

COVID-19 in EU/EEA

Reporting period: 19 - 25 April 2021

Epidemiological summary

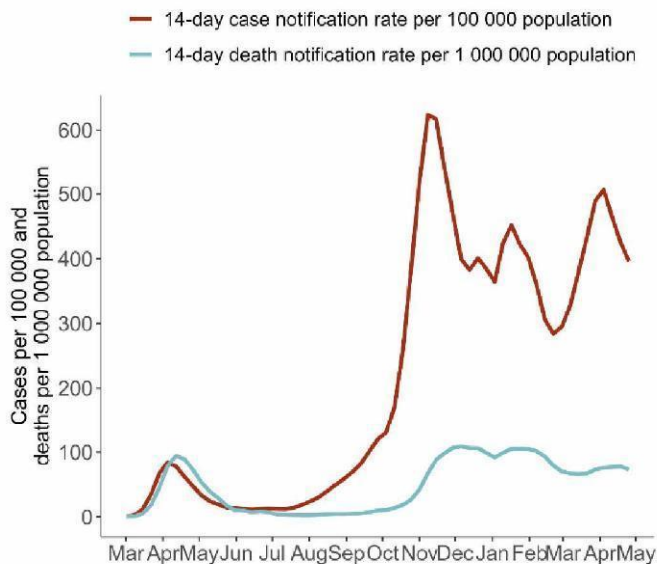
- During the reporting week, the **epidemiological situation was of serious concern in all EU/EEA countries except Finland, Iceland and Portugal (stable)**, with high case notification rates among older age groups and/or high or increasing death rates. Rates of hospital and ICU admissions, as well as the number of patients per capita in hospital and ICU due to COVID-19, remain very high, although recent stable or decreasing trends for these indicators continue to be observed in several countries.
- Among the 27 countries with an epidemiological situation of serious concern, **increasing trends of cases were reported in 6 countries** (Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and the Netherlands) compared to 8 in last week's report.
- Among the **17 countries reporting high rates among older age groups (above 60 per 100 000)**, **two countries reported increasing rates. Six countries reported increasing death rates and four countries reported increases in hospital or ICU admissions and/or occupancy** due to COVID-19.
- Variant B.1.1.7 continues to be the dominant variant in EU/EEA countries, with the median of the variant in all samples sequenced being **90.1% for B.1.1.7** among the 11 countries with the recommended level of 10% or 500 sequences reported per week in the period from 5 to 18 April 2021. In addition, the median proportion in all samples sequenced in the same period was **1.7% for B.1.351** and **0.2% for P.1**.
- Absolute values of **several indicators remain high**, suggesting widespread transmission, although trends are stable or decreasing for a number of indicators in several countries.
- **There is no indication that public health and physical distancing measures can be relaxed, even in countries with decreasing trends.**

Key COVID-19 trends in Europe

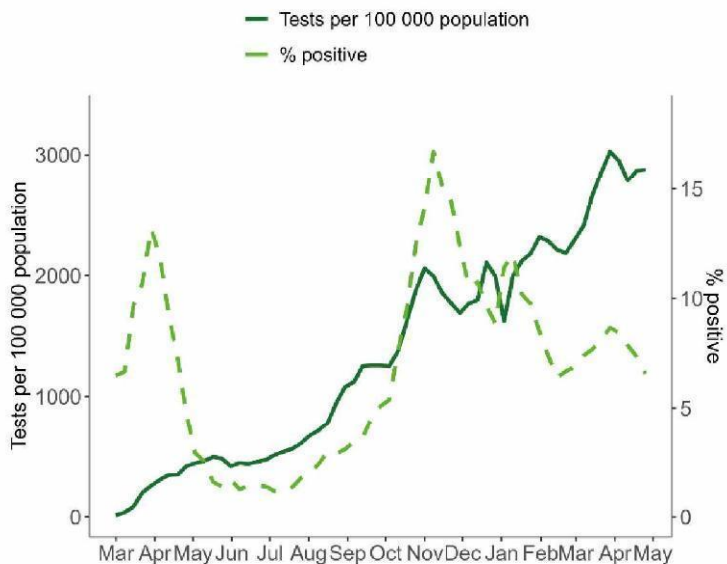
1 March 2020 to 25 April 2021: 14-day COVID-19 case and death notification rates, testing rate and test positivity trends

