 21, the government implemented a sanitary cordon in la Tirana to prevent a religious festival.⁷³ In urban and populated areas, masks will be mandatory in public.⁷⁴ The government wants to increase PCR testing abilities in the metropolitan area.⁷⁵ In response to a 20% decline in the rate of positive COVID-19 test results between June 16 and July 8, the government will announce a national reopening plan.⁷⁶ Until then, reopening will only be in places with few cases over a prolonged period, low incidence, strong contact tracing, no increase in cases and a good healthcare system.⁷⁷ The metropolitan areas are among the most affected parts of Chile; they are seeing a decrease in cases and are working on a gradual reopening plan that educates Chileans and requires masks and social distancing.⁷⁸ On July 13, five of 22 sanitary protection measures will be lifted in Aysen and Los Rios. These measures will reopen cinemas and restaurants at 25% capacity, non-elective surgeries, sports events with 10 participants indoors or 50 participants outdoors, and allow adults over the age of 75 to go outside with permits. A sanitary cordon that separates these regions was installed on July 10.⁷⁹ An epidemiologist said that COVID-19 rates in Chile do not support relaxing health measures and that the country should wait until it has a 10% positivity rate and fewer cases before reopening.⁸⁰

WESTERN EUROPE

France

French officials warned that the R-rate is now above 1.0; 71 clusters of outbreaks are being investigated and contacts traced.⁸¹ Sewage testing indicates that traces of COVID-19 in Parisian non-drinking water over the past 14 days have increased.⁸² Professor Jean François Delfraissy, head of the government's scientific advisory body, noted that "barrier gestures" that prevent the spread of COVID-19 are being "abandoned" in France--as even ministers in the new cabinet exchanged kisses and hugs during their swearing-in ceremonies.⁸³ The municipality of Nice is considering making wearing masks mandatory at major events after a 5,000-person outdoor rave where almost no one wore masks or practiced social distancing.⁸⁴ Spectators were allowed back into soccer stadiums, but with a seating limit of 5,000 fans and social distancing between parties. However, the limit on gatherings technically remains below 10 people.⁸⁵

On July 8, the French government revealed it was preparing for a possible surge in the coming months but ruled out another nationwide lockdown, citing that the "economic and human consequences from a total lockdown are disastrous."⁸⁶ Two weeks after reopening its borders, France has revised its travel corridor list, and is now banning travellers from Algeria due to a resurgence in that country.⁸⁷

Germany

Germany's 7-day reproduction rate is 0.91. It successfully concluded the local lockdown in the North-Rhine Westphalia region last week.⁸⁸ Local lockdowns are lifted if total active cases fall below a threshold of 50 per 100,000 people over a seven-day period.⁸⁹ Accordingly, authorities lifted the lockdown in Warendorf on July 1. However, State Premier Armin Laschet decided to extend the city of Gütersloh's lockdown for another week because case numbers remained high there.⁹⁰ Although set to expire at midnight on July 7, the Higher Administrative Court in Münster ordered the end of the lockdown measures on July 6 with immediate effect--saying the government had had time to bring in targeted rules.⁹¹ Additionally, the meatpacking company at the centre of this COVID-19 outbreak came under fire from politicians on July 12 for requesting government support to cover quarantined workers' pay.⁹² After 1,500 Tonnies' workers were infected, the company was forced to close until at least July 17. Agriculture Minister Julia Klöckner responded by saying, "I don't have much sympathy with this, after an entire region was forced into lockdown, this will not help to lessen the public's irritation."⁹³

Belgium

In Belgium, the government has decided not to reopen its borders to the 15 non-EU safe list countries decided by the EU Council.⁹⁴ On July 7, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs updated the list of countries where Belgian citizens can travel for non-essential journeys. Belgians are unable to travel to Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Norway.⁹⁵ Also, travel is not permitted to Leicester, a city in England, effective July 12, after it went back into lockdown following a spike in cases. On July 8, the government announced that travellers will be tested and quarantined on arrival, depending on whether they are returning from a high-risk country or region. The Belgian government will test returning travellers and place them in quarantine for a maximum of 14 days. Even if a test is negative, quarantine will continue until a second retest is negative.⁹⁶ Since no federal legal framework exists, Belgian travellers returning to the country from places with high infection rates cannot be forced into quarantine. In Flanders, travellers returning to Belgium from high-risk areas who do not quarantine could risk a fine of up to 4000 euros and up to six months in prison. However, prevention policies can be issued at the regional level. Belgium's top virologist said that Belgians should not be allowed to travel abroad yet for holidays and that, as countries in Europe begin to see a resurgence, Belgium should be considering its plan for a second wave.⁹⁷

