ASPHER Report: COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

Week of February 7th, 2022

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This is ASPHER's weekly surveillance report. We hope it is complementary to other resources such as ECDC and Our World in Data, where the reader can go for more detailed information. Please give us your feedback: is the presentation helpful to you and your colleagues? What other information would you like to see in it?

Key messages

- The overall epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA was characterised by a very high overall case notification rate that has increased rapidly in the past six weeks and an elevated but stable death rate. Case notification rates were highest among age groups under 50 years old. Rates among older age groups have also been increasing but appear to have stabilised over recent weeks. Case notification rates and death rates are both forecast to increase over the next two weeks. (link)
- A recent ECDC review of vaccination policy concluded that priority should still be given to completion of the primary vaccination series in the eligible population and to administering booster doses to priority groups, before considering giving booster doses to adolescents aged 12-17 years with no underlying conditions. (link)
- A recent ECDD review of facemask use concluded that a public health policy for wearing a face mask in public spaces should be considered in areas with community transmission when the public health objective is to limit community transmission. An additional option is to focus on the use of face masks in specific settings to protect people vulnerable to severe COVID-19. (link)

ASPHER is concerned about speculative talk about the 'end of the pandemic'. *Pandemic* is not defined by politicians, or by journalists. The *pandemic* is defined by the World Health Organisation, under strict decision-making process and not as mere opinion. A pandemic is "an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people". We are still in the midst of the pandemic. We are also concerned at the misuse of the term *endemic* suggesting that COVID-19 has somehow become less serious. *Endemic* assumes there is a certain degree of predictability in the behaviour of the incidence and prevalence of the disease. Nothing enables us to state that there will be no new SARS-COV-2 variants: there is plenty of experience that there will be new variants. Nothing allows to predict what the characteristics of the new variants will be, or the planetary region or time when they will appear. Therefore, we are not in *endemic* conditions, we continue to be in the *pandemic*.

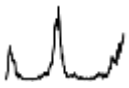
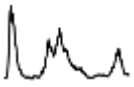
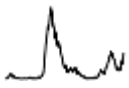
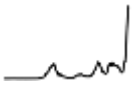
We will not come out of the pandemic until we seriously address the problem globally. We need global solidarity, commitment to international preparedness and increased global production of vaccines.

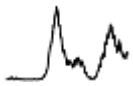
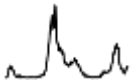
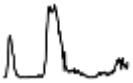
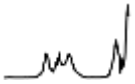
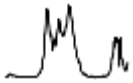
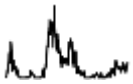
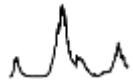
ASPHER is concerned that many countries are relaxing protections, at a time when there is still substantial transmission of the virus, outbreaks affecting young children, disrupting education and leading to unexpected numbers of children's hospital admissions, and uncertain threats in terms of long COVID manifestations and late serious illness such as strokes and cardiac events. Hospital services continue to be confronted by high levels of serious infection, although intensive care services seem to be affected to different levels, in different areas.

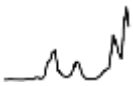
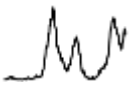
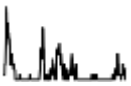
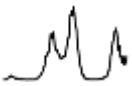
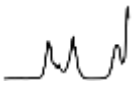
Alongside political initiatives which are throwing away proven measure to control the pandemic, there is the reality with Omicron variant, that primary health care and social care is not coping across Europe. Occupational health services are non- existant in many parts of Europe and therefore unable to address mass sickness absence or support workers in key industries suffering burnout. We urge governments to invest in additional measures to support primary care, social care and occupational health. Protection of our key service workers is a central concern.

