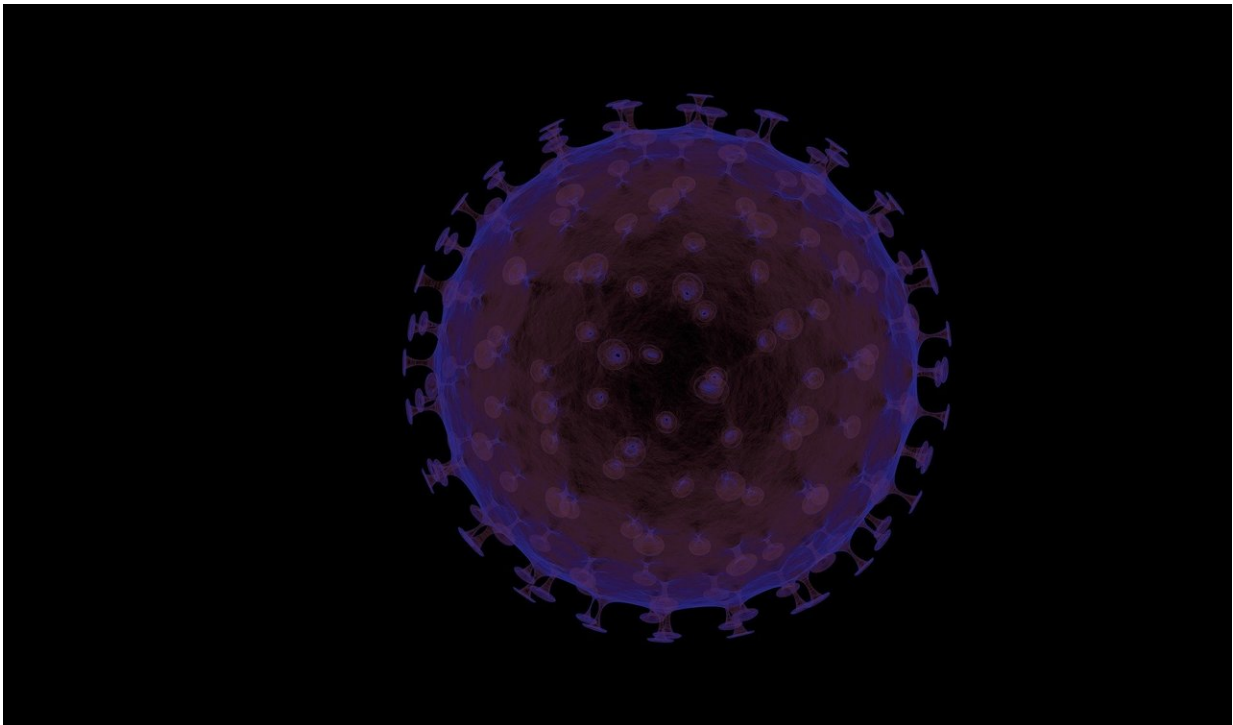


Austria limits indoor events to 10 as virus spikes

September 17 2020



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Austria announced Thursday that private indoor gatherings would be limited to 10 people in the battle to contain a second wave of coronavirus infections.

"From midnight on Monday... all parties, private events and meetings

indoors are limited to ten people," Chancellor Sebastian Kurz told a press conference.

"We have an exponential rise in new infections in Austria," he said, adding the country was going through a second wave of the pandemic.

Funerals will be exempt from the new rules and the limit for outdoors will remain at 100, Kurz said, with further exemptions for some cultural events.

He admitted it would not be legally possible to enforce the new limit in people's homes but added that he hoped Austrians would follow the rule.

Also from Monday, cafe and restaurant customers will have to wear a mask whenever they're not at their tables.

Previously only waiters and other staff had to wear a face covering.

Austria is recording several hundred new daily infections, with the one-day total reaching 882 on September 11, the second-highest of the whole crisis.

Kurz said he was aware the measures "will once again mean sacrifices" from the population but they were necessary "to hopefully prevent a second lockdown" and the "catastrophic consequences" that would entail.

Asked whether Vienna's famous winter ball season could go ahead, Kurz said it was too early to say but admitted "autumn and winter will be very hard".

"We expect a clear improvement next year in terms of progress with vaccines and treatments," he said.

Neighbouring Slovenia has also seen a recent rise in infections and on Thursday announced that from Saturday masks would be mandatory in outdoor public spaces such as markets.

Masks will also be compulsory for pupils and teachers in [secondary schools](#), and from Monday restaurants and cafes will have to close at 10 pm.

Hungary has also been experiencing a virus surge and on Wednesday Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced the country's border closure would remain in place beyond October 1.

He added that the second wave of Hungary's outbreak could be expected to peak around the end of the year.

Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia will remain exempted from Hungary's border closures—exceptions which have raised criticism from top EU officials, who have warned of discrimination between member states.

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