Netherlands

On July 9, the Dutch football association published a protocol for clubs on how to restart matches while following social distancing rules. Public games have been allowed since July 1 as long as spectators keep a 1.5m distance.⁹⁸ In an announcement on July 11, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs eased the cautionary travel advice for the UK from orange, indicating only urgent trips should be undertaken, to yellow. The decision was made after the UK itself loosened its own local rules. However, entry procedures from the Channel Islands ought to be stricter than the rest of the UK, considering the rise in the number of cases there.⁹⁹

Spain

In response to a rise in cases, the Spanish government will meet to discuss further potential lockdown measures.¹⁰⁰ Although there are differences across regions, there are still nationwide regulations on large

events and capacity limits.¹⁰¹ With some exceptions, Extremadura, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands have made masks mandatory regardless of social distancing and reports suggest that Cantabria, Asturias and Aragon may also do so.¹⁰² On July 4, Segria in Lleida in Catalonia entered lockdown again for 15 days with the possibility of an extension. Prior to the lockdown, non-residents were advised to leave and residents were advised to return by a specified time. Due to the roadblock regulations, people would only be able to enter or leave for work purposes; however, gatherings of up to ten people and some other activities are permitted amid the lockdown.¹⁰³ In Galicia, restrictions were introduced again and between July 5 and July 10, people were only allowed to enter and leave A Marina for work.¹⁰⁴ As of July 10, Asturias and La Rioja were the only states that had not reported another outbreak. Aragon has the second-most COVID-19 cases. Madrid has the most new cases. Basque Country has ordered PCR tests for all patrons who visited a specific bar in the Ordizia district.¹⁰⁵ Despite the restrictions, Spaniards voted in regional elections in Basque Country and Galicia with mail-in votes or delegates voting for COVID-19 patients.¹⁰⁶ In reopening, the Balearic Islands have faced many large parties that violate health regulations.¹⁰⁷

The United Kingdom

The number of new cases continues to hover around 600-900 daily in the United Kingdom. After a steep reopening last week, PM Boris Johnson's government is opening the economy even further. As of July 12, beauty salons, spas, tattoo parlours and nail bars are welcoming back clients. Some treatments, such as eyebrow threading, are still banned.¹⁰⁸ In Scotland, indoor shopping centres are allowed to reopen on July 12, with hair salons, barbershops, indoor pubs, cafes and restaurants following suit on July 15.¹⁰⁹ With regard to face coverings, PM Johnson had previously indicated that the government may be considering tougher rule, which are currently compulsory only on public transport in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.¹¹⁰ However, opinion on this is divided among his cabinet ministers, with some ministers preferring a "common sense" approach over a compulsory one.¹¹¹ On July 12, Amnesty International reported that the UK has the highest number per capita of health and social care worker deaths during the pandemic, with at least 540 frontline staff dying after contracting the virus in England and Wales.¹¹² Leicester remains in lockdown after a rise in cases there. Health Minister Matt Hancock said this will be reviewed later this week.¹¹³ After introducing a 14-day quarantine measure for travellers last month, the UK released a "travel corridor" list on July 10. Travellers to England from countries on this list would not be required to quarantine. Notably, Canada is not on this list of exempted countries.¹¹⁴

Ireland

Ireland launched a contact-tracing app on July 6 to help track the spread of the virus and potentially limit its transmission. A similar app is scheduled to launch in Northern Ireland in the coming weeks, which will then allow apps on both sides of the border to exchange information. The app is currently only available to individuals whose smartphones have either iOS 13.5 or Android 6.0 and higher.¹¹⁵ The Irish government aims to publish a "green list" on 20 July, listing the countries safe for travellers. However, the advice against all non-essential travel from Ireland remains in place, along with the 14-day quarantine requirement for people arriving in Ireland from overseas (this was previously set to be lifted by 10 July).¹¹⁶ The government is also working on a major financial package to help schools reopen at full capacity in autumn, including extra funding for substitution cover, cleaning and support for school principals. However, there would be flexibility in the interim public health guidelines, with one-metre physical distancing rules eased for students.¹¹⁷

