

## COVID-19 EU Briefing 22 December 2021

### General Developments

#### Vaccines:

- The Novavax coronavirus vaccine has been recommended for use in the EU by the European Medicines Agency.

#### Therapeutics:

- The EMA has recommended authorising the monoclonal antibody Xevudy for the treatment of COVID-19, has recommended extending the indication of Kineret to include treatment of COVID-19 in adult patients with pneumonia and also has issued advice on the use of Paxlovid.

### Restrictions Update

#### European:

- The European Commission has announced that it has adopted new rules regarding the EU Vaccination Certificate, making the same valid for a period of 270 days.
- The countries that are considered highly affected by the virus are France, Portugal, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, and Denmark.

#### International:

- **Germany:** Tighter restrictions have been imposed on people travelling from the UK. To enter a negative test and 14-day quarantine is required. This is regardless of vaccine status. Meanwhile, Andorra, Denmark, France, Lebanon and Norway have been added to the 'high-risk' list, requiring both a negative test and quarantine.
- **The Netherlands:** The Government has announced that arrivals from third countries must present a negative test. This is regardless of vaccination status.
- **Bulgaria:** As of Monday 20 December, the orange zone includes Spain, Malta, Sweden, Serbia, Montenegro and Ukraine. France, Jordan, Greenland and the Faroe Islands are in the red zone.
- **Luxembourg:** From 21 December 2021, non-EU citizens with a certificate proving a complete vaccination schedule issued by Brazil, Canada, South Korea, India or Japan are authorised to enter Luxembourg for non-essential travel.
- **Cyprus:** Travellers from Romania will no longer be obliged to undergo double testing upon reaching the country.
- **Greece:** All travellers, regardless of nationality and vaccination status, must provide a PCR test performed within the last 72 hours or present a rapid test within 24 hours pre-departure.
- **Austria:** Only travellers with proof of 2G (vaccination or recovery) will be allowed to enter Austria, and in addition, people who have not received three doses of the vaccine will need to either show a negative PCR test on entry or self-isolate on arrival until they can show a negative PCR test result.
- **Estonia:** All travellers from the Schengen area will need to show a negative test to enter Finland from 28 December under new rules. The rule will be in place until 16

January and applies to all travellers entering Finland regardless of vaccination status. The test must have been carried out within 48 hours of crossing the border.

- **Lithuania:** Lithuania has added Spain's Fuerteventura, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, and French Guiana to the red list. Romania has been moved from the red to the yellow list. Arrivals from the red and grey list countries will be recommended to take a PCR test on the third day of arrival at the latest, including those who have been fully vaccinated. The tests can be taken free of charge. People coming from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe will have to self-isolate for 10 days and take two PCR tests, one on the third day of isolation and the second test between seven and ten days after arrival.
- **Latvia:** The Latvian government agreed that Covid-19 tests will be performed on all arrivals from high-risk countries. For people arriving via international carriers such as airlines, the Covid-19 test must be performed and presented prior to arrival in Latvia: RNA test within 72 hours prior to arrival or an antigen test within 48 hours prior to arrival. The new rules will be valid from 24 December until 11 January and will apply to arrivals from the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Germany and Russia.
- **Finland:** Arrivals to the country's borders will be required to present proof of a negative Covid test which has been taken within 48 hours of entering the country. This rule goes into effect on 28 December and will be in effect until 16 January. In addition to having a negative Covid test, arrivals will be required to present certificates showing proof of being fully vaccinated or having recovered from Covid within the past six months.
- **Sweden:** All travellers from the EU and EEA countries including the Nordic countries, are now subject to the requirement to present proof of Covid-19 vaccination, recovery from the illness within the previous six months, or negative results of a test performed in the last 72 hours before arrival in Sweden.
- **Czech Republic:** Unvaccinated and unrecuperated travellers from Portugal, Iceland, Latvia, and the Canary Islands will now have to follow additional entry rules when reaching the territory. Travellers from these four territories who haven't been vaccinated or recovered from the virus must take a PCR or rapid antigen test before entry.

#### *Domestic:*

- **Germany:** Chancellor Olaf Scholz has announced Germany will tighten its Covid-19 restrictions before New Year's Eve. He suggested private gatherings of vaccinated people will be limited to 10. The Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) has recommended boosters three months after finishing the main course.
  - Meanwhile, Germany's ethics council has approved mandatory vaccines for over 18s.
- **Ireland:** The Government announced that from 19 December to at least 30 January all restaurants and bars will have to close at 8pm. There will also be limits on indoor and outdoor events capacity.
- **The Netherlands:** Prime Minister Mark Rutte has announced a lockdown. All but essential stores will be closed down. The earliest it will be lifted is 14 January.
- **France:** The Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine has been approved for all children aged 5-11.
- **Belgium:** Belgium's Consultative Committee will meet on Wednesday to discuss extra measures to halt the rapid rise of the Omicron variant in the country. The reintroduction of contact bubbles should be considered. The closing time in the hospitality industry should be brought forward from 11:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and the sale of alcohol should be banned from a certain hour as well. Expanding the teleworking obligation to the entire workweek instead of four days now could also be on the table in the situation worsens.
- **Greece:** The government is implementing a two-phase plan to delay and limit, as far as possible, the spread of the Omicron variant. The plan will unfold over the holidays and the first weeks of 2022. The government has at its disposal a range of options, such as the

extension of work from home and the adjustment of opening hours in catering and entertainment.

