

Estonia plans new restrictions to avoid lockdown like Latvia

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Estonia is considering new coronavirus restrictions on top of the ones that took effect a day ago but is seeking to avoid a general lockdown like the one neighboring Latvia has imposed to counter the rapid spread of

the virus.

Health Minister Tanel Kiik told Estonian media that the government will discuss additional restrictions particularly ones aimed at boosting the tempo of vaccinations in the small European Union nation of 1.3 million, with a decision expected on Thursday.

"We have mapped out all the different kinds of ways the spread can move and infect. Certainly, the most important measure to improve the situation is getting vaccinated," Kiik told Estonian public broadcaster ERR.

The Cabinet's scientific council said it wouldn't recommend imposing a lockdown and that schools should continue in-person classes.

Some 57% of Estonians were fully vaccinated by Tuesday, [health officials](#) said. Some 513 coronavirus patients are being treated in hospitals across Estonia and 1,190 new cases were recorded in the last 24 hours with eight deaths.

As of Monday, Estonians no longer can use negative test results to obtain the virus certificates needed to attend [sporting events](#), theaters, indoor public meetings and other events. Only proof of vaccination or having recovered from COVID-19 are now accepted for a virus certificate. Masks in indoor public places are also required until Jan. 10.

In Latvia, nearly 90% of those who died of COVID-19 last month were not vaccinated, and over 88% of [virus](#) patients now in the hospital are not vaccinated, official figures showed Tuesday as the Baltic country endures a monthlong lockdown.

Latvia's vaccination rate is among the lowest in the 27-nation European Union, with only slightly over half of Latvians fully vaccinated.

The [lockdown](#) that started Oct. 21 and runs until Nov. 15 includes a nationwide curfew and closes most stores. Indoor and outdoor gatherings, including entertainment, sports and cultural events, are also banned in the country of 1.9 million people.

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