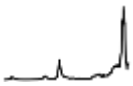
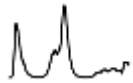
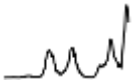
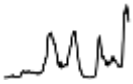
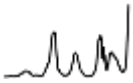
ASPHER supports the VACCINE-plus approach to pandemic control; or what we have called 'COVID-DO_IT_ALL'. We recognize the importance of following non-pharmacological interventions as well as achieving a high level of vaccine uptake. Vaccine hesitancy still needs to be understood and addressed especially in Eastern parts of Europe. We need to protect frontline services, protect children, and protect vulnerable people. Current political moves in Europe are adding to the likelihood of increased transmission, creating more pressures on services, more likelihood of additional sickness absence, economic damage, and social disruption. The mindset of the 'pandemic is over' will have the dangerous impact of prolonging it.

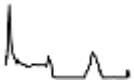
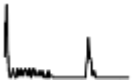
Rolling 7-day average of latest daily newly confirmed coronavirus cases, deaths, and proportion of people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in the countries of the WHO-Europe region (data).

WHO Europe region	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	30-day trend in deaths	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Denmark	7,366.21		3.86		81.47
Netherlands	6,753.67		0.38		71.79
Slovenia	6,083.82		9.07		58.39
Georgia	5,396.22		10.19		30.89
Estonia	5,151.72		4.10		62.86
Israel	4,917.65		5.80		65.75

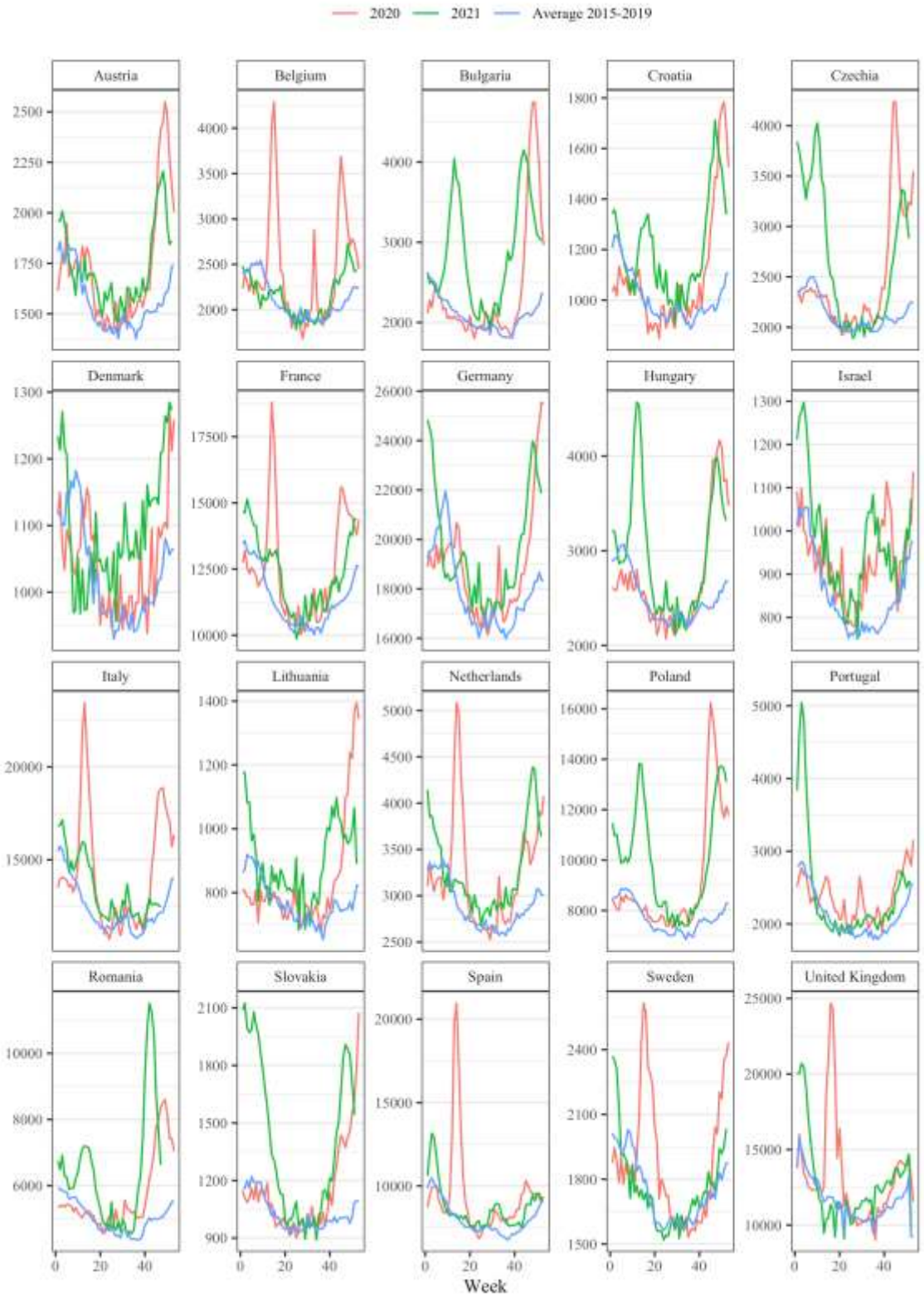
WHO Europe region	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	30-day trend in deaths	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Lithuania	4,043.01		6.16		69.34
Iceland	4,003.03		1.55		77.62
Slovakia	3,957.02		3.80		49.40
Portugal	3,836.39		4.69		91.20
Austria	3,630.91		2.28		74.71
Switzerland	3,388.84		2.33		68.14
France	3,140.16		4.88		76.83
Czechia	3,067.61		4.08		63.50
San Marino	2,889.91		0.00		64.03
Cyprus	2,882.64		3.51		71.34
Monaco	2,519.52		3.62		64.95
Luxembourg	2,399.35		2.92		67.69
Sweden	2,397.95		3.98		74.15
Germany	2,286.34		1.78		73.90