EU/EEA: 14-day COVID-19 case and death notification rates, 1 March 2020 to 25 April 2021

EU/EEA: testing rate and test positivity (%), 1 March 2020 to 25 April 2021



Source: ECDC Epidemic Intelligence



Source: TESSy and public websites. Data shown for countries submitting data up to 25 April 2021

25 April 2021: current 14-day COVID-19 case notification rate per 100 000 population



14-day COVID-19 case notification rate per 100 000 population 2021-w15 to 2021-w16

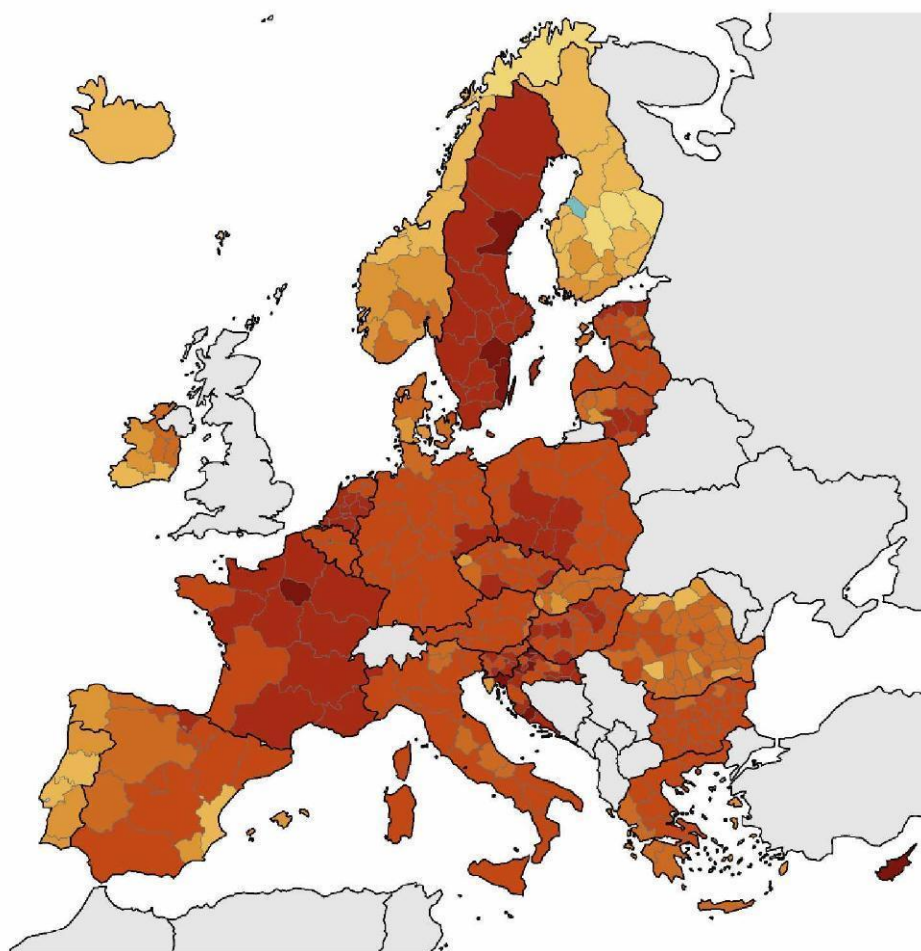
- No cases reported
- <20.0
- 20.0 - 59.9
- 60.0 - 119.9
- 120.0 - 239.9
- 240.0 - 479.9
- 480.0 - 959.9
- ≥960.0
- No data reported / rate not calculated

Regions not visible in the main map extent

- Azores
- Canary Islands
- Guadeloupe and Saint Martin
- Guyane
- La Reunion
- Madeira
- Martinique
- Mayotte

