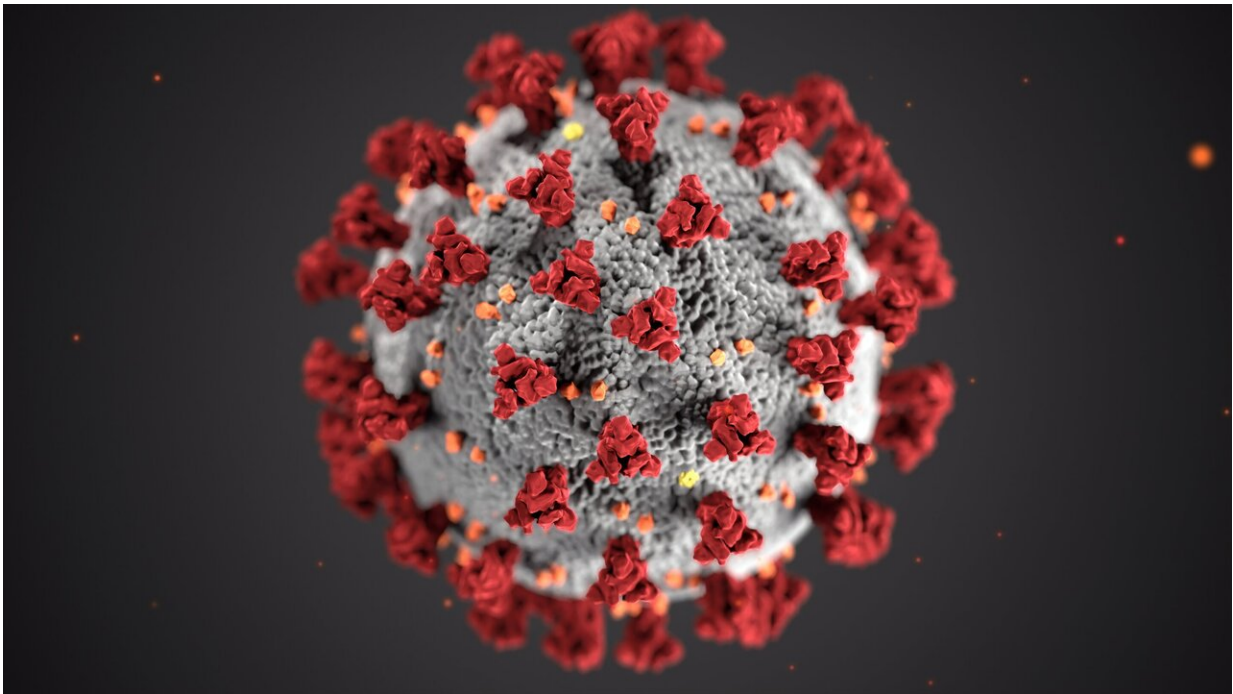


Eastern Europe has been hardest hit by COVID

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The seven countries with the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in proportion to their overall population are in central and eastern Europe, according to an AFP tally at 1400 GMT on Friday.

With 307 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, Hungary is the worst hit, followed by the Czech Republic with 281 deaths per 100,000, Bosnia-

Herzegovina with 280, North Macedonia with 258, Bulgaria with 254, Montenegro 251 and Slovakia 226.

Of the seven, Montenegro, which with 628,000 inhabitants is the country with smallest population, has recorded 1,578 fatalities since the start of the pandemic.

The Czech Republic, with the largest population of 10.7 million, has registered 30,088 deaths.

Both nations are also the two with the highest number of overall infections in proportion to their population, with 15,839 and 15,505 per 100,000 people respectively.

After the seven in eastern Europe, Belgium and Brazil are the countries that have been next hardest hit with 215 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Slovenia with 210.

Europe overall remains the region hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic with 1,130,491 deaths and 52,724,615 cases, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 1,024,435 deaths and 32,493,431 cases and the United States and Canada with 618,685 fatalities and 34,612,033 infections.

COVID-19 has killed more than 3.5 million around the world since it was first discovered in China in December 2019.

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