Luxembourg

As of July 11, a growing number of countries have listed Luxembourg as an "at-risk country" following a recent resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the past weeks. On July 4, Denmark banned travel from Luxembourg. Lithuania also closed its borders to residents from Luxembourg on July 6; Lithuanian

residents required to self-isolate upon their return from Luxembourg. While Luxembourg residents can still travel to Estonia and Latvia, they will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Slovakia also placed restrictions on travellers from Luxembourg: with 5 days of quarantine and mandatory tests upon arrival. Slovenia and Romania have excluded Luxembourg from their 'green list' of countries as of July 7, requiring them to quarantine in Slovenia and self-isolate in Romania upon arrival. Cyprus requires a negative test taken within 72 hours before arrival from tourists from Luxembourg. While Finland reopened its borders to a majority of countries from the Schengen area on July 13, they remain closed to travellers from Luxembourg. Norway also announced on July 10 a 10-day quarantine upon arrival for travellers from Luxembourg.¹¹⁸ To manage the sudden rise in cases, Luxembourg police have been directed to monitor nightlife and outdoor spaces, such as popular barbecue spots and unauthorised parties in more rural areas. The new infections have mainly been traced back to parties, private gatherings, and bars.¹¹⁹

Portugal

Portuguese and British authorities moved ahead with a re-evaluation of the UK's list of countries that holidaymakers can visit without having to self-isolate for 14 days upon their return to the UK. Portugal was initially left off the list. The two governments are now in talks over adding Portugal in the coming weeks.¹²⁰ Effective July 11, Portugal's airports will be ramping up controls on visitors, requiring proof of negative tests for COVID-19 before letting passengers through to their destinations. The new rules, however, only apply to nationals from non-EU countries: namely Brazil, the US, Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde and São Tomé e Príncipe. Travellers from the UK who already spent 14-days in quarantine upon returning home will not face any further hurdles if they choose Portugal for holiday this summer. Non-Portuguese citizens and foreigners without residence in Portugal who do not have a negative test result for COVID-19 on arrival will have to take a test and pay for it at the airport. The latter would also be required to stay at their residences until the results arrive.¹²¹ Madeira's Regional Government Council has authorised the reopening and use of playgrounds in the region as of July 18--with strict rules and safety rules in place. Face masks are mandatory for children over 10 years old along with their companion, and a distance of two metres must be maintained at the playground.¹²²

CENTRAL EUROPE

Austria

In Austria, new outbreaks of COVID-19 connected to foreign travel have emerged--with the majority linked to the Balkan region. The travel warnings issued last week for Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo remain in effect.¹²³ On July 8, the Austrian government issued travel warnings for Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova due to their epidemiological situation. Austrians arriving from these countries must enter a 14-day quarantine or show proof of a negative COVID-19 test. The Austrian government will be increasing checks at the Hungarian and Slovenian borders.¹²⁴ More than 3,000 people in the state of Upper Austria, which borders Germany and the Czech Republic, have been placed under quarantine to contain an outbreak.¹²⁵

Greece

After weeks without new cases, Greece has recorded a number of positive tests. A majority of cases are related to tourists entering the country and arrivals through northern land borders.¹²⁶ Health authorities are concerned after more than 100 tourists tested positive and entered quarantine since Greece reopened to international visitors on July 1. Regardless, Greece has further eased restrictions intended to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Rules permitting a maximum of 6 customers per table at bars and restaurants have been removed and the use of masks inside shopping malls will no longer be mandatory. A government

spokesperson said that they were aware that restarting tourism would result in a rise in cases, but they are focused on quickly locating and isolating the cases to prevent further spread.¹²⁷ Effective July 6, the Greek government announced the temporary closure of its borders to Serbian citizens due to a rise of COVID-19 cases in that country.¹²⁸ The government has banned all but essential travel from Serbia and closed all entry points for a week. Greece is going against the EU Council's recommendation, as Serbia is on their list of 15 safe non-EU countries whose citizens are allowed to enter the EU.¹²⁹ Effective July 14, Greece will only allow visitors through its land border crossing with Bulgaria if they show a negative COVID-19 test.¹³⁰

