

Austria hits new virus high as tourism concerns mount

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Austria on Thursday recorded its highest ever one-day total of coronavirus infections despite measures taken in recent weeks to try to bring the pandemic under control.

Countries including Germany have warned against travel to parts of Austria, putting the [tourism industry](#) under pressure as the ski season approaches.

Figures from the health ministry showed that 1,209 new [coronavirus](#) infections had been recorded within 24 hours.

The Alpine nation of nearly nine million managed to escape the worst of the pandemic earlier in the year with a nationwide lockdown in March and April helping to curb [infection rates](#).

However, numbers have been rising steadily in recent weeks and Thursday was the third time in October that more than 1,000 infections had been reported.

Measures such as mandatory wearing and restrictions on public events had been relaxed over the summer, but have now been toughened again.

However, Health Minister Rudolf Anschober has rebuffed rumours that Austria might need a second lockdown, noting that only about five percent of intensive care beds were currently occupied.

Austria's [ski resorts](#) came under scrutiny at the beginning of the pandemic when thousands of tourists contracted the virus there.

The forthcoming winter tourism season is now one of the government's biggest concerns.

Though rules have been introduced to keep tourists safe—from banning apres-ski dance parties to a mask mandate inside lifts.

But the country needs to lower [infection](#) rates to be removed from other countries' lists of high-risk destinations.

Surveys suggest [public confidence](#) in ministers is falling.

Roughly half of Austrians back the government's handling of the virus, according to a poll published on Thursday, down from 91 percent at the end of March.

Elsewhere in the region, Romania also hit a record high of 3,130 new infections on Thursday, according to statistics from the Romanian [health ministry](#).

On Wednesday, neighbouring Hungary registered an all-time record of 24 deaths of people who had contracted COVID-19.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia, two of Austria's other neighbours with which it has close transport and economic links, last week both declared a state of emergency as they also grapple with a spike in infections.

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