Countries not visible in the main map extent

- Malta
- Liechtenstein



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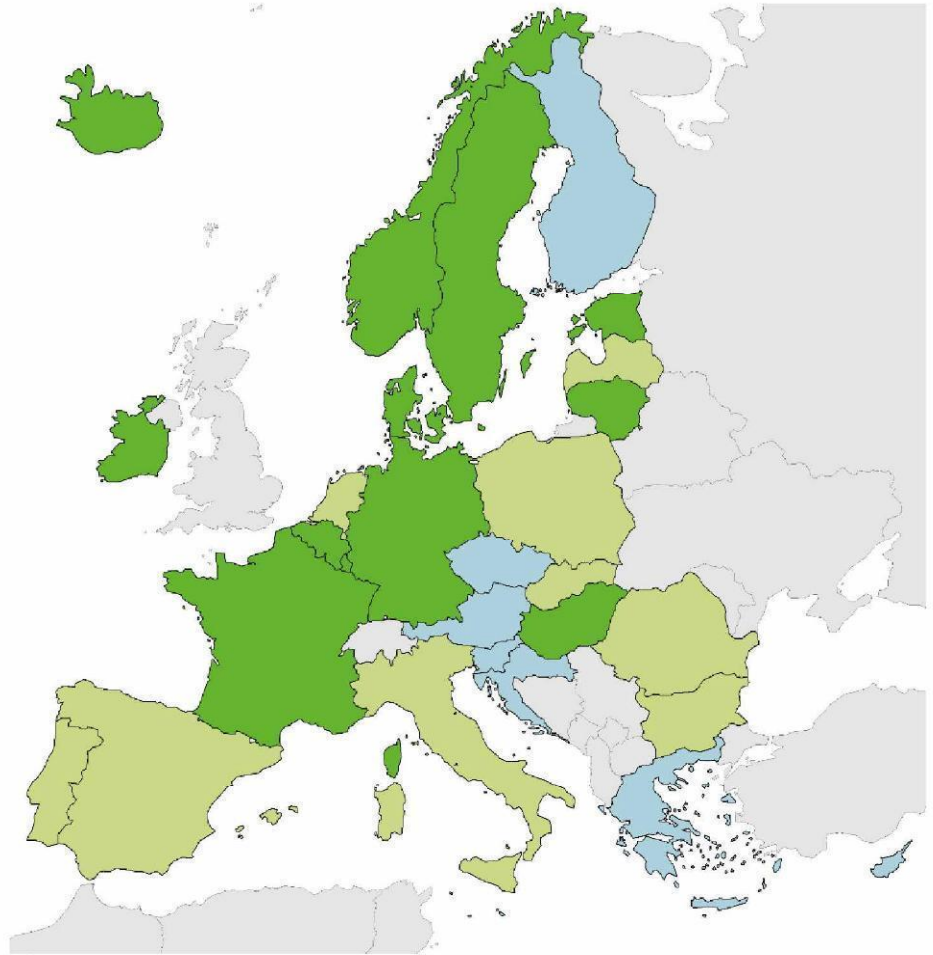


Number of samples sequenced during weeks 2021-w14 to 2021-w15

- <60
- 60 - 499
- ≥500 or ≥10% of total positive samples

Countries not visible in the main map extent

- Malta
- Liechtenstein
- Luxembourg



Source: GISAID EpiCoV™ and ECDC TESSy data. Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics
The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the European Union. ECDC. Map produced on: 28 Apr 2021

Epidemiological overview

Case and death rates

- By 25 April 2021, the 14-day case notification rate for the EU/EEA was **396** (country range: 44-1 221) per 100 000 population, compared to **426** in the last report. The rate has been **decreasing for three weeks**. Ten countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden) had notification rates higher than 500 per 100 000 population during the week of reporting, compared to 10 as in the previous report.
- The 14-day COVID-19 death rate for the EU/EEA was **73.1** (country range: 0.0–316.6) per million population, compared to 77.6 in the previous report, and has been **stable but not decreasing for eight weeks**. Death rates above 50 per 1 000 000 population were reported by 14 countries, compared to 15 in last week's report. Of these, eight countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) had death rates above 100 per 1 000 000 population.

Hospitalisation and ICU admissions

- Pooled data from 24 countries for week 16 show that there were 12.2 patients per 100 000 population in hospital due to COVID-19. According to weekly hospital admissions data pooled from 19 countries, new admissions were 9.0 per 100 000 population.
- Pooled data from 18 countries for week 16 show that there were 2.4 patients per 100 000 population in ICU due to COVID-19. Pooled weekly ICU admissions based on data from 15 countries show that there were 3.1 new admissions per 100 000 population.

