

# Italy finally meets 500,000 daily vaccinations target

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Italy has for the first time inoculated more than 500,000 people in a day, meeting a key coronavirus vaccinations target, the government said Friday.

Authorities initially hoped to reach the milestone by mid-April, but pushed back the objective as supply shortages stymied immunisation efforts across Europe.

"Yesterday more than 500,000 doses of the vaccine were administered in Italy," Health Minister Roberto Speranza wrote on Facebook, hailing the institutional "team work" that led to the result.

According to government statistics, some 19.5 million doses have so far been administered, and 5.75 million people have been fully vaccinated in a country of around 60 million residents.

The government's [coronavirus](#) commissioner, army general Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, told RAI public television that 60 percent of the [adult population](#) should be fully vaccinated by mid July.

The pace of inoculations has stepped up in recent days, but business daily Il Sole 24 Ore calculated that the seven-day average of daily inoculations is still only around 360,000.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Italy's vaccination efforts are slightly behind those of its larger European peers.

Just under 25 percent of Italians have received at least one dose of the vaccine, against 28.1 percent of Germans, 26.7 percent of French people and 27.6 percent of Spaniards.

Italy badly needs relief from the coronavirus.

Its economy suffered its biggest post-war recession last year, and the official COVID-19 death toll, standing at more than 120,000, is the second-highest in Europe after Britain's.

Under pressure from lockdown-weary businesses, the government eased restrictions on Monday, letting for example bars and restaurants reopen for outdoors service across much of the country.

Tighter restrictions remain in force only in a handful of regions with higher infection figures, including Sicily, Puglia, Calabria and Basilicata in the south.

All four are medium-risk "orange" zones, where people cannot leave their towns of residence and eateries are limited to takeaway and delivery service.

On Friday, Speranza announced a change in restrictions for two more regions, effective from Monday.

A partial lockdown is due to end on the island of Sardinia, with a move from the "red" to the "orange" category, while Val d'Aosta in the north is heading the other way, from "orange" to "red".

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