WHO Europe region	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	30-day trend in deaths	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Belgium	2,206.77		4.25		76.38
Serbia	2,007.08		8.86		47.31
Greece	1,717.25		9.84		71.06
Croatia	1,611.49		12.29		54.23
Andorra	1,569.78		3.69		68.65
Italy	1,536.65		6.12		77.47
Romania	1,482.55		5.93		41.85
Hungary	1,405.53		8.87		63.58
Finland	1,265.44		2.76		75.67
Spain	1,222.97		3.97		82.04
Turkey	1,215.57		2.68		61.79
Russia	1,127.71		4.53		48.37
Armenia	1,114.32		2.21		28.22
Poland	1,103.02		5.52		57.92

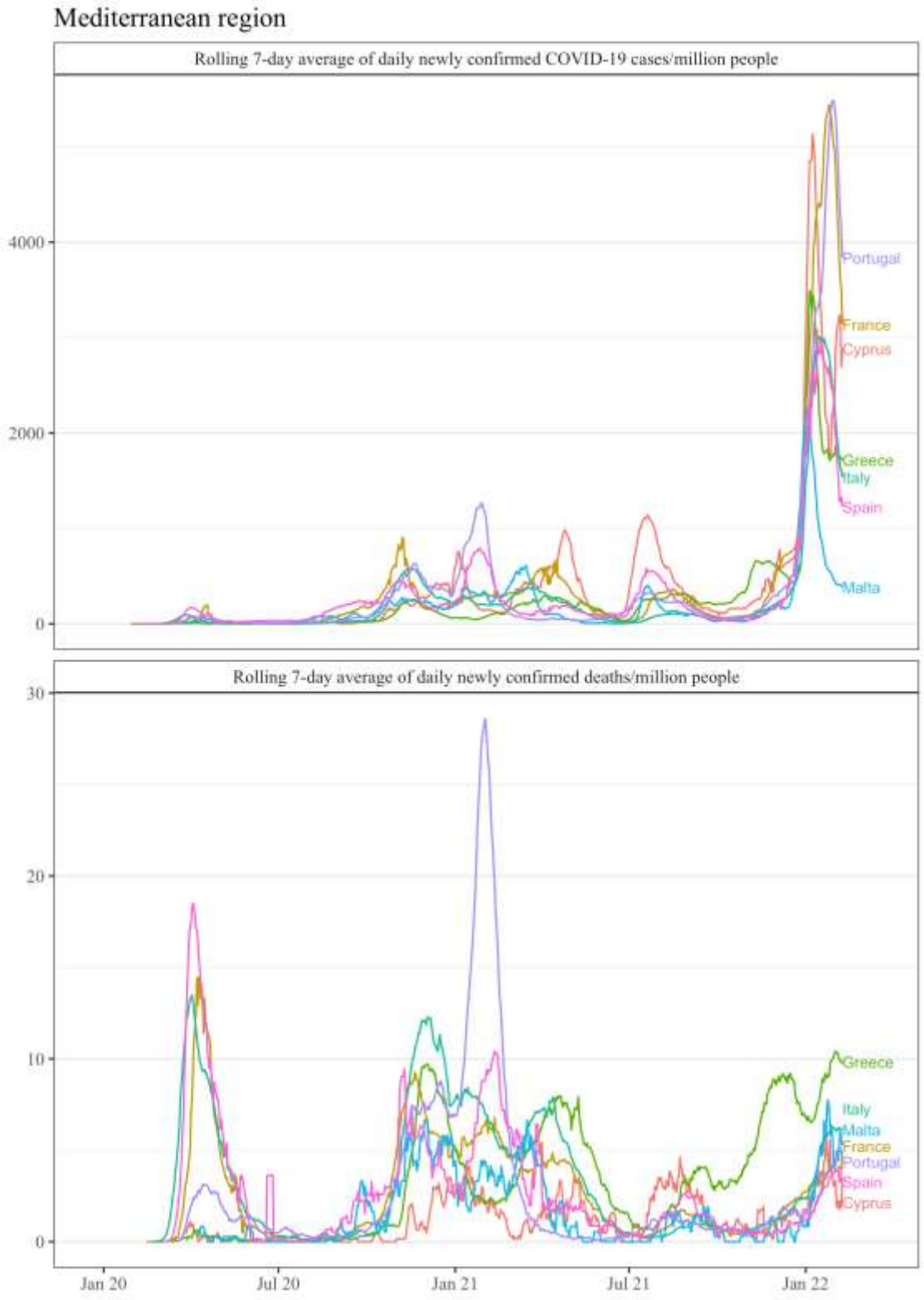
WHO Europe region	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	30-day trend in deaths	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Ireland	1,079.29		2.64		78.60
United Kingdom	1,062.33		3.78		71.28
Bulgaria	1,004.21		13.24		29.25
Moldova	940.00		4.86		25.31
Kosovo	889.63		2.56		45.36
Montenegro	857.76		10.24		44.37
Ukraine	839.56		4.37		34.19
Belarus	666.61		1.63		44.84
North Macedonia	665.15		12.35		39.77
Azerbaijan	652.19		2.31		46.51
Bosnia and Herzegovina	407.24		15.67		25.93
Malta	386.14		5.26		88.38
Albania	356.68		2.34		40.71
Kazakhstan	258.80		1.08		46.45

WHO Europe region	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	30-day trend in deaths	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Uzbekistan	26.85		0.08		38.70
Kyrgyzstan	23.69		0.54		16.70
Tajikistan	0.48		0.00		38.56

