

ASPHER Report: COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

Week of November 29th, 2021

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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

- Europe is the only of WHO's six regions reporting an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and deaths last week ([link](#)).
- Globally, the Delta variant remains the dominant variant with its high level of transmission ([link](#)). The Omicron variant has been reported in the following EU countries: Austria (3 cases), Belgium (2), Czechia (1), Denmark (4), France (1, in Réunion), Germany (9), Italy (4), the Netherlands (16), Portugal (14), Spain (2), and Sweden (3) ([link](#)).
- Whilst the burden from COVID-19 is particularly high in a number of countries experiencing low vaccine uptake, there is evidence of rising burden even among countries with higher uptake ([link](#)).

ASPHER recognizes the importance of following [non-pharmacological interventions](#) as well as achieving a high level of vaccine uptake. Vaccine hesitancy is a major pitfall stemming from the improvement in the vaccination rate particularly in Eastern parts of Europe. Mistrust in vaccines and false information are the driving factors for the population's low vaccine uptake. It is vital to address distrust to better handle the low vaccination rate. The decision regarding the idea of implementing mandatory vaccine passports and validation of these certificates should be made more clearer for the smooth operation of the process.

The current situation demands international consensus on a long-term strategy to minimize the transmission of virus variants, not only by rapid vaccination but also by increasing vaccine confidence and improving accessibility to vaccines to prevent further waves. Despite vaccination status, non-pharmaceutical interventions which complement vaccination must be followed.

ASPHER remains concerned that countries are unprepared and complacent about the responses that will be needed by health services and public health authorities this autumn. Read our statement [here](#).

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	Rolling 7-day average of daily newly confirmed deaths/million people	Share of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (%)
Slovakia	2044,23	11,04	42,94
Belgium	1546,29	3,65	74,68
Czechia	1522,69	8,33	59,26
Netherlands	1298,87	2,97	N/A
Austria	1285,75	6,05	65,69
Croatia	1142,39	15,75	47,33
Slovenia	1122,26	8,80	55,23
Hungary	1053,11	17,11	60,65
Georgia	951,10	15,11	25,01
Ireland	861,89	1,23	76,06
Switzerland	826,59	1,52	65,14
San Marino	793,88	0,00	N/A
Andorra	762,73	1,85	N/A
Denmark	738,77	1,67	76,58
Germany	691,82	3,26	67,89
Lithuania	640,98	9,14	66,14
United Kingdom	633,33	1,76	67,9
Greece	619,55	8,84	63,46
Monaco	618,13	0,00	N/A
Poland	616,82	8,41	54,02
Luxembourg	534,02	2,70	N/A
Cyprus	521,20	0,48	65,07
Norway	483,44	1,26	69,95
Latvia	479,24	14,39	63,46
Montenegro	471,75	10,69	40,59
France	440,52	1,01	69,6
Estonia	439,40	5,61	59,45
Iceland	403,58	0,42	81,77
Serbia	348,12	7,40	45,26
Bulgaria	323,68	16,94	25,56
Ukraine	307,61	13,34	25,64
Turkey	292,23	2,35	59,27
Portugal	289,20	1,28	N/A
Russia	226,38	8,21	38,62
Finland	210,69	1,98	72,61
Italy	198,07	1,16	72,96
Bosnia and Herzegovina	188,89	10,77	N/A
North Macedonia	188,63	8,23	N/A
Armenia	181,60	10,93	14,70
Spain	175,37	0,54	80,41
Belarus	172,53	1,54	N/A
Azerbaijan	165,46	2,46	44,60
Albania	156,09	2,14	33,4
Malta	154,46	1,11	83,73
Moldova	150,99	7,85	23,22
Sweden	142,19	0,49	69,11
Romania	103,02	9,48	38,65
Kazakhstan	49,61	1,03	42,42
Israel	28,29	0,28	62,16
Kyrgyzstan	8,64	0,35	13,45
Uzbekistan	6,27	0,09	N/A
Kosovo	5,37	0,08	42,7
Tajikistan	0,00	0,00	N/A

Country situation reports

Czech Republic

According to data from the Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic (IHIS), the COVID-19 epidemic is oscillating at very risky numbers and has been evolving in recent weeks according to the riskiest scenario. IHIS prediction says that at the current peak, the epidemic may remain for a short time of 1 – 2 weeks, then it may begin to slow down, but it may also return to further growth due to the omicron variant. So far, in the Czech Republic, only one case of the omicron variant has been confirmed (vaccinated air traveller from Namibia via South Africa and Dubai).

