In Europe, COVID-19 cases surge and deaths mount following end of lockdowns

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A resurgence of coronavirus is taking place across Europe due to the decision to reopen its economies. Across the continent, governments prematurely ended national lockdowns from as early as May.

By the end of July, the number of dead in Europe from COVID-19 passed 200,000. In the weeks since it has climbed to almost 210,000. Total cases now stand at 3,797,904, with around 30,000 new cases being recorded daily. On Friday 35,223 cases were announced across Europe; 29,348 on Saturday. On Sunday, a further 26,021 cases were registered.

Last week, Andrea Ammon, director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, warned that the virus was starting to infect as many people as it did when the pandemic started to spread exponentially in March.

"The virus did not sleep during the summer. It was not on holiday," Ammon told Members of the European Parliament. New data showed that 46 people per 100,000 were infected in Europe. "We almost went back to the numbers we saw in March," She noted that by the end of March, the number infected had reached around 40 infected per 100,000. This shot up by the end of April to around 70 infected per 100,000.

In some parts of the continent, the infection rate is far higher already than it was in late April. The *Dubrovnik Times* reported of Ammon's statement, "The figures, relating to the 27 EU member states, Britain, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, vary widely from country to country, from two infected to 176 per 100,000 people, she said, without specifying the countries in question."

Central to the ruling elites' opening their economies is the return of tens of millions of pupils to class, so their parents can be forced back to work to create profits for the corporations.

On Friday, **France, Spain, Italy** and **Britain** all reported the highest numbers of coronavirus cases since the height of the pandemic in the spring, when the world was shocked by scenes of mass deaths and hospitals unable to cope with the rapid spread of the virus.

In **France**, according to data released by the Directorate General of Health on Saturday, 8,550 new COVID-19 cases had been identified since Friday. This was roughly the same level as the day before (8,975 cases). On Sunday, another 7,071 cases were recorded, with Public Health France noting, "In mainland France, the progression of viral circulation is exponential."

A rapid and sustained transmission of the virus is taking place across approximately one-quarter of France's territory, including all the largest cities: Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Lille, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Strasbourg. According to *lepoint*, 53 new "clusters" of the virus have been detected out of 484 already identified, including 208 in nursing homes.

Seven new local regional districts have been moved into the COVID-19 "red zone" category, bringing to 28 the number of districts where enhanced measures to prevent the spread of the virus can be adopted. As 12 million children return to school in France, 22 schools have already been shut down due to COVID-19 infections (12 in mainland France and 10 schools in the French Indian Ocean island of La Reunion).

Spain, with 517,133 cases, has the most per capita of any European state. Another 4,503 cases were announced on Friday—the highest level in four months. The 184 deaths registered the same day took its official death rate to almost 30,000. The Madrid region is among the epicentres of the pandemic, with around a third of Spain's 96,000 infections recorded there over the past fortnight.

In the **UK**, almost 3,000 new cases (2,988) were recorded on Sunday. This was the biggest leap in cases since May 23 and a substantial rise on Saturday's figure of 1,813 infections. Total cases stand at 344,164.

The death toll, according to the official figures, stands at

41,549, the fifth highest of any country in the world. These figures are highly manipulated as thousands more have died according to statistical analysis based on excess deaths. Those country with higher death tolls (the US, India, Brazil and Mexico) all have significantly larger populations than Britain.

The Johnson Conservative government, which declared in favour of a herd immunity policy at the outset of the pandemic, fully ended the national lockdown from July 4. Such is the rampant spread of COVID-19 since then that a large area of northern England, as well as the city of Glasgow, and the regions of West Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire in Scotland are under local lockdowns. From August 11, over 10 million pupils and 1.5 million education staff returned to classrooms in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. By Sunday, this homicidal policy had already resulted in coronavirus infections in at least 140 schools.

In **Italy**, where 35,534 have died of COVID-19, the number of daily cases is edging towards 2,000. Last week, former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi was hospitalized in Milan after testing positive for COVID-19.

During the first week of September, intensive care hospital admissions for COVID—a key figure, both for hospital capacity and for the likely future virus death toll—rose by 62 percent nationally, with 1,733 new cases. A report published by Italy's evidence-based medicine foundation, GIMBE, said these statistics are a key indication that the epidemic has returned to Italy on the eve of the crucial moment of the reopening of schools.

In the face of the resurgence, Franco Locatelli, president of Italy's Higher Health Council and a member of the government's technical scientific committee, declared, "We will reopen the schools at any cost."

A survey by Save the Children found that seven out of 10 parents are worried about the consequences of sending their children back to school. Italy's health minister Roberto Speranza, who participated in a World Health Organization video conference with 53 countries on August 31, tweeted, "Right to health and right to education must go together. Today, representing Italy, I promoted a conference with WHO on the safe reopening of schools. This is the real priority for the coming weeks in all countries of the world."

In Rome, St. George's School delayed opening due to the high number of reported coronavirus cases within the school community, and Marymount school was forced to close, and go online instead, after 60 of their students and staff had to be quarantined because of a massive outbreak on campus.

In **Germany**, health authorities reported 988 new infections in one day, according to the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) early Sunday morning. Experience has shown that on Sundays the reported case numbers are often lower because not all health authorities transmit data to the RKI over the weekend.

On Sunday, the district of Oldenburg in Lower Saxony reported another coronavirus outbreak involving 14 people in a meat processing plant in Hatten.

New infections of students and teachers are reported daily in states that already went back to school. In Essen, the second largest city of the Ruhr, new cases were reported at two schools—at Bockmühle Comprehensive and Bertha Krupp Secondary school. In Winterhude, in Hamburg, eight classes were sent into quarantine after new cases. Since the return to school 106 students or teachers have tested positive. Schools are set to reopen in Bavaria, the second most populous German state where infection rates are among the highest.

With its recent surge in new cases and deaths, **Russia** has now passed 1 million cases and has 17,820 fatalities. Over 15,000 cases and almost **300** deaths were recorded in just the three days since Friday.

On Saturday, 798 cases were recorded in the **Czech Republic**, as **Hungary** reported a record 510 new cases. **Slovakia**, which has a population of just 5.4 million and total cases of 4,526, reported a record spike of 226 cases Saturday—the highest one-day rise since the start of the pandemic.

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