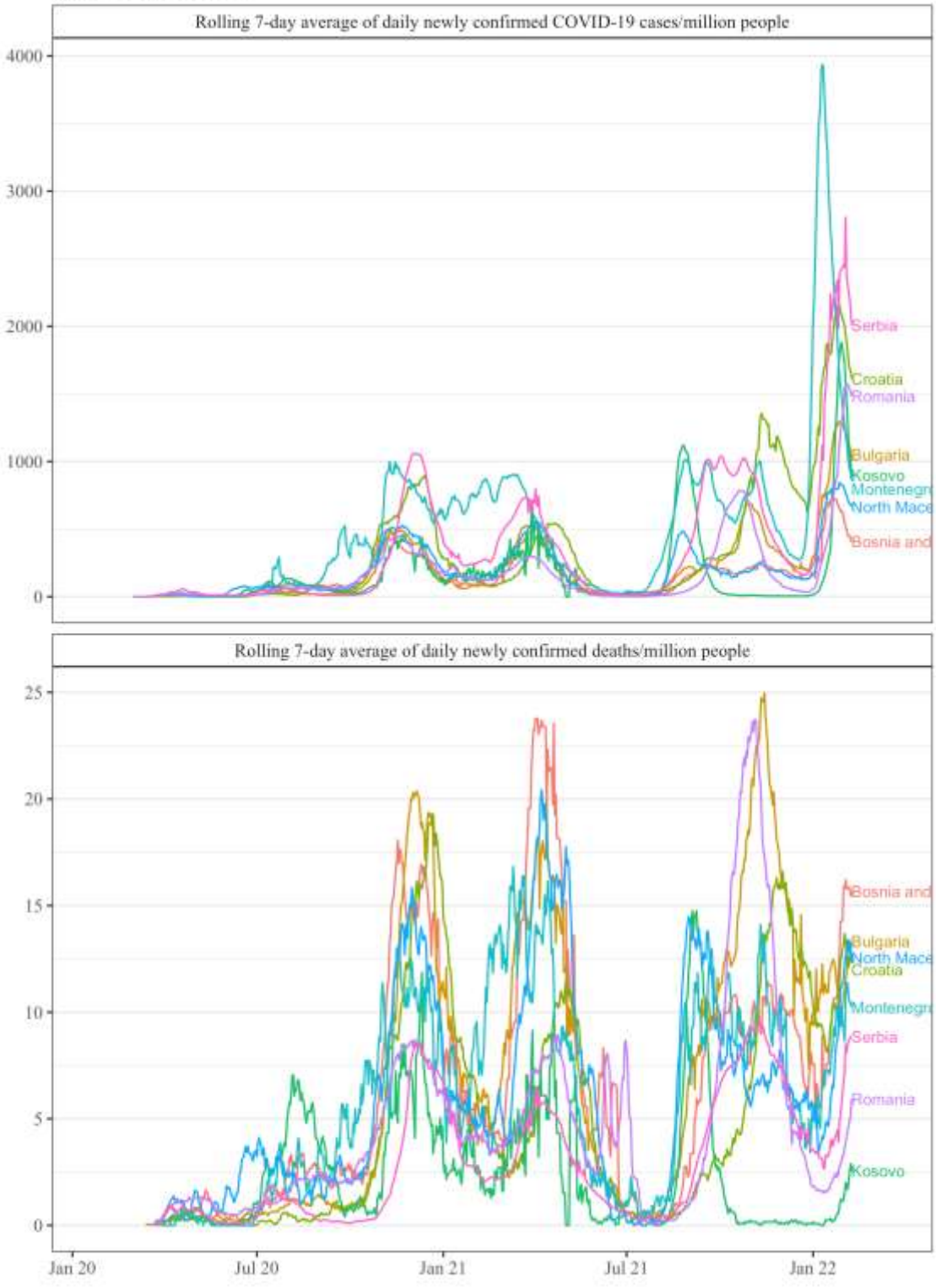
Weekly deaths in 2021 and 2020 compared to the average in 2015-2019 in selected countries (data).



