Faced with second wave, Europe tightens virus measures

July 17 2020

Fresh outbreaks of the coronavirus have led several European states to tighten measures as they scramble to prevent its spread.

Here is an overview of recent developments, which include localised lockdowns and the obligation to wear [face masks](#) among others:

Spain

The almost four million residents of Spain's second city Barcelona were from July 17 urged to stay at home by the Catalan regional government, unless absolutely necessary, after a rise in coronavirus cases.

The regional government also ordered the closure of cinemas, theatres and nightclubs and banned gatherings of more than 10 people in the coastal city. Restaurants will have to limit capacity to one-half the usual amount.

Since July 15, residents have been told to stay home in an area in and around the Catalan city of Lerida, a measure affecting around 250,000 people.

Faced with a resurgence of infections many Spanish regions, including Catalonia, have tightened the requirement to wear masks which have to be worn at all times in the street and in enclosed spaces.

Portugal

Lockdown at home has been in place since July 1 for 700,000 inhabitants in the Lisbon region.

The measures, which affect some 20 neighbourhoods, have been extended at least until the end of July.

Britain

On June 30 the central city of Leicester began a localised two-week lockdown with non-essential shops shutting. The restrictions have now been partially eased ahead of a review in two weeks. Facemasks—already compulsory in Scotland—will also become so in all shops and supermarkets in England from July 24.

On July 17, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Britain could return to normality by Christmas, as he sketched out a timetable for easing the remaining lockdown measures in England.

Ireland

Having planned to open bars fully from July 13 that decision is now pushed back to August 10 after a resurgence of cases. Gatherings are limited to 50 people indoors and 200 outdoors while wearing masks in shops will be compulsory.

France

Wearing [masks](#) in all indoor establishments open to the public will be obligatory from next week. Indoor mask-wearing became compulsory with immediate effect already on July 16 in Mayenne, northern France, where an outbreak hotspot has been noted.

Belgium

Wearing a mask—already required on public transport—was made compulsory from July 11 for all aged 12 and above in enclosed public spaces including shops, cinemas, libraries and places of worship as cases rise slightly.

Germany

Despite the country being less affected by the pandemic than many of its neighbours, Germany's federal and regional governments have agreed on tougher, more targeted [lockdown](link) measures to contain local outbreaks and ward off the threat of a second coronavirus wave, including a ban on travel "in and out of the affected areas."

Hungary

Hungary's government on July 12 said it was barring travel from South America, Africa, most of Asia, and restricting entry from several European countries after worldwide spikes in coronavirus cases.

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