

Czechs, Slovaks to declare coronavirus state of emergency

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The Czech Republic and Slovakia are set to declare states of emergency this week to combat the coronavirus pandemic, the prime ministers of the EU neighbours said on Monday after a sharp rise in cases.

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis told the Nova television station that

he expected the state of emergency to be approved at an extraordinary government meeting on Wednesday, but did not detail the nature of the restrictions.

A country of 10.7 million people, the Czech Republic has seen record spikes in coronavirus infections in recent days, bringing its total to 65,313 confirmed cases, including 615 deaths.

Babis was echoed by Slovak Prime Minister Igor Matovic who said the "extremely serious" situation called for "very bold decisions" following a meeting of his country's crisis management team.

The measure is also expected to be approved by the government on Wednesday and would be the second time that Slovakia introduces a state of emergency to combat the pandemic.

Under the proposed restrictions, all [sporting events](#), cultural events and [religious services](#) would be banned from October 1.

Weddings and funerals would only be allowed if all the participants can prove they have had a negative test for coronavirus.

Restaurants, bars, and cafes would close at 10:00 pm (2000 GMT) and if people not living in the same household come closer than two metres (six feet) outdoors, they would have to wear masks.

Masks are already compulsory in public indoor spaces in Slovakia.

The EU country of 5.4 million registered 9,343 coronavirus infections since the beginning of the pandemic and 44 patients have died.

On Friday, the number of daily infections reached a record high of 552.

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