

European nations pin hopes on new measures as virus cases mount

September 13 2020



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Austria and Britain were among European nations grappling with mounting coronavirus infections Sunday, while restrictions were eased in the South Korean capital Seoul and work resumed on a much-hyped potential vaccine.

New cases in the UK reached more than 3,000 in 24 hours for the second day in a row Saturday, with the Sunday Times newspaper reporting that around one-third of those were at elderly care homes where the virus has roared back.

"I think one would have to say that we're on the edge of losing control," Mark Walport, the British government's former chief [scientific adviser](#), told BBC radio.

After a spate of local lockdowns this month, new government restrictions come into force across England on Monday, limiting social gatherings to no more than six people.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz told citizens the country was already facing "the beginning of the second wave" as new daily infections climbed towards 1,000.

Kurz said the government would further restrict events and extend the areas where mask-wearing is mandatory to include all shops and public buildings.

Meanwhile France reported 10,000 new infections Saturday, close to the peak of the first wave in April.

Prime Minister Jean Castex declined to announce any new major restrictions Friday despite noting a "clear worsening" in the country's outbreak.

Around the world, 921,219 people had died of the virus from among 28.8 million cases on Sunday.

'Aggressive' lockdown protest

In South Korea, authorities in Seoul said they would ease some [infection control measures](#) introduced in recent weeks after a spike in cases in the capital region, home to half the country's 52 million population.

Coffee shops, restaurants and bakeries will return to normal service while gyms and private cram schools can reopen.

While the country largely overcame an early COVID-19 surge with extensive tracing and testing, it has seen triple-digit daily new cases since mid-August after weeks with numbers in the 30s and 40s.

Police arrested dozens of participants in an anti-lockdown demonstration in the southern Australian city Melbourne on Sunday that drew around 250 people.

Defying stay-at-home orders, the crowd gathered at the central Queen Victoria market where they were met by a heavy police presence.

"Many protestors were aggressive and threatened violence towards officers," the Melbourne police said.

The Australian event followed a number of demonstrations in Germany and Poland on Saturday at which people protested against anti-[coronavirus](#) measures and defied mask-wearing rules.

Meanwhile Democratic US presidential candidate Joe Biden slammed incumbent Donald Trump as "reckless" for holding a packed rally Saturday in Reno, Nevada, where many attendees did not wear masks.

The Republican president is under pressure as the US toll continues to rise, nearing 6.5 million cases on Saturday with more than 193,000 deaths—by far the most in either measure in the world.

In Latin America, which this week passed the milestone of eight million virus cases, worst-hit Brazil charted more than 131,000 deaths from COVID-19 as of Saturday, the second-highest in the world behind the US.

Vaccine trials resume

In Britain, regulators gave pharma company AstraZeneca and Oxford University the all-clear for clinical trials to resume on one of the most advanced experimental COVID-19 vaccines.

Researchers had "voluntarily paused" their vaccine trial after a UK volunteer developed an unexplained illness.

Even during the pause, AstraZeneca said it remained hopeful that the vaccine could still be available "by the end of this year, early next year".

Vaccine development has turned into a political football in the US, where Biden has accused Trump of "undermining public confidence" by regularly raising the possibility that a jab will be ready before November's election.

Any fashionistas hoping that New York Fashion Week would bring distraction from the virus may be in for disappointment, as the event will open with almost no live audiences and few big names.

Regular heavy-hitters Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren will not attend the event, which will last only three days.

But organisers hope the shows can help support American design houses of all sizes, with many of them teetering on the brink.

Citation: European nations pin hopes on new measures as virus cases mount (2020, September 13) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-european-nations-pin-virus-cases.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.