United Kingdom – overall

There was a level of difference in what the head of the new UK Health Security Agency said about social mixing and what the prime Minister said. This reflects some broader dissonance about whether to limit, at this stage, unnecessary social gatherings in bars, parties, and other venues. There is clearly some concern on such gatherings promoting faster transmission as we move towards the festive period ([link](#)). The government key emphasis is to roll out boosters to all adults with great urgency. Some public health countermeasures have also been strengthened given the cases of Omicron in the UK this week such as with mask-wearing in shops and public transport and quarantine of travellers from several Southern Africa countries ([link](#), [link](#)).

United Kingdom – Scotland

Test positivity has been 9-10% in recent days with 7.4% on Thursday with 42819 tests. On the same day, 3002 new cases were reported, as were 27 deaths within 28 days of diagnosis, 61 hospital admissions, and 3 new admissions to ICU. Approximately 70 patients in total are receiving intensive care due to COVID-19. Vaccination uptake is at 82.6% for those over 12 (two doses) but remains under 80% (78.2%) for under 40s and 69.9% for under 18-29s. In teenagers the uptake is very low, just above 20%.

There was confusion over eligibility for boosters as it was announced at UK level in the press before staff on the ground could be briefed. Staff are trying to prioritise those over 50s and clinically vulnerable and prevent all appointments being taken by younger, healthy people.

The requirement to wear masks in indoor settings has remained in place throughout with generally good compliance. The exceptions are pubs and clubs, where masks are meant to be taken off only when eating, drinking, and dancing, and in smaller shops, where most violations are by staff and late at night. Vaccine passports and lateral flow tests are required for larger events and strongly advised for others. The vaccine passport scheme now includes negative flow test to cover medically exempt, vaccine trial participants (medically exempt) and those who have had vaccinations in other countries with non MHRA approved vaccines ([link](#)). Work from home is encouraged. When working in-person, wearing of a mask is encouraged unless at own desk. In schools, parents, staff, and pupils favour continued masks at desks and in schools. Ventilation and CO2 monitoring are in place, however, some gaps are present. Evidence suggests that it is largely out of school contacts that drive transmission in schools ([link](#)).

A new case of omicron was reported not linked to a known outbreak. There is active surveillance in place but is strained due to high case numbers, given that backward contact tracing takes about an hour a case (less if cases are linked). The likely timing of emergence globally (end of October) raises concerns about the role holidays. There is good genomic sequencing in place and reasonable oversight of private labs based in Scotland.