Italy

The Italian government is calling for the EU to introduce precautionary measures for all passengers arriving from non-EU countries to slow the spread of COVID-19.¹³¹ On July 6, Italian authorities suspended all flights from Bangladesh for a week after a significant number of passengers arriving from Dhaka tested positive. The decision was made in order to try to contain an outbreak among the Bangladeshi community in the Lazio region, which has begun increased testing for COVID-19. On July 9, the Health Minister signed an ordinance banning the entry of people arriving from at-risk countries, including Brazil, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chile.¹³² Various regions around the country have decided to increase health checks in order to prevent outbreaks. In the Veneto region, authorities have introduced legal repercussions against citizens who do not follow self-isolation measures. Fines will be given to people violating the mandatory quarantine period. Swab tests are mandatory for anyone returning from outside of the EU with a temperature higher than 37.5 degrees Celsius.¹³³ People who test positive in the region but refuse hospital treatment (if needed) could face a prison sentence under the new regulations.¹³⁴

Slovenia

In Slovenia, the government has re-introduced restrictions on public gatherings, with only 10 people now permitted. Official events of up to 50 people are still permitted but only if the organizer keeps a record of all the participants.¹³⁵ Slovenia moved France and the Czech Republic back to their list of safe countries just two days after putting them on a list of countries whose citizens must quarantine on arrival. Residents of an eastern region of the Czech Republic remain on the quarantine list. Slovenian citizens and people with residence in Slovenia arriving from a quarantine-listed country do not need to be quarantined if they can prove property ownership or provide a bill for accommodation.¹³⁶ The government had intended to implement a compulsory contact tracing app for those who have tested positive or those in quarantine. Failure to use the app would have resulted in a fine of 600 euros. Slovenia's privacy watchdog, representatives from the Ministries of Health and Public Administration, and opposition parties all expressed their reservations about making the app mandatory.¹³⁷ The opposition parties said the government should not use COVID-19 as a reason for excessive encroachment on human rights and civil liberties.¹³⁸ On July 13, the Public Administration Minister addressed these concerns and announced that the app will be voluntary.

Switzerland

While the government has phased out most of its restrictive policy measures, the number of new cases has increased as the economy has started to reopen. As a result, the Swiss government has made face masks mandatory on all public transport, effective July 6, for all passengers over the age of 12.¹³⁹ Switzerland's COVID-19 Science Task Force is advising people to avoid indoor events, particularly nightclubs and bars, after a cluster of infections was linked to nightclubs in Zurich.¹⁴⁰ Nightclubs are now required to record the identity card details and phone numbers of all patrons, and temperature checks are being recommended upon entry. Since the pandemic began, Switzerland's federal government has allowed cantons to take a localized approach to containing the virus. As a result, a number of cantons are enacting compulsory mask-wearing policies in retail spaces and shops.¹⁴¹

EASTERN EUROPE

Czech Republic

On July 11, Serbia and Montenegro joined Sweden on the Czech Republic's list of "red" (high-risk) countries from which travellers must submit a negative COVID-19 test prior to entering the country.¹⁴² Czech citizens and permanent residents can currently travel to and from over 30 "green" (low-risk) countries without restrictions.¹⁴³

Hungary

Following a resurgence in cases of COVID-19 throughout Eastern Europe, Hungary has temporarily reintroduced travel restrictions with a number of countries. On July 12, Hungary's government began sorting countries into 3 categories – red, yellow, and green – based on their rates of new coronavirus infections. Foreigners from countries in the "red" category – including Albania, Ukraine, Belarus, and most of Asia, Africa, and Latin America – are banned from entering, while Hungarian citizens travelling from those locations will have to quarantine for two weeks upon their return, or until they have tested negative for COVID-19 twice in the span of 48 hours. Both Hungarians and foreigners travelling from countries in the "yellow" category – which includes Britain, Russia, the US, and Sweden – will be required to quarantine for two weeks, or after testing negative for COVID-19 upon arrival in Hungary.¹⁴⁴ On July 13, all international passenger transport via rail between Hungary and Serbia was suspended until further notice.¹⁴⁵

Latvia

On July 10, Latvia's Cabinet decided to partially renew certain restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19. Latvia's Ministry of Health concluded that three separate outbreaks of the virus occurred in the past week, and that each one occurred in either a bar or restaurant. As a result, the Ministry of Health suggested that the Latvian government consider reintroducing certain restrictions on eateries. The decision of the Cabinet stipulates that, from July 11, eateries will not be allowed to operate between midnight and 6:30am, and no more than 4 people will be allowed to share a table indoors.¹⁴⁶

