

New virus crackdown extended to more Spanish regions

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Nightclubs closed their doors Monday in four more regions of Spain as new measures to curb a rise in COVID-19 infections came into effect, a day after a noisy Madrid protest against virus restrictions.

Spain's most populous [region](#), Andalusia, along with Galicia and Cantabria in the north and Castilla and Leon in the centre were the latest

Spanish regions to begin enforcing 11 measures the government unveiled Friday to curb one of the fastest virus growth rates in Europe.

Two other regions, La Rioja and Murcia, began applying the measures on Sunday.

They include the closure of all discos, night clubs and dancing halls while restaurants and bars are required to close by one am, with no new guests allowed in from midnight in a country known for late-night partying.

All of Spain's 17 regional governments, which are responsible for healthcare, agreed to enforce the measures which also include a ban on smoking outdoors in [public places](#) when a distance of two metres cannot be maintained and limits on visits to [retirement homes](#).

Chanting "freedom", between 2,500 and 3,000 people, according to a police estimate, rallied in Madrid on Sunday evening against the mandatory use of facemasks and other government-imposed virus restrictions.

Many protesters did not wear a mask in public even though it is required by law across Spain and did not respect social distancing rules.

"What happened will be punished with the greatest severity," the central government's representative in Madrid, Jose Manuel Franco, told Cadena Ser radio.

Meanwhile the northern Basque Region on Monday declared a "health emergency: which will allow it to impose tougher restrictions than its neighbours because of the risk of a "tsunami" of new infections.

Spain counts nearly 343,000 infections, the highest amount in Western

Europe. In the past 14 days, it produced 115 new cases per 100,000 people, compared to 45 in neighbouring France, 19 in Britain and 16 in Germany.

But a large part of the new cases are in asymptomatic people and the lethality of the virus has decreased considerably—out of the 28,617 [virus](#) deaths which Spain has recorded less than 300 have occurred since the end of a strict lockdown on June 21.

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