Testing and sequencing

- Testing rates in the EU/EEA as a whole have been stable for the last five weeks. Weekly testing rates for week 16, available for 27 countries, varied from 1 040 to 47 567 tests per 100 000 population. Cyprus had the highest testing rate for week 16, followed by Greece, Czechia, Slovenia and Luxembourg.
- Among 16 countries in which weekly test positivity was high (at least 3%), no countries had observed an increase in test positivity compared with the previous week. Test positivity remained stable or had decreased in 16 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden).
- Sequencing capacity varies greatly across the EU/EEA; 12 EU/EEA countries (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden) met the recommended level of 10% or 500 sequences of SARS-CoV-2-positive cases sequenced and reported to the GISAID EpiCoV database by 27 April 2021 or to TESSy by 25 April 2021 (data from 5 to 18 April 2021). During the same period, nine countries sequenced and reported between 60 and 499 samples, while nine other countries sequenced and reported <60 samples or did not report data.

Variants of concern and of interest

- There were 12 countries with the recommended level of 10% or 500 sequences reported per week in the period from 5 April to 18 April 2021. Among the 11 countries with sufficient data to allow calculation of prevalence, the median (range) of the variants of concern in all samples sequenced in the period was 90.1% (28.4–96.9%) for B.1.1.7, 1.7% (0.0–10.7%) for B.1.351 and 0.2% (0.0–11.8%) for P.1.
- Variant B.1.1.7 is the dominant variant in EU/EEA countries. Community transmission and outbreaks due to B.1.351 and P.1 are reported, but there is no clear increasing trend for these variants according to the available data in TESSy and GISAID EpiCoV.
- Concerns about B.1.617 variants have been raised due to the epidemiological situation in India where these variants are dominating. B.1.617 variants have been detected sporadically in the EU/EEA, in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands (according to GISAID EpiCoV database), Denmark and Norway (other sources of information).

Situation and trends in EU/EEA countries

- During the reporting week, all countries had an epidemiological situation of serious concern except Finland, Iceland and Portugal (stable situation)¹.
- Transmission remains high, with high notification rates in most countries, however trends are generally stable or decreasing in the majority of countries. Despite this, the number of cases is increasing in six countries with high notification rates, associated increases in hospitalisations and ICU admissions as well as deaths in some cases.

¹ The list of countries with stable epidemiological situation was corrected on 30 April and now corresponds to assessment in the Annex (p. 11) and Epidemiological summary (p. 1).

- The current epidemiological situation suggests that **maintaining public health and physical distancing measures, as well as rapidly increasing the vaccination uptake**, are essential to reduce transmission and pressure on healthcare systems.

A full table with all indicators and the assessment for each country is available in the Annex.

Hot topics

Epidemiological situation in India

India is currently experiencing the largest number of daily COVID-19 cases globally (>300,000 cases each day according to Indian authorities) with overburdened health care, lack of oxygen, and related mortality.

Different SARS-CoV-2 variants are co-circulating in India: the B.1.1.7 variant, the B.1.617 variants (including the so-called double mutant) as well as B.1.618 predominantly found in Bengal region. The level of sequencing performed remains very low, for example, there are only 150 sequenced isolates during the last week in March in the global database GISAID compared to >10,000 each from the US and the UK.

A large increase of the overall proportion of B.1.617 viruses has been observed during March 2021, from around 20% in the first week in March to around 50% in the last week in March (GISAID EpiCoV data). Preliminary and limited data published by Indian scientists in a preprint on 23 April show a slight reduction in neutralisation in vaccinated (Covaxin) and convalescent sera compared to B.1.1.7 or B.1, these early results indicate that vaccines are likely to still have high effectiveness against this variant.

Data from sero-epidemiological studies show that a high proportion (up to 80%) of the population in India is susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 viruses.

Although having shown increased transmissibility, the proportion of the B.1.1.7 variant does not appear to be increasing in India. This may indicate that B.1.617 has a transmission advantage against B.1.1.7 but this is still subject to great uncertainty.

Seventeen countries outside of India have reported the B.1.617 variant, of those eight in the EU/EEA: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands (from GISAID), Denmark and Norway (other sources of information).

