

Austria prosecutors probe coronavirus outbreak in ski resort

March 24 2020

Austrian prosecutors said Tuesday they were investigating possible negligence during a coronavirus outbreak in a ski resort that led to hundreds of foreigners travelling back to their countries infected.

Prosecutors in Innsbruck, the capital of western Tyrol province, said Tuesday that they were investigating a business thought to be a restaurant or bar on suspicion of "recklessly endangering people through infectious disease".

The German ZDF news channel had reported that the business in the ski resort of Ischgl had failed to inform authorities that one of its employees had tested positive for the new [coronavirus](#) in late February.

The entire Alpine province of Tyrol—bordering Italy and known throughout Europe for its [ski areas](#) and lively after-ski parties—was placed under lockdown last week.

Ischgl was among areas which had already been sealed off after clusters of infections came to light, but critics have said authorities acted too late, leading to hundreds of further cases.

Those included tourists from several Scandinavian countries, Iceland and neighbouring Germany.

Consumer protection activist Peter Kolba also filed a complaint against the Tyrolean authorities, including regional governor Guenther Platter

Tuesday.

His complaint argues that they did not heed warnings about infections and delayed closing slopes and hotels.

And separately, the regional conservative-Green coalition government has said it is considering setting up an independent expert commission to probe Tyrol's actions.

Platter rejected criticism last week, saying authorities had taken "very quick" and "very radical" decisions to contain the virus.

For its part Austria's government has not ruled out that "faults" were committed in the reaction to the epidemic but has said it wants to focus on addressing the current crisis rather than reviewing past decisions.

The country of almost nine million people, which has strictly limited movements nationwide, has recorded more than 4,800 new coronavirus cases so far with 28 deaths.

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