

# Spain confirms pandemic slowdown with 281 new deaths

May 1 2020

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Spain registered 281 deaths from coronavirus in the past 24 hours, bringing the total toll to 24,824, confirming the slowdown in the pandemic, according to figures released on Friday.

On Thursday, the [death toll](#) reached its lowest since March 20 with 268 deaths.

But the news was soured by controversy as hundreds of people failed to observe social distancing rules as they attended the Madrid authorities' closure of a large field hospital set up at the city's conference and exhibition centre.

The venue had treated thousands of COVID-19 patients since March.

The facilities will remain in place, however, just in case a second wave of the virus emerges.

But there was consternation notably on [social media](#) after the closure drew a crowd of people—politicians, journalists and [health workers](#)—who gathered without any visible sign of social distancing.

Images showed participants, albeit most at least wearing masks, in [close proximity](#) and posing before a sea of photographers jostling for position.

One video emerged of Madrid regional president Isabel Diaz Ayuso of the conservative Popular Party giving an accolade to a man who was not wearing a [face mask](#).

"There must have been around 1,000 people... (social) distance was not respected and nor were the protocols which the Spanish and the Madrid regional governments keep stressing on television," leftist Madrid lawmaker Pablo Perpinya said in a video tweet.

In another tweet, Madrid municipal councillor Mar Espinar of the opposition Socialists slammed what she said amounted to "utter irresponsibility".

Spain, which has registered a total of 215,216 confirmed cases, has suffered the fourth most fatalities in the world behind only the United States, Italy and the United Kingdom.

For six days in succession, the toll has hovered around 300 daily deaths, far from the peak of 950 deaths in 24 hours recorded in early April.

Some 2,628 others were declared cured, bringing the total to 114,678.

Spain will further ease strict lockdown measures this weekend, allowing individuals to leave the house for sports activities.

The move follows an easing of restrictions last weekend when children were allowed out of the house for the first time since March 14.

But kids are only allowed out during certain hours of the day to avoid overcrowding.

Children and the elderly are also not allowed to go out at the same time in a bid to keep them apart.

This easing occurs after seven weeks of severe confinement during which the Spanish could only leave their houses if they could not work from home, to go to the supermarket, the pharmacy or briefly take the dog out.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced that the beginning of the deconfinement could begin from May 11 with several phases until the end of June, if conditions allow.

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