EMA committee provides risk-benefit analysis of Vaxzevria usage

EMA's human medicines committee (CHMP) undertook a review of data on vaccination and disease epidemiology (e.g. infection rates, hospitalisations, morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19) to put the risks of Vaxzevria into the context of the benefits of ongoing vaccination campaigns.

In a report published on 23 April 2021, the CHMP concluded that the benefits of vaccination in terms of averted hospitalisations, ICU admissions and deaths, increase with increasing age and infection rates. Data were insufficient to assess benefits and risks with regard to sex. The CHMP also recommended to continue with a second dose of Vaxzevria in line with the product information, that is, 4 to 12 weeks after the first dose.

In focus

Key figures on the vaccine rollout in the EU/EEA as of 25 April 2021

Total doses distributed and administered

- Total number of vaccine doses distributed by manufacturers to EU/EEA countries: 151 963 879 (29 countries reporting, Malta missing)
- Median number of vaccine doses distributed by manufacturers to EU/EEA countries per hundred inhabitants: 40.6 (range: 19.7-78.1) (29 countries reporting; Malta missing)
- Total number of vaccine doses administered: 133 269 691 (30 countries reporting)

Cumulative vaccine uptake in adults

- Cumulative uptake of first vaccine dose among adults aged 18 years and above: **median of 26.3%** (range: 9.7-44.6%) (30 countries reporting)
- Cumulative uptake of full vaccination among adults aged 18 years and above: **median of 9.8%** (range: 2.4-21.2%) (30 countries reporting)

Cumulative vaccine uptake in target groups

- Cumulative uptake of the first vaccine dose among persons aged 80 years and above: **median of 77.3%** (range: 9.2-100%) (24 countries reporting)

(Missing countries: Cyprus, Germany, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia)

- Cumulative uptake of full vaccination among persons aged 80 years and above: **median of 53.8%** (range: 1.5-97.7%) (24 countries reporting)

(Missing countries: Cyprus, Germany, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia)

- Cumulative uptake of the first vaccine dose among healthcare workers: **median of 76.7%** (range: 20.1-100%) (16 countries reporting)

(Missing countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia)

- Cumulative uptake of full vaccination among healthcare workers: **median of 51.6%** (range: 16.4-100%) (16 countries reporting)

(Missing countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia)

ECDC publication in preparation: Options for the use of saliva as sample material for COVID-19 testing in the EU/EEA

ECDC is planning to publish a new report on the feasibility of using saliva as sample material for COVID-19 testing.

The alternative or complementary use of saliva as sample material for Covid-19 testing has a number of practical advantages over the use of nasopharyngeal samples. At the same time, the current diagnostic commercial assays available in the EU/EEA are generally validated for the use of nasopharyngeal samples only. Hence, nasopharyngeal specimens remain the gold standard for COVID-19 testing for use with RT-PCR and rapid antigen diagnostic tests.

According to the draft report:

- There is evidence that RT-PCR tests with saliva as sample material show comparable sensitivity to those using nasopharyngeal swabs if the sample collection is performed within the first five days from onset of symptoms and when the viral load is high;
- Current limited evidence does not support the use of saliva as alternative sample material for rapid antigen or antibody tests.

Further research on the sensitivity of saliva as sample material for RT-PCR analysis is warranted and is expected to standardise the sampling collection methods.

ECDC collects information on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) implemented in EU/EEA countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The database is updated every second week.

As of 27 April 2021, the following **mobility restrictions** are recorded and active:

- Two nationally enforced “stay-at-home” orders (legally enforced) in Cyprus and Portugal. Regional and local enforced “stay-at-home” orders in Austria and Italy.
- National “stay-at-home” recommendations (not legally enforced) are currently active in the Netherlands. Regional “stay-at-home” recommendations are active in Spain.
- Curfews (“partial” stay-at-home orders) are currently active in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. No regional curfews are currently active.

As of 27 April 2021, the following **closures of educational institutions** have been recorded and remain active according to our database:

- At the national level, day-cares and nurseries are fully closed in Greece, and partially closed in Estonia, Germany and Latvia.
- At the national level, primary schools are fully closed in Estonia, Greece and Lithuania. Primary schools are partially closed at the national level in Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and Poland, and, at the regional or local level, are fully or partially closed in Lithuania and Poland.
- Secondary schools are fully closed, at the national level, in Czechia, Estonia, France, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. Secondary schools are partially closed at the national level in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia. Secondary schools are also closed at the regional or local level in Lithuania.
- At the national level, higher education institutions remain fully or partially closed in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. At the regional level, higher education institutions remain fully or partially closed in Finland and Spain.