Spain

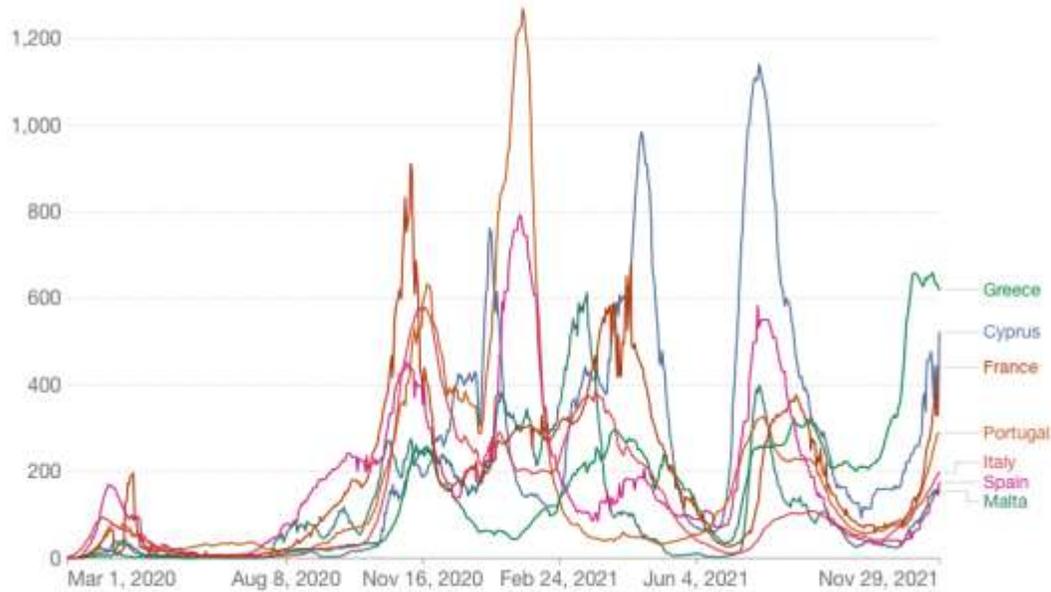
Close contacts of people infected with omicron variant will have to quarantine for 10 days even if they are fully vaccinated ([link](#)). The 14-day incidence rate in Spain now stands at 217 cases per 100,000 – a rise of nearly nine points since Tuesday. Navarre continues to have the highest incidence rate, with 622 cases per 100,000. It is followed by the Basque Country, with 521 cases, and Aragón, with 403. The incidence rose on Wednesday in all of Spain's 17 regions, except Catalonia, where it fell by eight points. By age group, transmission rates are highest among the under-12 population, who are not yet able to get vaccinated against Covid-19. In this age bracket, the incidence rate is 343 cases per 100,000. In Andalucía, the rules for taking different levels of intervention will depend on hospitalisation rates rather than incidence; the argument is that cases are less severe due to the high vaccination uptake.

Rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases and daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths in sub-regions of Europe from until 30th November 2021 ([link](#)).

Mediterranean Region

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

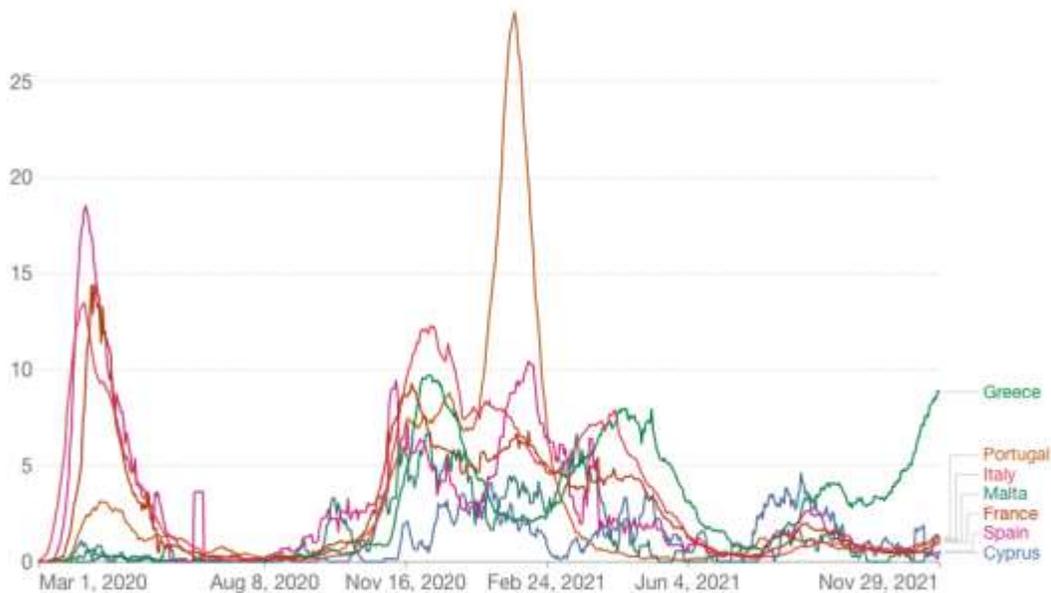


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death, confirmed deaths can be lower than the true number of deaths.



