

COVID-19 infection rates and deaths on the rise in Germany

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Although war propaganda has shouldered the pandemic out of the news, the coronavirus is still running rampant in Germany and worldwide. After a brief decline in the infection rate in Germany, the numbers have shot up again in recent days. From Wednesday to Thursday, the seven-day incidence per 100,000 residents rose to 1,174. Within one day, 210,673 infections were registered and 267 died. On Friday, as many as 217,593 people were confirmed to have caught the coronavirus and 291 died. The seven-day incidence rose to over 1,200.

Infection rates are extremely high across Germany. In 408 of 411 counties, the seven-day incidence is above 500 and in 290 counties it is above 1,000. A nationwide seven-day incidence of over 1,200 means that more than 1.2 percent of the population is infected with the virus every week. In 29 counties, the incidence even exceeds 2,000.

The facts expose the official claim that the Omicron variant is “mild” as a lie. The number of severe cases remains stable and high. The adjusted hospitalization incidence is 12.5 per 100,00 residents, representing 10,000 new hospitalizations in Germany last week alone. Two-thousand coronavirus patients require intensive care. There has been a general increase in hospitalized cases, especially in the last four weeks.

The number of deaths is particularly alarming. Just since the beginning of the week, 1,118 people have died in Germany of the coronavirus, including many young people. On average, at least one child has died every week since the beginning of winter.

Fuelling the number of severe cases and deaths is, among other things, the continued growth of outbreaks in medical facilities and nursing homes. In the past week, 208 active outbreaks in medical facilities were officially reported (compared to 187 the previous week)

as well as 517 outbreaks in nursing homes and homes for the elderly (472 the previous week). In nursing homes and homes for the elderly, an average of 13 people were infected in each outbreak.

About nine percent of those infected in medical facilities outbreaks died from the infection. In nursing homes and homes for the elderly, the figure is as high as 13 percent. This week there were 149 more mortal cases than the week before.

Schools and kindergartens have been particularly inundated by mass infection. The 5-to-14-year-old and 15-to-34-year-old age groups have the highest incidences of infection, 2,467 and 1,644, respectively. In the last four weeks, 746 outbreaks were recorded at day care centres and 847 outbreaks in schools. These number are understatements, however, and are expected to rise retroactively as late reports trickle in.

The rapid spread of the even more infectious Omicron sub-variant BA.2 threatens to further aggravate the situation. Within just one week, its share of the infection incidence has increased from 25 to 38 percent. Even the Robert Koch Institute (RKI, the German federal agency responsible for disease control and prevention) warns that “due to the higher transmissibility of the BA.2 sub-lineage ... a significantly slower decrease or renewed increase in case numbers cannot be ruled out.”

Despite the persistent high case numbers and the threat of an even larger pandemic wave, the federal and state governments are ending the last remaining coronavirus protection measures. They are putting profits ahead of lives and declaring the pandemic politically over. In mid-February, a conference of federal and state governments decided on a corresponding three-step plan.

In the first step, all private contact restrictions for

vaccinated and recovered persons were lifted on February 18, the so-called “2G” rule (vaccinated or recovered) was abolished in retail stores nationwide and the wearing of FFP2 masks was no longer generally required.

On Friday, the second step of the re-opening plan was implemented, which includes relaxation of safety requirements for hotels, restaurants and large events, as well as the reopening of clubs.

In hotels and restaurants, the “3G” rule (vaccinated, recovered or recently tested) will soon apply in place of the “2G” rule, regardless of infection rates. In addition, the ten-person limit at tables will be abolished. Clubs will be allowed to reopen under the “2G-plus” (vaccinated, recovered and recently tested) in the near future.

Particularly conducive to infection is the massive increase in the number of spectators permitted at large events. In indoor venues, where up to 4,000 visitors were previously allowed, up to 6,000 visitors will be permitted, assuming a 60 percent occupancy rate.

For large outdoor events, the permissible number of spectators will be more than doubled. Previously, up to 10,000 spectators were permitted in most German states. Soon, up to 25,000 spectators will be permitted for events with a capacity of up to 75 percent.

In two weeks, on March 19, the Infection Protection Act, which forms the legal basis for the current measures, will expire. As a final re-opening step, all remaining measures are to be discontinued on March 20. All that will remain is an undefined “basic protection” based on mask wearing and social distancing.

In addition to the relaxed policies of the federal and state governments, the RKI decided that as of Thursday, no country is considered a high-risk area. The RKI justified the decision by only classifying countries as high-risk areas where a “more dangerous” variant than Omicron is spreading. Soon, therefore, there will no longer be a quarantine requirement for entry into Germany, rather only the 3G rule.



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