Workplaces have been strongly urged, or forced, to transition to **teleworking** at the national level in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

A repository with all NPIs implemented in each EU/EEA country from 1 January 2021 is publicly made available by ECDC and JRC at: <https://covid-statistics.jrc.ec.europa.eu/RMeasures>.

Recent and upcoming ECDC publications on COVID-19

- Interim guidance on the benefits of full vaccination against COVID-19 for transmission and implications for non-pharmaceutical interventions, 21 April
- Sampling protocol for genomic surveillance guidance, 29 April / 3 May (TBC)
- Considerations for the use of saliva as sample material for COVID-19 testing in the EU/EEA, 3 May
- ECDC/OSHA report on the use of rapid antigen test at the workplace, 4 May
- Overview of the implementation of COVID-19 vaccination strategies and vaccine deployment plans in the EU/EEA, 6 May
- Protocol for data collection on COVID-19 outbreaks in closed settings with completed vaccination programme: long-term care facilities, 6 May
- COVID-19 vaccination and SoHO donation, May
- Strategies for the surveillance of COVID-19, update, May
- Reducing COVID-19 transmission and strengthening vaccine uptake among migrant populations in the EU/EEA and the UK, end of May

Publication dates for all upcoming ECDC reports are preliminary and subject to change.

Annex:

Criteria for epidemiological assessment

Epidemiological situation is 'concerning'

Countries with at least two of the following:

1. High ($\geq 60/100\ 000$) or sustained increase² (≥ 1 week) in 14-day case notification rates
2. High ($\geq 3\%$) or sustained increase (≥ 1 week) in test positivity
3. High ($\geq 60/100\ 000$) or sustained increase (≥ 1 week) in 14-day case notification rates in the older age groups (65+yr)
4. High ($\geq 10/1\ 000\ 000$) or sustained increase (≥ 1 week) in 14-day death notification rates

Epidemiological situation is 'of serious concern'

Countries whose epidemiological situation is 'concerning' and which meet at least one of criteria 3-4.

Epidemiological situation 'stable'

Countries not meeting the criteria described above for 'concerning'

Additionally, data on ICU and hospital admissions or occupancy due to COVID-19 are considered but not formally used as part of the assessment. The following provisional thresholds have been used in the table below, but these are subject to change as they are undergoing internal review within ECDC:

- *High ($\geq 25\%$ of the peak value during the pandemic) or sustained increase (≥ 1 week) in the rate of weekly hospital admissions due to COVID-19; and/or the 7-day mean hospital occupancy due to COVID-19*
- *High ($\geq 25\%$ of the peak value during the pandemic) or sustained increase (≥ 1 week) in the rate of weekly ICU admissions due to COVID-19; and/or the 7-day mean ICU occupancy due to COVID-19*

² Definitions of increases for each indicator can be found in <https://covid19-country-overviews.ecdc.europa.eu/>