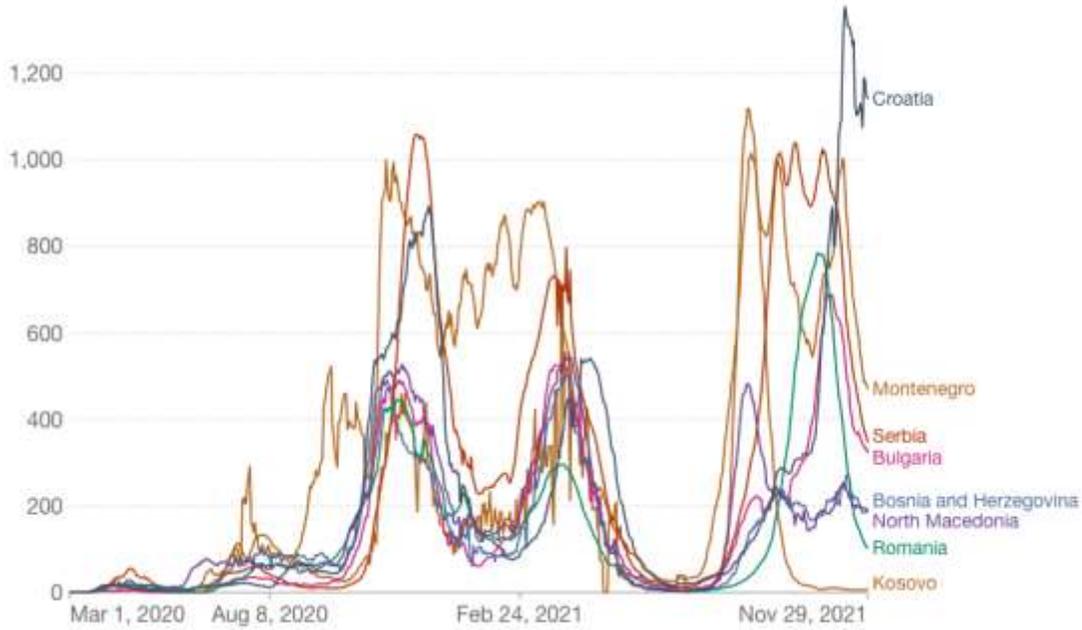
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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South-East region