Lithuania

Due to the increasing rate of COVID-19 infections throughout parts of Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa, Lithuania has updated its travel restrictions and reintroduced outright bans on entry from certain countries. From July 13, foreigners living in Sweden, Luxembourg, Portugal, Bulgaria, and Romania are banned from entering Lithuania. Lithuanian citizens returning from these countries - as well as from Ghana, Seychelles, Djibouti, San Marino, and Eswatini - will be required to self-isolate for at least 14-days upon their arrival.¹⁴⁷

Poland

On July 12, incumbent President Andrzej Duda narrowly defeated Rafał Trzaskowski, mayor of Warsaw, in the second round of Poland's presidential election. Winning by a margin of less than 3%, Duda's victory was Poland's narrowest since the end of communism in 1989.¹⁴⁸

Slovakia

On July 9, Slovakia's Ministry of Health reported 53 new cases of COVID-19 – the country's largest number of new cases in a day since April 22. Following this spike in cases, Prime Minister Igor Matovic announced that the government will meet on July 13 in order to discuss whether to tighten restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of the virus. These restrictions may include a legal amendment requiring that those

returning to Slovakia from high-risk countries could be contacted by text message and required to report to Slovak authorities.¹⁴⁹

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark

The Danish government raised its private gathering limit to 100 people on July 8, allowing larger meetings, conferences, and parties to take place.¹⁵⁰ Some larger public events, including games in the Danish Superliga, have already been permitted to take place with as many as 10,500 people. The private gathering limit will be raised to 200 people on August 8 if there is no associated surge in cases.¹⁵¹ The Danish Health Agency dropped its opposition to the use of face masks in certain circumstances, recommending the use if a person has to leave self-isolation, is visiting an elderly relative, or is returning from abroad. Public health officials had previously been concerned that their stockpile of masks would run out if they recommended use by the general public.¹⁵² Residents of four Swedish counties on the Danish border may now enter Denmark for leisure travel after they met the criteria for unrestricted entry. All travellers from Sweden must carry documents that confirm their residency in one of the eligible counties.¹⁵³

Estonia

The Estonian government will ease gathering restrictions on July 15, allowing 1,500 people at indoor events and 2,000 people at outdoor events. Indoor events must be at 50% capacity or the specified number of people, whichever is lower.¹⁵⁴ However, the Research Council said that the government should be more cautious in its approach to easing restrictions, as there are clear differences in how certain events can meet social distancing guidelines.¹⁵⁵ Travellers from the UK no longer need to self-isolate on arrival in Estonia after the government raised its criteria to 16 new cases per 100,000 people over the previous two weeks. People who do need to self-isolate will have to test negative for COVID-19 twice, and their isolation must be ensured by their employer or the school they attend.¹⁵⁶ Universities in Estonia are seeking further clarity from the government on how they can ensure that arriving international students self-isolate because they do not have the capacity to house each student separately.¹⁵⁷ Estonia's contact tracing app will be ready for download on a voluntary basis on August 20.¹⁵⁸ The Minister of Social Affairs said that, while development of the app has taken longer than in some other countries, it will be a high-quality product that is not beset by some of the same privacy issues found on the Norwegian app, among others.¹⁵⁹

Finland

A number of travel restrictions on both EU and non-EU countries will be lifted on July 13.¹⁶⁰ Unrestricted travel will be allowed from 17 European countries. Work-related and essential travel will be permitted from Algeria, Australia, China, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uruguay.¹⁶¹ Finland will consider lifting restrictions on the remaining EU countries if their infection rate is below 10 new cases per 100,000 people over the previous two weeks. The government continues recommending that all travellers self-isolate upon their arrival in Finland, except for those coming from Nordic or Baltic countries.¹⁶² Going forward, the government will update its travel restrictions every two weeks. The next update will be effective July 27.¹⁶³ The closure of schools and daycares had minimal impact on the infection rate among children in Finland, with the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL) finding similar rates to those in Sweden, where schools were not shut down.¹⁶⁴ As a result, officials from THL said their agency would probably not recommend closing schools in the event of a second wave.¹⁶⁵