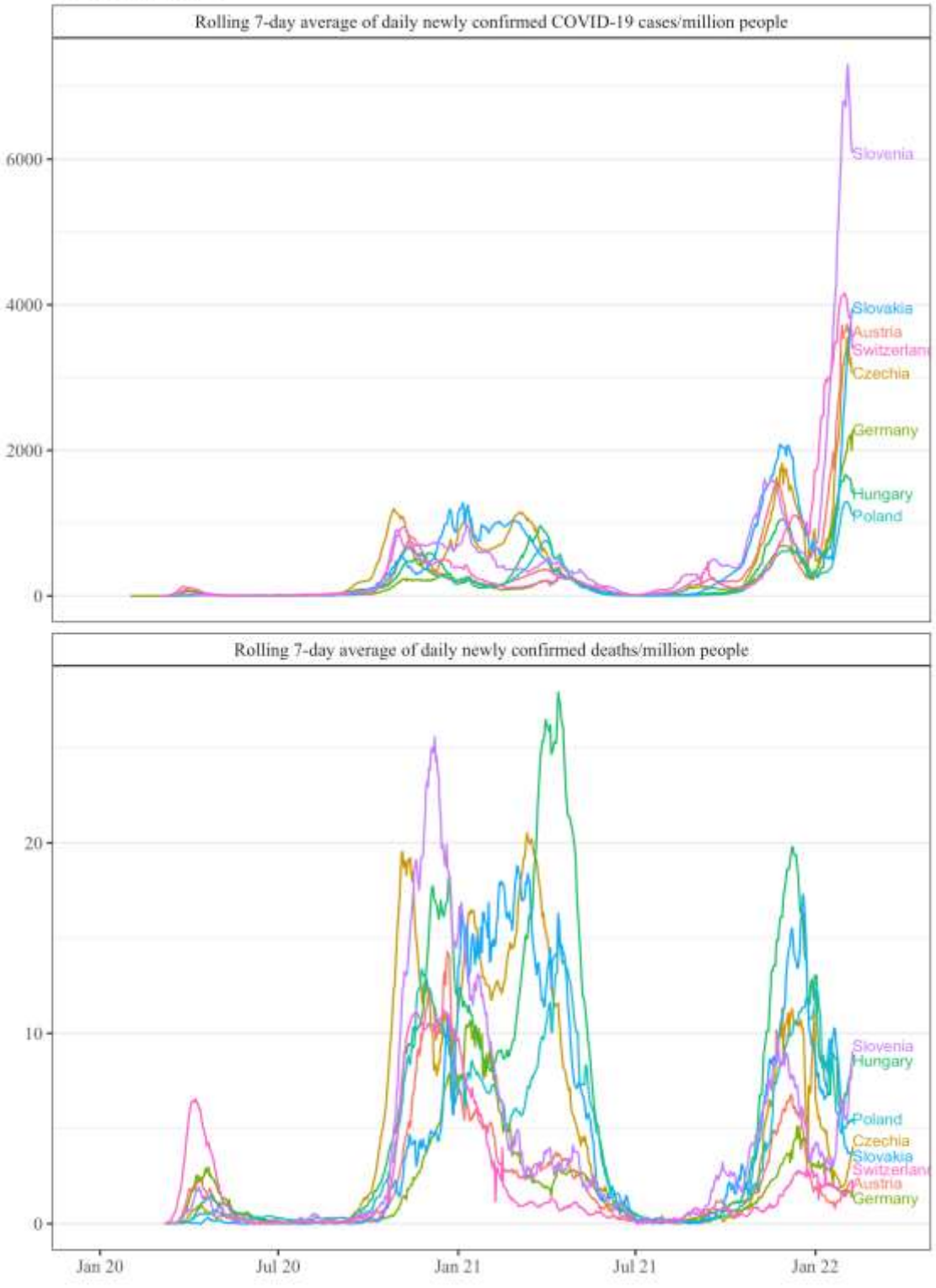
Rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases and daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths in sub-regions of Europe (data).