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

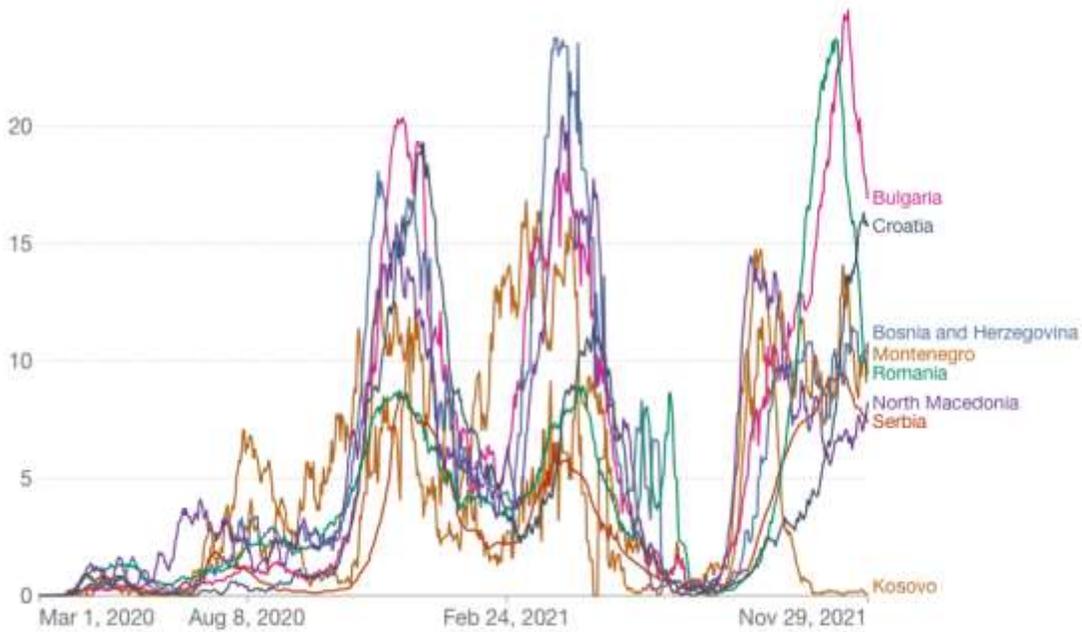


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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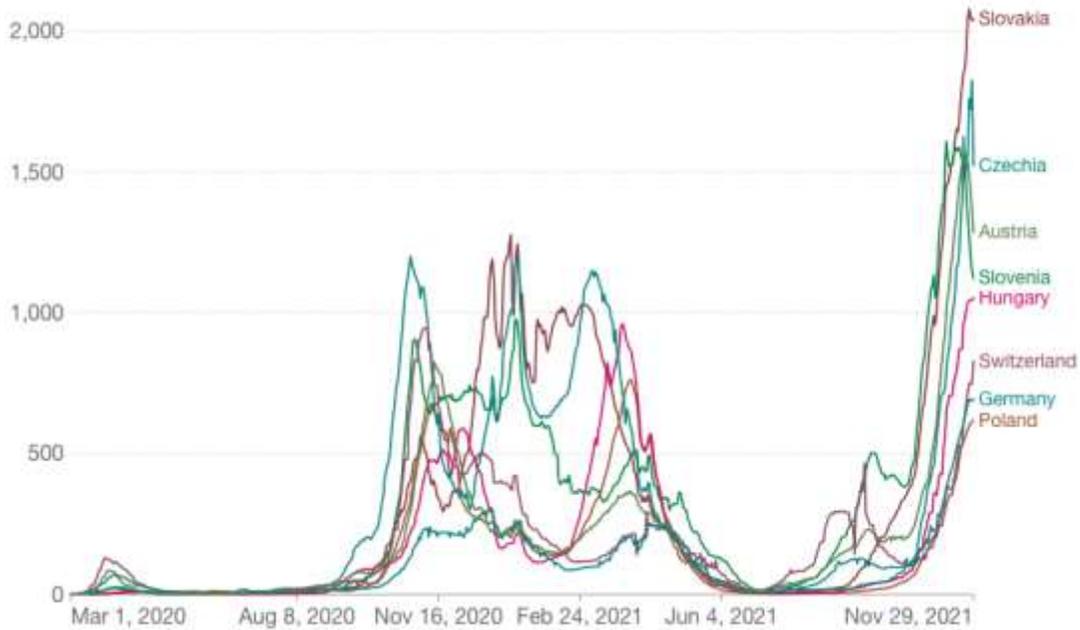
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Central Europe

