

WHO: Europe is only region with increasing COVID deaths

November 17 2021



Funeral house employees drag a coffin on a trolley as they arrive at the University Emergency Hospital morgue to take a COVID-19 victim for burial, in Bucharest, Romania, Monday, Nov. 8, 2021. In much of Eastern Europe, coronavirus deaths are high and vaccination rates are low, but politicians have hesitated to impose the measures curb the virus that experts are calling for. A World Health Organization official declared earlier this month that Europe is again the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic. Credit: AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda, File

The World Health Organization says coronavirus deaths in Europe rose 5% in the last week, making it the only region in the world where COVID-19 deaths increased. The U.N. health agency said confirmed cases jumped 6% globally, driven by increases in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

In its weekly report on the pandemic issued late Tuesday, WHO said COVID-19 deaths in all regions other than Europe remained stable or declined, and totaled 50,000 worldwide last week. Of the 3.3 million new infections reported, 2.1 million came from Europe.

It was the seventh consecutive week that COVID-19 cases continued to mount across the 61 countries and territories that WHO counts in its European region, which stretches through Russia to Central Asia.

While about 60% of people in Western Europe are fully immunized against COVID-19, only about half as many are vaccinated in the eastern part of the continent, where officials are struggling to overcome widespread vaccine hesitancy.

WHO said infections have been falling in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia since July.

Within Europe, WHO said the highest numbers of new cases were in Russia, Germany and Britain. It noted that deaths jumped by 67% in Norway and by 38% in Slovakia.

The health agency previously described Europe as the epicenter of the ongoing pandemic and warned that there could be 500,000 more deaths by February if urgent actions aren't taken on the continent.

In the last week, Austria has put tight restrictions on the movement of unvaccinated people, the Netherlands and some other European countries have reintroduced lockdown measures to try to slow infections, and the U.K. decided to roll out booster doses to everyone over 40.



A woman wearing a face mask uses her cellphone in a subway train in Lisbon, on Oct. 22, 2021. Portugal has inoculated 86% of the country against COVID-19, but its prime minister is warning that a recent surge in infections across Europe compels it to consider taking precautionary measures. The government has convened a meeting of health experts on Friday to assess what measures may be required. Credit: AP Photo/Armando Franca, File

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