Iceland

An Icelandic genome research company that has been heavily involved in the country's effort to test incoming travellers at the border said it would no longer participate in Iceland's testing scheme as of July 13.¹⁶⁶ The CEO of deCode Genetics said that his company had repeatedly requested that the government take over all testing at the border, and that he believed that the government could easily handle the increased quantity of tests by providing the National University Hospital (NUH) with the resources to increase their capacity.¹⁶⁷ As a result, Iceland is altering its strategy to test bundles of ten samples at once, and will only test individual samples if there is a positive result from the batch. The government acknowledged that this strategy increases the likelihood of unreliable results, but is moving forward with it due to the low percentage of positive tests at the border.¹⁶⁸ DeCode Genetics did not have a written contract with the government to perform tests at the border and was therefore able to pull out at any time.¹⁶⁹ Icelandic residents returning from abroad will have to undergo a modified five-day quarantine that offers limited freedom to go out upon their return to the country. They may go grocery shopping, use public transport, and see friends and family in small groups—but they cannot have close contact with anyone or attend large events. Icelanders may leave self-isolation after they test negative for a second time.¹⁷⁰

Norway

Norway has opened to tourism to and from all EU and Schengen Area countries except for Bulgaria, Croatia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Hungary, and most of Sweden.¹⁷¹ All self-isolation requirements have been lifted for safe EU and Schengen Area countries, while residents of the exempted seven countries must quarantine themselves for 10 days upon their arrival.¹⁷² Norway's Data Protection Agency has ordered that public health officials stop all analysis of data collected by the country's contact tracing app. Use of the app was suspended last month, and public health officials said that they deleted all data they had when the suspension was announced.¹⁷³ Data privacy advocates said that the app went above and beyond what was necessary in the fight against COVID-19. Amnesty International said that it was among the most invasive apps in the world. This ruling indicates that the app will not be ready for a re-release before the fall. Public health officials said they will continue testing and tweaking the app to get it ready prior to a second wave.¹⁷⁴

Sweden

Sweden's healthcare watchdog has reported that some residents of long-term care homes did not receive appropriate healthcare in the midst of the pandemic.¹⁷⁵ After strict restrictions on long-term care homes were issued by some municipalities, some homes reported that they were unable to let doctors in to assess individual residents. Nearly half of all Swedish deaths from COVID-19 occurred in long-term care homes.¹⁷⁶ Starting on July 15, Sweden will update its travel advice every two weeks.¹⁷⁷ Swedes are currently able to travel to 14 countries in the EU; advice against non-essential travel is still in place for all other European countries. With a few exceptions, all countries exempted from the advice do not have quarantine requirements in place for Swedish travellers.¹⁷⁸

ASIA/PACIFIC

Japan

Japan is experiencing an uptick in new infections. Tokyo has recorded more than 200 new cases per day for 4 consecutive days, starting on July 9. The positivity rate of testing in Tokyo has been rising in recent weeks, reaching 5.1% on July 5 after being around 1% at the end of May. The Metropolitan Government decided to secure 3,000 beds for COVID-19 patients on July 9.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, more PCR tests will be conducted in Tokyo and the number of staff at local public health centres will be increased.¹⁸⁰ A new

COVID-19 subcommittee met for the first time on Monday to replace the original panel of experts, with the primary focus on reopening the economy.¹⁸¹ Despite the resurgence of infections, Japan's reopening strategy will not be interrupted. Almost all businesses have resumed operations. The maximum number of participants at an event was raised from 1,000 to 5,000 on July 10. Attendees are discouraged from visiting facilities without proper health and safety precautions, and will be required to install the contact-tracing app and provide their contact details to organizers. Temperature checks will also be mandatory upon entry.¹⁸² The government is planning to allow foreign nationals with student and technical trainee visas to re-enter the country. Negotiations are underway to let businesspeople from about 10 countries and territories travel to and from Japan.¹⁸³

South Korea

South Korea continued recording dozens of new infections per day during the past week. Transmission is no longer concentrated in the Seoul Metropolitan Region but is occurring sporadically across the country. The mask rationing system was terminated on July 12 as the supply stabilized.¹⁸⁴ The country is maintaining restrictions on exports of masks while raising the quotas of outbound shipments.¹⁸⁵ 48.9 billion KRW (approximately \$41 million USD) has been allocated in the government's 3rd Supplementary Budget to expand the influenza vaccination program to prepare for a possible future influenza outbreak coinciding with the COVID-19 outbreak.¹⁸⁶ Health authorities show no intention to raise the nationwide distancing level and are leaving the rules at the discretion to local governments--despite growing calls to make the measures stricter. A growing number of seaside villages are now closing their beaches due to fear of COVID-19 transmission. Due to recent outbreaks related to religious activities, it became mandatory for all churches to stop hosting activities outside of regular services and to ensure mask wearing at all times, effective July 10.¹⁸⁷ Starting on July 13, foreigners arriving from high-risk countries will be required to submit a certificate of a negative test result before entering South Korea. Direct flights from high-risk countries have also been ordered to limit the number of passengers to 60% capacity.¹⁸⁸