Key indicators and weekly trends per country as of 25 April 2021, EU/EEA

| Country | Assessment | Case rate | | Death rate | | Positivity (%) | | Testing rate | | 65+yr | | Hospital admissions | | Hospital occupancy | | ICU admissions | | ICU occupancy | |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|----------------|--------|--------------|--------|-------|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|----------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| | | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends | Value | Trends |
| Austria | Of serious concern | 354.6 | | 47.3 | | | | | | | | | | 15.8 | | | | 6 | |
| Belgium | Of serious concern | 422.7 | | 47.4 | | 8 | | 2,650 | | 266.7 | | 13.9 | | 26 | | | | 7.9 | |
| Bulgaria | Of serious concern | 366.9 | | 214.2 | | 13.2 | | 1,214 | | | | | | 122.4 | | | | 11.1 | |
| Croatia | Of serious concern | 741.7 | | 141 | | 21.6 | | 1,691 | | | | 42.3 | | 54.7 | | | | | |
| Cyprus | Of serious concern | 1221.2 | | 29.3 | | 1.4 | | 47,567 | | 361.7 | | 23.4 | | 32.8 | | 1.9 | | 4.2 | |
| Czechia | Of serious concern | 364.9 | | 101.4 | | 1.5 | | 10,830 | | 262.9 | | 55.2 | | 34.8 | | 12.9 | | 7.6 | |
| Denmark | Of serious concern | 172.1 | | 5.8 | | | | | | 43.4 | | 3.3 | | 3.2 | | | | 0.7 | |
| Estonia | Of serious concern | 446.6 | | 79.8 | | 8.4 | | 2,318 | | 348.9 | | 18.5 | | 31.7 | | 3.1 | | 4.4 | |
| France | Of serious concern | 652.6 | | 61 | | 10.2 | | 3,052 | | | | 17.8 | | 45.6 | | 4.3 | | 8.9 | |
| Germany | Of serious concern | 346.1 | | 38.1 | | 11.2 | | 1,563 | | 165.1 | | 2.9 | | | | | | 6 | |
| Greece | Of serious concern | 351.3 | | 104.7 | | 1.5 | | 11,303 | | 242.3 | | | | | | 3.1 | | | |
| Hungary | Of serious concern | 473 | | 316.6 | | 11.9 | | 1,567 | | 371.8 | | | | 77.6 | | | | | |
| Ireland | Of serious concern | 114.6 | | 17.7 | | 2.6 | | 2,382 | | | | 2.3 | | 3.5 | | 0.3 | | 1 | |
| Italy | Of serious concern | 323.4 | | 83.6 | | 4.6 | | 3,367 | | 187.8 | | 6.7 | | 42.2 | | | | 5.1 | |
| Latvia | Of serious concern | 404.1 | | 60.8 | | 4.3 | | 4,894 | | 271.6 | | | | 31.6 | | 6.7 | | | |
| Liechtenstein | Of serious concern | 348.4 | | 25.8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lithuania | Of serious concern | 540 | | 57.3 | | 6.1 | | 4,518 | | 269.3 | | 11 | | 38.6 | | 2.8 | | | |
| Luxembourg | Of serious concern | 407.6 | | 35.1 | | 2.3 | | 8,632 | | 158.6 | | | | 17.1 | | | | 5.7 | |
| Malta | Of serious concern | 102.6 | | 21.4 | | 1.6 | | 2,027 | | 89.4 | | 2.5 | | | | 0.6 | | | |
| Netherlands | Of serious concern | 630.9 | | 15.6 | | 10 | | 3,219 | | 306.3 | | 9.5 | | 10.1 | | 2.1 | | 4.8 | |
| Norway | Of serious concern | 130.2 | | 9.3 | | 1.9 | | 3,112 | | 29.5 | | 2.5 | | 3.8 | | 0.4 | | | |
| Poland | Of serious concern | 462.8 | | 183.3 | | 15.2 | | 1,162 | | 61.7 | | | | 78.5 | | | | | |
| Romania | Of serious concern | 201.9 | | 117.1 | | 8.2 | | 1,040 | | 271.2 | | | | | | | | 7.3 | |
| Slovakia | Of serious concern | 162 | | 165.1 | | 4.7 | | 1,547 | | | | | | 28.5 | | | | | |
| Slovenia | Of serious concern | 497.7 | | 52.5 | | 2.3 | | 9,969 | | 316.3 | | 19.3 | | 30.2 | | 3.8 | | 7.5 | |
| Spain | Of serious concern | 249.7 | | 25.6 | | 7.6 | | 1,665 | | 125.4 | | 1.9 | | | | 0.1 | | | |
| Sweden | Of serious concern | 747.1 | | 13 | | 10.9 | | 3,200 | | | | | | 20.8 | | 2 | | 3.9 | |
| Finland | Stable | 66.2 | | 5.8 | | 1.4 | | 2,083 | | 16.7 | | | | 2.7 | | | | 0.6 | |
| Iceland | Stable | 44.5 | | 0 | | 0.5 | | 5,054 | | 7.6 | | 1.4 | | 0.9 | | | | | |
| Portugal | Stable | 66.8 | | 4.6 | | 0.7 | | 5,006 | | 34.6 | | 0.4 | | 3.9 | | | | 1 | |