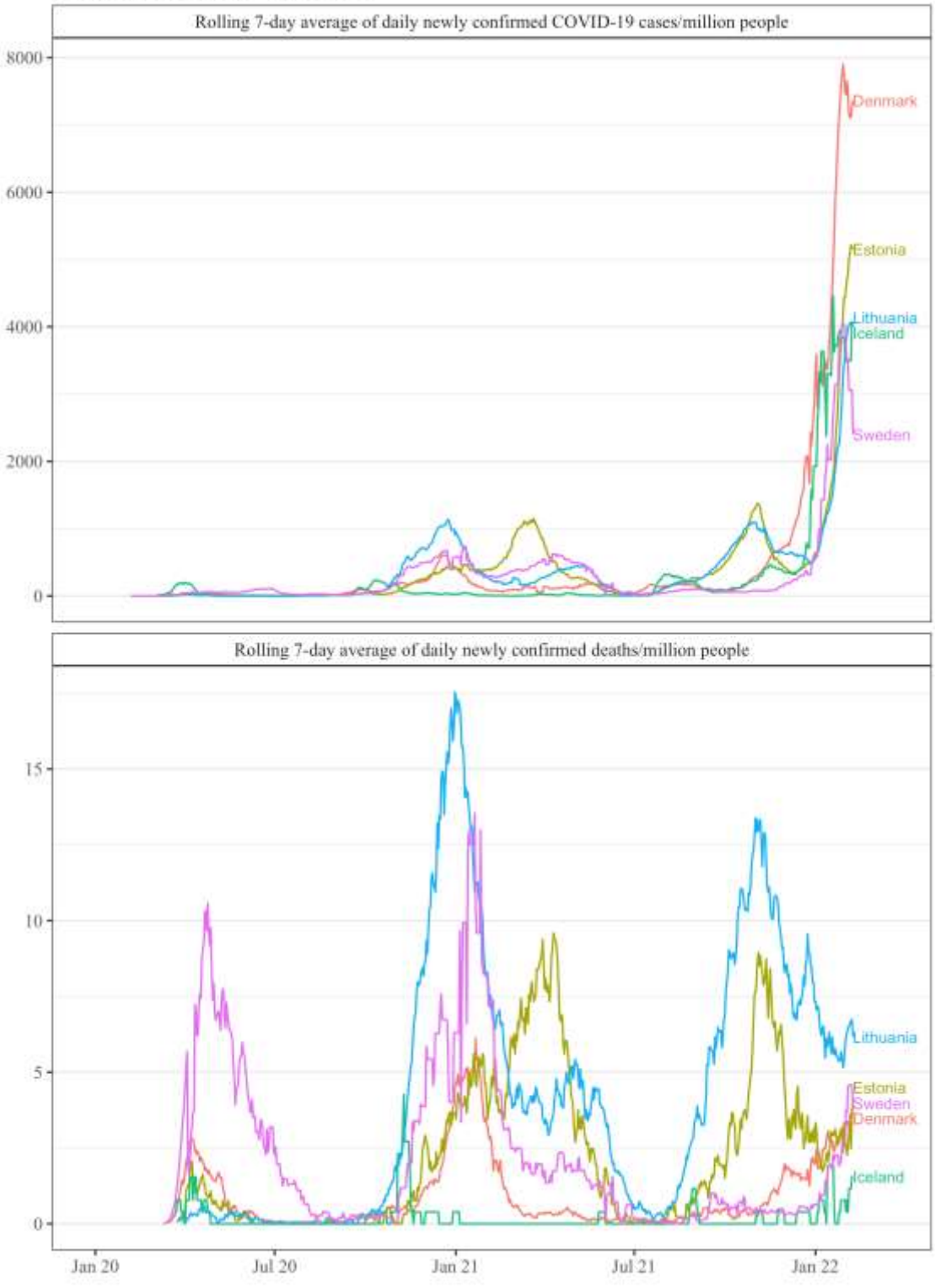
South-East region



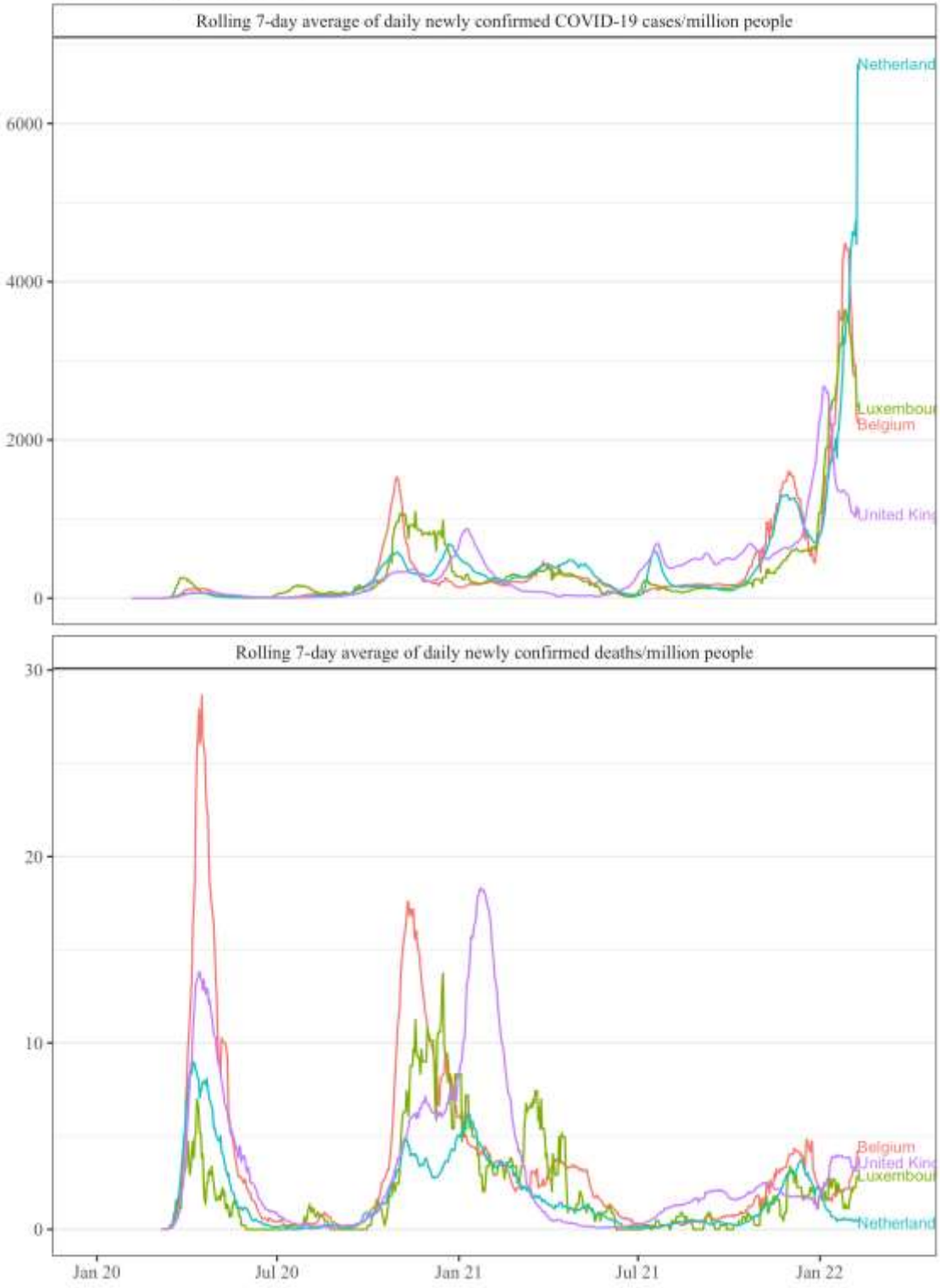
Central Europe



Baltics and Nordic Countries



North-Western Europe



Central Asia