

Virus cases in 23 EU nations and UK of 'serious concern'

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The EU's disease control agency warned on Friday that transmission levels of COVID-19 in 23 member countries and the United Kingdom were now of "serious concern".

All EU countries except Cyprus, Estonia, Finland and Greece fall into that category, according to European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control's (ECDC) latest assessment, up from only seven countries a month ago.

"The continuing increases in COVID-19 infections... pose a major threat to [public health](#), with most countries having a highly concerning epidemiological situation," ECDC director Andrea Ammon said in a statement.

"The impact in terms of pressure on healthcare services and mortality has become increasingly evident. With high levels of community transmission, the protection of vulnerable individuals becomes harder, and it is inevitable that more of them will develop severe disease," she added.

The agency also said new recorded cases had been "steadily increasing since August and has shown a marked escalation in recent weeks".

Noting that there was an "an increasing risk of transmission" in most countries, the ECDC said the situation required "immediate, targeted public health action."

Suggested measures included physical distancing, limits on large gatherings, [hand washing](#) and encouraging the use of face masks.

In addition to the 27 EU countries, the ECDC covers the UK, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

According to the ECDC, as of Friday 5,528,320 cases of COVID-19 had been recorded in all those countries and 205,986 deaths.

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