

Czech restaurants, bars to close after virus spike

October 13 2020

The Czech government said Monday it would close restaurants and bars and ban alcohol in public places after a record spike in Covid-19 infections.

The measures take effect from Wednesday and will last until November 3, Prime Minister Andrej Babis told reporters.

"We only have one attempt now and it has to be a successful one," said the billionaire populist, whose cabinet has been criticised over its response to the pandemic.

The European Union member of 10.7 million people posted four daily record growths last week with 8,618 new cases on Friday.

As of Monday, the health ministry registered 119,007 confirmed novel coronavirus cases and 1,045 deaths.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said Monday the Czech Republic recorded the fastest two-week growth per 100,000 inhabitants in the EU.

The country had 493 cases per 100,000 people, up from 398 last Friday, overtaking Belgium with 402.5 cases.

"We need to take measures that will reverse the trend within two or three weeks, otherwise we'll run out of hospital capacity," said Health Minister

Roman Prymula.

Up to six people are now allowed to meet and [elementary schools](#) will switch to distance learning, following secondary schools and universities which had already done the switch.

After weathering much of the first Covid-19 wave in the spring with timely measures, including a lockdown, the Czech Republic has seen a spike in infections since August after it had lifted most restrictions over the summer.

The government has since reintroduced the compulsory wearing of face masks indoors, reduced the number of people at both indoor and outdoor events, and closed swimming pools, zoos and gyms.

From Monday it has also suspended sports events and closed cinemas, theatres, museums and galleries.

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