

# Czechs, Slovaks target unvaccinated with new restrictions

November 18 2021, by Karel Janicek

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Demonstrators gather to protest against the government restriction measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 during celebrations of the 32nd anniversary of the pro-democratic Velvet Revolution that ended communist rule in 1989 in Prague, Czech Republic, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Petr David Josek

The Czech and Slovak governments on Thursday approved new

coronavirus restrictions that will come into effect next week and specifically target unvaccinated people amid a record surge of infections in both neighboring countries.

Czech Health Minister Adam Vojtech said most [unvaccinated people](#) will no longer be allowed to show negative coronavirus tests in order to attend public events, go to bars and restaurants, visit hairdressers, museums and similar facilities or use hotels.

Only people who are vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 will remain eligible. There are exceptions for teenagers aged 12 to 18, people whose medical condition doesn't allow vaccination and people who have been partially vaccinated.

Vojtech said the goal of the measures that will come into force on Monday is to motivate people to get vaccinated. The measures will be in force until the end of February.

Prime Minister Andrej Babis said his government was inspired by similar measures imposed in the German state of Bavaria.

"The situation is serious and we again urge everyone to get vaccinated," Babis said.

A negative test will be enough for visitors to hospitals and nursing homes.

Additionally, the government is imposing mandatory testing for non-vaccinated employees of all companies once a week. Those who are over 60 and have been vaccinated will also have to be tested.

At the same time, the testing at elementary and high schools that was supposed to end on Nov 29 will continue.

The announcement came after the Czech daily count soared to 22,511 new cases on Tuesday, eclipsing the previous record set Jan. 7 by almost 5,000 and nearly 8,000 more than just a week earlier. The country's infection rate has risen to 819 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days, up from 558 a week earlier.

In Slovakia, those who have not been vaccinated will be banned from all non-essential stores and shopping malls, starting on Monday.

They'll not be allowed to attend any public events and gatherings and will be required to test twice a week to go to work.

Only in the hardest hit parts of the country, fitness and wellness centers, restaurants and hotels will be closed for all.

Prime Minister Eduard Heger called the measures "a lockdown for the unvaccinated." They should be in place for three weeks but "we will react promptly if we can see the restrictions are not effective," Heger said.

Slovakia, a nation of 5.5 million, reported 8,342 new virus cases on Tuesday, surpassing the previous record of 7,244 set Friday.

Heger said Thursday some of the country's hospitals have been already overwhelmed.

Both, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have vaccination rates below the average of the European Union's 27 nations.

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