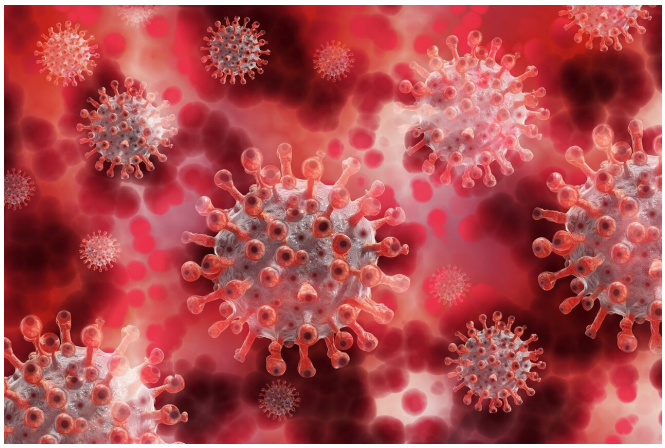
Italy lifts lockdown on worst-hit region Lombardy

9 April 2021



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Italy on Friday announced an end to lockdown measures from next week for Lombardy, the epicentre of its coronavirus pandemic, and several other regions with improving contagion statistics.

Top-level "red zone" restrictions will cease from Monday in Tuscany, Piedmont, Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Calabria, the health ministry said.

The regions will be reclassified as "orange" areas, where people face fewer travel curbs, shops can reopen, while bars, restaurants remain shut except for takeaway or delivery service.

Most of Italy faces these restrictions.

From next week, the strictest red zone measures will apply only to Val d'Aosta in the north-west, Campania and Puglia in the south, and Sardinia, which was added to the list on Friday.

Despite bar and restaurant owners becoming increasingly angry about forced shutdowns, with some of them clashing with police in Rome this week, the reopening of eateries is not expected before next month.

Italy is one of the countries worst-hit by the pandemic, with more than 113,500 deaths, including some 31,500 in Lombardy, the region home to its business and fashion capital, Milan.

According to the GIMBE health think tank, new infections have dropped by more than 11 percent in the week ending April 6, but intensive care units are saturated.

Meanwhile, the country is struggling with its vaccination programme.

To date, it has administered 12.3 million doses and fully vaccinated 3.8 million people, little more than 6 percent of the total population.

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