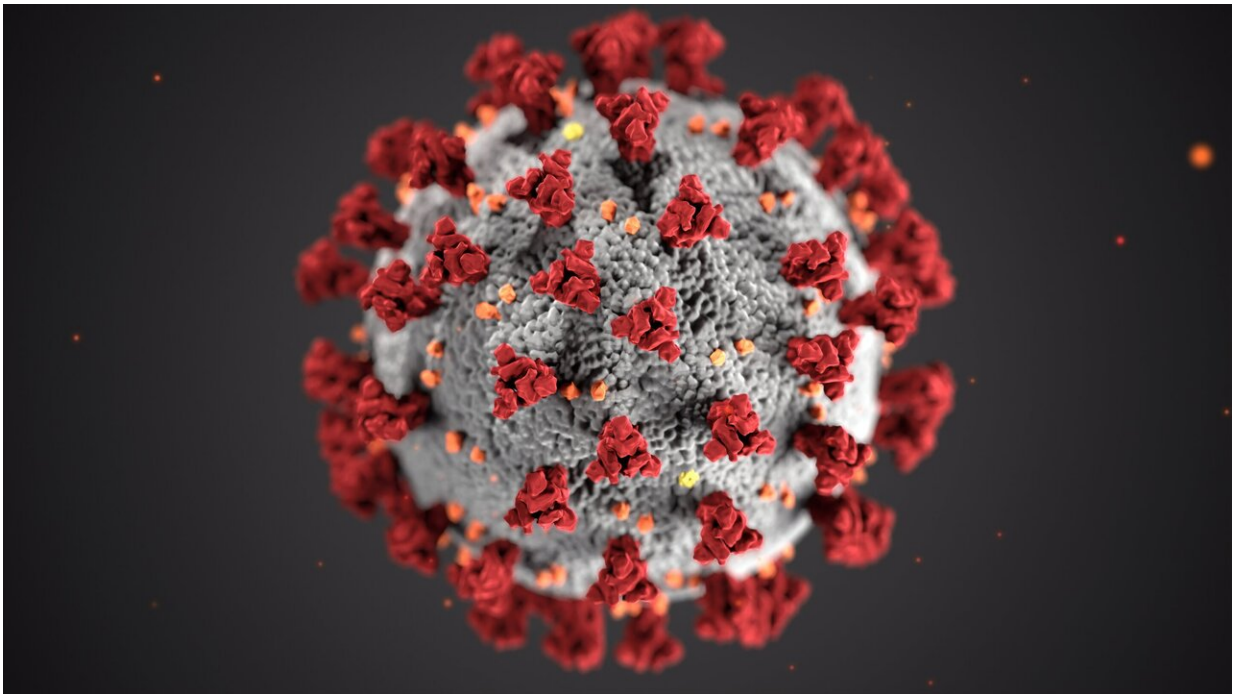


Czechs mull lockdown amid fastest virus spike in Europe

October 10 2020



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

The Czech Republic was facing the prospect of a lockdown as the growth in COVID-19 cases in the EU member reached a fourth straight daily record, according to data released Saturday.

The [health ministry](#) said the country of 10.7 million people had 8,618 new cases on Friday, beating Thursday's record of 5,394 and bringing

the total tally to 109,374 cases with 905 deaths.

In comparison, neighbouring Poland with 38 million inhabitants said Saturday it had registered 5,300 new cases over the last 24 hours, which was also a record.

Friday's data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control showed the Czech Republic recorded the fastest two-week growth per 100,000 inhabitants in the EU.

The Czech Republic had 398 cases per 100,000 people, leading the grim statistics ahead of Spain with 307 and the Netherlands with 304.

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis said Friday the government may reimpose a lockdown if the growth continues, calling on Czechs to behave responsibly.

"The situation is very serious," he added.

"Either we will all comply with the [safety measures](#), or we will have to adopt further restrictions fast, and we can't rule out a lockdown," he added.

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 as it had lifted most restrictions over summer.

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

From Monday it will suspend [sports events](#) and close cinemas, theatres,

museums and galleries, while Czech universities and secondary schools will switch to distance learning.

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