

Czechs reimpose overnight curfew, close pubs for Christmas

December 14 2020



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The Czech government said Monday it would reimpose an overnight curfew and close restaurants and bars across the country for Christmas as there has been no let-up in its COVID-19 outbreak.

Measures also include a limit on gatherings to six people indoors or outdoors and a ban on [alcohol consumption](#) outside as of December 18.

"It was a very tough decision because we know how big an impact this will have on people's lives," Prime Minister Andrej Babis told reporters.

He added however that all shops and services will remain open.

The EU member of 11 million people saw a massive spike in COVID-19 cases earlier in autumn, with daily increases of around 15,000, and has been struggling to flatten the growth curve ever since.

In recent weeks, the daily infection rate has reached some 6,000 cases, bringing the total tally since the March outbreak to more than 580,000 cases and over 9,600 deaths.

The slowdown in the spread led the [government](#) to ease some restrictions in early December—including by reopening restaurants, museums and galleries—but relief was short-lived.

Angered by the new tightening, pub owners have threatened to stay open unless the government pledges compensation for lost revenue.

The government, planning a record-high budget deficit amounting to almost 10 percent of forecast GDP, also announced Monday a relief programme for affected businesses.

And Prague said it would offer free and voluntary COVID-19 antigen tests to all citizens as of December 16.

Babis said the country expected the first batch of vaccines to arrive at the end of the month.

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