

## COVID-19 EU Briefing 08 October 2021

### Recovery

#### Key changes since last week:

##### *European:*

- The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has suggested that the COVID-19 rules and restrictions should be amended since the current colour-coded system limits the freedom of movement.
- The ECDC has proposed to make changes regarding the system and ease the travel rules for vaccinated travellers.
- The ECDC has advised through its latest update that stricter entry restrictions should apply to travellers from Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.

##### *International:*

- **Germany:** Germany added Belarus, Lithuania, Romania & El Salvador to its list of high-risk areas.
- **Cyprus:** Cypriot authorities have tightened entry requirements for Hungary as the country has moved from green to the orange category. Malta has been added to the green category alongside Poland and The Czech Republic. Cypriot authorities have also facilitated entry rules for Lichtenstein, Norway, Japan, Rwanda, and Chile.
- **Estonia:** Six European countries are on Estonia's green list; there is no restriction of movement for The Czech Republic, The Vatican, Hungary, Malta, Monaco and Poland.
- **Lithuania:** Lithuania has updated its weekly travel restrictions, with only Malta remaining on the country's green list. Poland has now been moved to the red list, from orange.
- **Latvia:** Six European countries are on Latvia's green list; there is no restriction of movement for The Czech Republic, The Vatican, Hungary, Malta, Monaco and Poland.
- **Finland:** The ongoing restrictions on entry at external borders will be continued until 24 October. Restrictions on entry will be lifted for residents of Kuwait.
- **Sweden:** People who can present vaccination certificates from the UK will be exempted from both the entry ban and the requirement for a negative test on arrival to Sweden effective from October 11th.
- **Malta:** Travellers arriving in Malta without the necessary documents are being allowed to take a flight back home if they test negative for COVID-19 instead of being forced into quarantine on the island.
- **Croatia:** All Croatian regions remained in red, while the Zagreb area remained in dark red on the latest new epidemiological map from the ECDC.
- **Italy:** Italy's health ministry has confirmed that it now recognises the Indian-produced AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield, ending travel uncertainty for people inoculated with the jab in India as well as other countries including Canada and the UK.
- **Spain:** Maltese citizens and residents will be able to travel to Spain as the Consumption and Social Welfare has removed Malta from its list of high-risk areas. Several regions of France and Italy have been removed from the list of high-risk areas.

- **Belgium:** The Brussels-Capital Region is no longer coloured dark red on the travel map of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Flanders remains orange.
- **Czech Republic:** Citizens of Estonia will be subject to stricter entry restrictions when planning to travel to the Czech Republic, as the latter has placed Estonia in the dark red category.

*Domestic:*

- **Lithuania:** Wearing facemasks indoors is once again mandatory. The new rules are in place even if the business or public place serves only people with the national COVID-19 certificates. The government has also issued a recommendation for both public and private sectors to switch to remote work.
- **Latvia:** The Crisis Management Council agreed to announce a state of emergency in Latvia for three months. The decision has yet to be taken by the government. The Committee decided that persons who are not vaccinated for COVID-19 or have not recovered from a previous infection will be permitted to shop only in stores that sell first necessity goods from now on, among other measures.
- **Finland:** Finland's Helsingin Sanomat reports that even with an upswing in infections and the slowing pace of vaccination uptake, the nation's main political parties are not in favour of reimposing restrictions or introducing a vaccination mandate.
- **Malta:** The health authorities will be conducting a study during October-November in schools to determine whether masks need to be worn during the second semester. Healthcare workers, care home workers, teachers, and various government workers will receive the COVID-19 booster from December.
- **Austria:** Tougher 3G (proof of negative test, recovery or vaccination against COVID-19) regulations are being drafted by the Ministry of Health for the workplace. It would mean all employees who have contact with customers or colleagues, would have to show 3G proof and wear masks. The new 3G rule will apply from October 15 for all employees, owners and operators of businesses who might meet colleagues or customers at work.
- **Luxembourg:** Various media reports suggested on Thursday that the country's CovidCheck system, which currently grants access to restaurants, bars and other venues to those who are vaccinated, tested negative or have recovered from COVID-19, will be extended to also cover smaller parties and other venues such as museums and gyms. Self antigen tests will no longer be accepted.
- **Italy:** The Italian government unanimously approved a decree that will allow the further opening up of venues in the world of culture, sport and nightlife, with effect from Monday 11 October. The new rules apply to 'white zones' - the areas with the fewest COVID-19 restrictions (currently most of Italy) - and apply exclusively to holders of the Green Pass, the digital or paper certificate that shows people have been vaccinated, tested negative or recovered from COVID-19.
  - Cinemas and theatres in Italy can operate to a maximum capacity, and fill all their seats, stadiums and sports facilities can operate at 75 per cent outdoors and 60 per cent indoors. Nightclubs, discos and dance halls will be able to open with a maximum capacity of 50 per cent indoors and 75 per cent outdoors

- **Greece:** The Greek government has decided to abolish most restrictive measures for vaccinated individuals, including "red" zone areas. From this Saturday onward, there will neither be curfews nor a ban on music at indoor catering and entertainment venues in red-coded areas.
- **Romania:** Wearing a mask is mandatory in all outdoor public spaces in localities where the infection rate is higher than 6 per thousand.
- **Ireland:** Ireland is on track to lift remaining COVID-19 restrictions on 22 October, Taoiseach Micheal Martin has said.
- **Germany:** The states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Saarland have lifted most COVID-19 restrictions. In North Rhine-Westphalia, masks are no longer compulsory in outdoor public spaces, a cap on the number of people allowed to attend soccer matches, stadiums and concerts will have been lifted.
- **Belgium:** Face masks are no longer mandatory in the hospitality sector and in shops, but must still be worn in care homes, on public transport, and some sporting events.

### Vaccination Plans:

#### *Member States:*

- **Greece:** People aged 50-59 years old and with an underlying health condition that puts them in the high-risk category will be able to book an appointment for their COVID-19 booster shot.
- **Estonia:** The government decided that in addition to the elderly and care home residents, COVID-19 vaccine booster doses will also be administered to workers in the healthcare, social work and education sectors. The third doses will be administered at least six months after the first vaccine process is completed.
- **Denmark:** The health authority is drawing up plans to offer all fully vaccinated people in Denmark a third jab, starting with the over-65s, frontline healthcare professionals and the chronically-ill.
- **Sweden:** Sweden's Public Health Agency has halted the use of the Moderna vaccine in people born 1991 or later due to data suggesting a slightly increased (but still very low) risk of a rare side effect. The region of Gävleborg has paused the use of Moderna completely.
- **Portugal:** The General Directorate of Health (DGS) will issue guidelines with "technical support for this third dose" or booster dose, noting that the vaccine will start first to be administered to people residing in nursing homes and those over 80 years of age.
- **Spain:** The Spanish Health Ministry has confirmed that third doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines can be administered to the over-70s, hoping to improve their protection against COVID-19.
- **Croatia:** The Croatian Health Minister said that vaccination is being intensified among health workers, whose coverage is now 71 percent, with the largest increase among nurses
- **Slovenia:** The Slovenian Constitutional Court has blocked a government plan to make coronavirus vaccines mandatory for public employees, just hours before it was due to come into force.

- **Ireland:** The Tánaiste Leo Varadkar has told a Fine Gael party meeting that evidence is stacking up that the country will need an extensive vaccine booster programme this winter.

**France:** France's health authority (HAS) is recommending a third COVID-19 vaccine booster shot for health workers

*Source: DeHavillandEU*