New Zealand

Although a couple of new cases were recorded among returnees in government-managed isolation, New Zealand has managed to maintain zero locally acquired cases for more than a month. The government is seeking ways to perform 4,000 tests per day at the border and encourage people to use the entry log system. To relieve the burden on managing returnees, a temporary hold has been put on new flight bookings, and those already booked will be admitted based on availability of quarantine facilities.¹⁸⁹ Following two recent escapes from government-managed isolation, the government announced that there will be a constant police presence at every managed isolation and quarantine facility in New Zealand effective July 9.¹⁹⁰ A massive privacy breach that published the personal details of recently confirmed cases is under investigation.¹⁹¹

Australia

Australia is still grappling with the resurgence of transmission in Victoria, its second largest state. Victoria has recorded more than 200 new cases per day multiple times in the past week and has overtaken New South Wales to become the worst-affected state in Australia. A six-week lockdown of metropolitan Melbourne and its suburbs started on July 9, covering more than 5 million people. Residents have to stay at home and any gatherings with more than 2 people are prohibited.¹⁹² Victorians have also been urged to wear masks when leaving home.¹⁹³ The National Cabinet decided on July 10 to reduce weekly arrivals into Australia from about 6,500 to 4,000 to ease pressure on hotel quarantine. Airlines are reportedly prioritizing bookings for business passengers.¹⁹⁴ The Cabinet also agreed to a national review of hotel quarantine arrangements, with states and territories moving toward a model of charging for hotel quarantine.¹⁹⁵ The states and territories are moving on with their own reopening plans, with the exception of Victoria. Three states have completely scrapped the limit on the maximum number of people attending gatherings.

Restaurants are able to accommodate large groups of patrons. Non-essential shopping has returned in most cases. Travelling within the state is largely unlimited. Although Victoria's borders remain open to travellers from most of the other states, all other states are either banning Victorians from entering or taking strict measures against them.¹⁹⁶

Turkey

On July 10, the Prime Minister of Turkey announced that the Hagia Sophia would reopen as a mosque for worshippers on July 24. The building had previously housed a museum for many decades. The Prime Minister stated that the building will continue to be open to all, as is the case with all other mosques.¹⁹⁷ On July 11, Turkey's Health Ministry released an updated list of guidelines for barbershops and hair salons. Cell phones may not be used while serving customers, and the number of visitors inside the shop is limited. Handshakes are completely forbidden. Staff and customers are not supposed to talk at all, but if they do speak, they must do so quietly in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 lingering in the air. To avoid crowding in salons and shops, customers must make an appointment, while children and other companions are strictly not allowed. Barbershops and beauty salons were among the first businesses to open in early May as Turkey gradually emerged out of stay-at-home orders and weekend lockdowns.¹⁹⁸

Israel

Israel is experiencing an extremely high rate of transmission. The country reported a record-high 1,684 new infections on July 10, with new cases tripling from two weeks ago. The number of active cases has gone up by 500% since June 7. A number of government officials have also been in self-isolation after exposure to infected persons.¹⁹⁹ The Health Ministry has told hospitals to prepare for a coming influx of patients. Facing criticism over the government's handling of the pandemic, the Prime Minister acknowledged that some reopening measures were premature.²⁰⁰ More neighbourhoods are being put under seven-day lockdowns, including parts of Jerusalem.²⁰¹ Citizens have been warned about a possible second nationwide lockdown if daily new cases exceed 2,000. The Health Ministry is reportedly planning to tighten the testing criteria to relieve the burden on the overwhelmed testing system. Asymptomatic people will no longer be able to get tested, and the ability of family physicians to provide referrals for tests has been reduced.²⁰² A controversial law was passed on July 7, allowing the government to impose restrictions immediately and seek parliament approval afterwards.²⁰³ The reopening process is being reversed. Gatherings with more than 20 individuals are prohibited in all cases. Restaurants have been forced to limit their indoor and outdoor capacity. Cultural institutions, event halls, clubs, bars, gyms and public swimming pools are now closed. Summer schools, camps and youth activities are not allowed for students higher than fourth grade. Buses are limited to a maximum of 20 people each.²⁰⁴

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