

Czechs struggling with record Covid-19 spike

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The Czech Republic is struggling to stem a massive spike in coronavirus infections after clocking a record daily rate of infection on par with neighbouring Germany, which has a population that is eight times larger.

The EU country of 10.7 million people reported on Thursday that it had confirmed 2,139 cases over the last 24 hours.

Ladislav Dusek, head of the Czech Institute of Health Information and Statistics, said the epidemic was no longer spreading within closed clusters.

"We are facing a big risk of an exponential spread," Dusek said.

Health Minister Adam Vojtech announced that the government would further tighten measures against the virus—it will close bars and clubs between midnight and 6am and introduce [face masks](#) in classrooms for pupils and students over 11.

The recent spike has seen the Czech Republic cut from the so-called "safe countries" lists in Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The country has had more than 41,000 confirmed cases since the March outbreak, including 482 deaths, with 35 deaths in the past week alone.

Dusek said his [worst-case scenario](#) estimated some 70,000 positive cases for September.

After fighting off much of the COVID-19 pandemic with timely measures including mandatory face masks outdoors in the spring, the Czech Republic is now experiencing a second wave.

The government lifted most of its anti-coronavirus measures before the summer holidays.

But it reintroduced mandatory face masks on [public transport](#) and in hospitals on September 1, before extending the measure to most indoor areas including shops and restaurants on September 10.

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