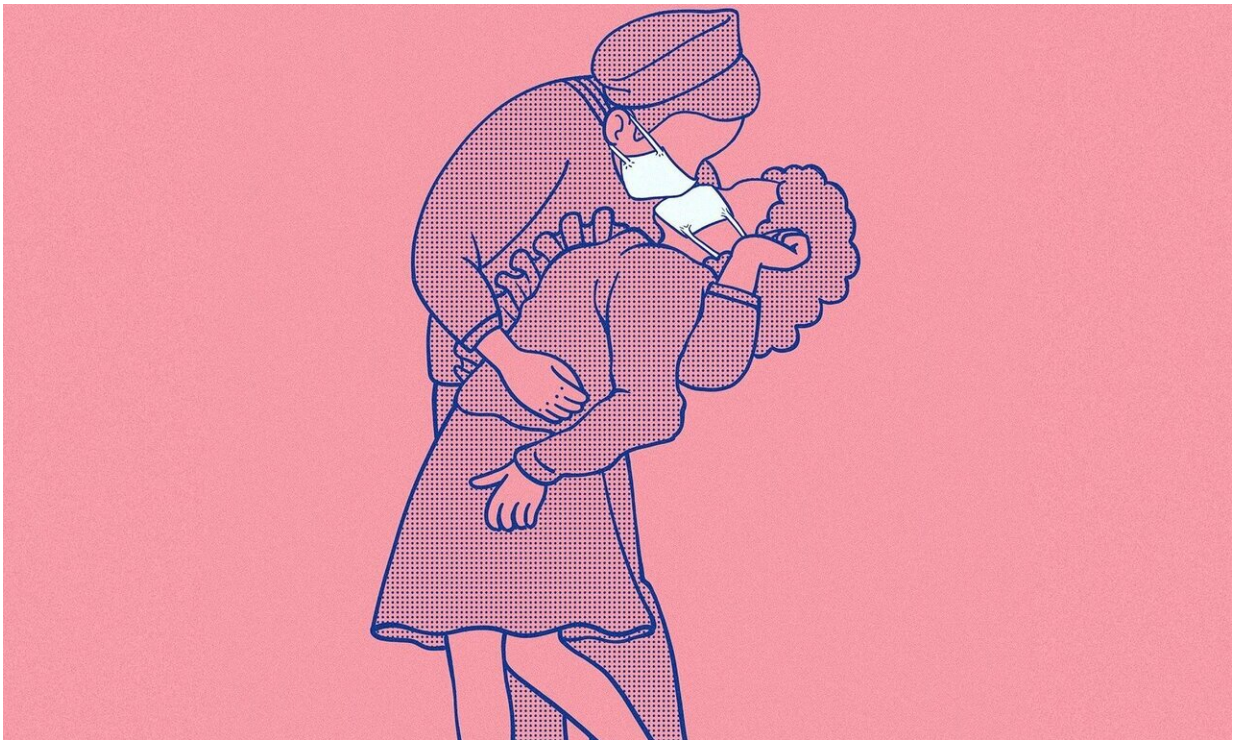


# Sweden encourages working from home until next year

July 30 2020

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Sweden, whose controversial softer approach to curbing COVID-19 has received worldwide attention, said Thursday it would keep encouraging people to work from home when possible, as the country passed 80,000 recorded cases.

Unlike most European nations, Sweden never imposed a lockdown and made headlines for having one of the highest per capita death tolls in the world.

The new recommendation, which is directed at those "who have the possibility to work from home", will remain in place until the New Year.

Aimed in part at reducing crowding on public transport, the measure is designed to make things easier for those who need to physically go to work.

The announcement came as officials noted several positive trends in Sweden, with falling numbers of new cases, especially serious cases in need of intensive care.

But the country's Public Health Agency noted that "if our contacts go up again there is a considerable risk of a new spread during the autumn".

On Thursday, Sweden passed another milestone by reporting an additional 318 confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the total to 80,100.

A total of 5,739 deaths related to the novel coronavirus have been recorded in the country.

The country's relatively high number of cases has put it at odds with its neighbours, challenging the usual unity among Nordic countries.

But on Thursday Denmark announced it was opening its border to all Swedes, whereas earlier it only allowed travellers from low-infection regions.

Most Swedes travelling to Norway are still subject to quarantine

regulations and Finland only allows essential travel from Sweden.

Schools in Sweden have remained open for under-16s throughout the coronavirus pandemic and it has not shuttered cafes, bars, restaurants and most businesses. Masks have been recommended only for healthcare personnel.

Swedish officials have argued that lockdowns only work temporarily and that drastic short-term measures are too ineffective to justify their impact.

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