- Meanwhile, unvaccinated people will only be able to procure a certificate of recent recovery from Covid-19, required to enter any indoor recreation and entertainment areas, if they had taken a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.
- **Cyprus:** Schools will re-open on 10 January after the Christmas break and all students, teachers and other staff must submit a 72-hour negative PCR or 48-hour Rapid Antigen rapid detection test. From 22 December 2021, all citizens must have a rapid test showing a negative result before participating in holiday gatherings inside homes.
- **Portugal:** Portugal will impose exceptional measures on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as well as New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, including having a negative test result to enter restaurants and public celebrations. And on New Year's Eve, no more than 10 people can gather in the street, and drinking alcohol outdoors will be prohibited.
- **Luxembourg:** Starting from 15 January, workers will have to show proof of vaccination, recovery or a negative PCR. Unvaccinated people are banned from going to restaurants, bars and other entertainment venues starting until 22 February.
- **Italy:** Prime Minister Mario Draghi will meet with regional leaders on Thursday to discuss measures set to be included in a new emergency decree.
- **Estonia:** The immunoprophylaxis expert committee decided that coronavirus vaccine booster doses could be administered two or three months after the initial vaccination process.
- **Lithuania:** The Lithuanian government is not planning to introduce lockdown over the holidays, but more restrictions are possible if there is a spike in Covid-19 infections.
  - Starting on 28 December, people will be required to get a booster vaccine shot seven months after their full vaccination to continue to be eligible for the covid-19 pass. The certificate will also no longer be accessible to those who have tested positive for the coronavirus more than seven months prior.
- **Latvia:** Since 21 December all stores in large shopping malls are able to open at weekends and public holidays. On New Year's Eve, there will be no ban on the provision of services and events at night after 23:00, but all other requirements such as maximum table allocations, client number limits and physical spacing remain valid.
- **Denmark:** New restrictions have been introduced until 17 January. Concert halls, theatres, cinemas, museums, galleries, community centres, zoos, casinos and amusement parks are all amongst cultural facilities and attractions now closed under the restrictions. Existing restrictions on bars, pubs and nightlife have been extended.
  - Sales of alcohol at bars, restaurants and other licensed establishments are now banned after 10pm. Bars must close by 11pm. Private events held at venues outside of homes must end by 11pm.
  - Face masks must now also be worn at all business and cultural locations with public access along with take-away businesses, driving schools and places of worship.
- **Finland:** From Christmas Eve restaurants will have to close at 10pm, and stop serving at 9pm. This restriction cannot be avoided by asking customers for a Covid pass. In the following days restaurants can maintain those opening hours (closing at 10pm), so long as they ask for Covid pass. From 28 December tighter restrictions come into force, for an initial period of three weeks. Restaurants will have to close at 6pm and stop serving alcohol at 5pm. Those outlets focusing on food will be allowed to open until 8pm — but won't be allowed to serve alcohol after 6pm.
  - Bars and pubs will see capacity restricted to 50 percent, while food-focused businesses will be able to seat 75 percent of the usual maximum number of customers.
- **Sweden:** From 24 December, public events with more than 20 guests will only be allowed to take place if all guests are seated. This is irrespective of whether a vaccine pass is required to enter or not. If organisers of indoor public events decide not to require a vaccine pass, then groups of guests must be one metre away from each other, with a limit of eight people per group. All public events with over 500 attendees must require a vaccine pass as well as the above rules, also from 24 December, private events in rented venues may not have more than 50 guests.
  - Organisers of indoor public events of more than 100 people are obligated to either require all attendees to show a valid vaccine pass in order to be granted admission, or have other infection control measures in place, for example assigned seating, no

more than eight people per group, and groups should be able to keep at least one metre's distance to each other.

- From 23 December, restaurants may only serve seated guests, and must make sure groups can keep at least one metre's distance to each other.
- **Czech Republic:** The new government led by Prime Minister Petr Fiala will discuss new anti-Covid restrictions once the state of emergency ends on 25 December. Health Minister Vlastimil Válek will propose that in the first two weeks of January, coronavirus testing in schools should be carried out on Mondays and Thursdays.
- **Austria:** Vienna becomes the final Austrian region to remove lockdown rules as restaurants and hotels re-open. People who have had contact with someone suspected of having the Omicron variant can now end their quarantine after five days with a negative PCR test; otherwise, they must quarantine for a full ten days.

Source: DeHavilland