

1 million French get 1st vaccine shot ahead of new virus law

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Parliament members attend a session of questions to the Government at the French National Assembly in Paris, Jan. 4, 2022. France's parliament is voting Sunday on a bill that would exclude unvaccinated people from restaurants, movie theaters, sports arenas and other venues, the central measure of government efforts to protect hospitals amid record numbers of virus infections. Credit: AP Photo/Francois Mori, File

France's government spokesman said Thursday that more than 1 million adults got their first COVID-19 vaccine shot over the past month, after the government announced a plan to exclude unvaccinated people from all restaurants, sports arenas and other venues.

The French parliament approved the new law over the weekend and the measure is expected to enter into force in the coming days, after the Constitutional Council releases its assessment on Friday.

The so-called vaccine pass "is a new step in our strategy to encourage (vaccination) and ensure maximum protection. It is already producing its effects," government spokesman Gabriel Attal said.

About 92% of French adults—over 48 million [people](#)—are already fully vaccinated, and 94% have received at least one shot.

In addition, the vaccine pass "helped very quickly the (COVID-19) booster campaign," Attal added.

"France is now in the European leading group regarding its vaccination campaign," he stressed.

The new law requires full vaccination to enter into restaurants and bars, cinemas, theaters and other leisure and sport facilities, and to take interregional trains and domestic flights. It applies to everyone 16 and over. The government said some exceptions are planned for those who have recently recovered from COVID-19.

Up to now, [unvaccinated people](#) have been allowed in if they show a recent negative test.

France this week reported a record number of over 464,000 confirmed cases of infection in a single day, as the spread of the virus in the

country is fueled by the highly contagious omicron variant.

On average, over 320,000 cases per day have been recorded over the past week. Yet numbers of new patients admitted into hospitals' intensive care units decreased by 15% over the same period, letting the [government](#) hope that the situation will improve in the coming weeks.

Prime Minister Jean Castex and Health Minister Olivier Veran are to hold a news conference on Thursday evening. They are expected to announce a schedule for lifting restrictions in the country, if the virus situation permits.

Current restrictions include working from home at least three days per week when possible and a maximum number of people limited to 2,000 indoors and 5,000 outdoors during events.

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