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

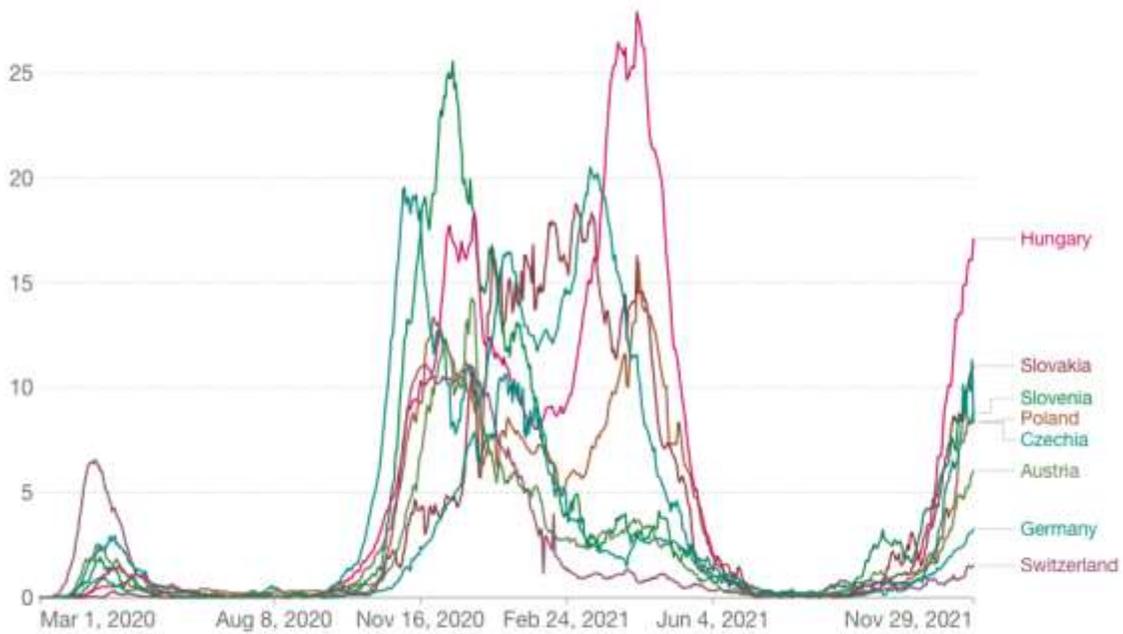


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

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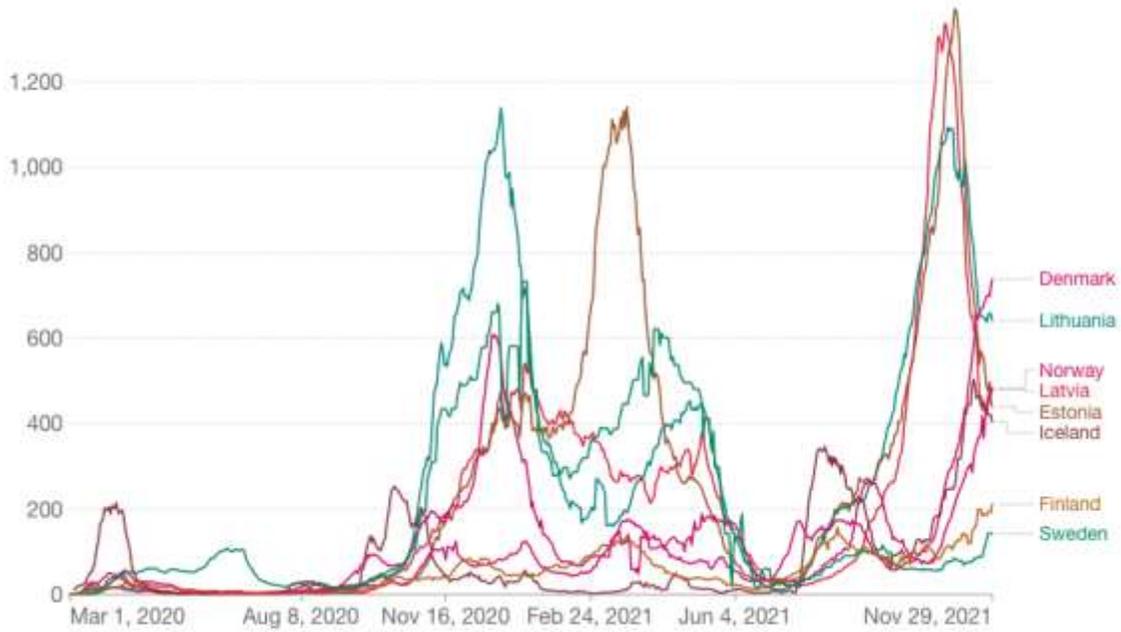
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Baltics and Nordic Countries

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

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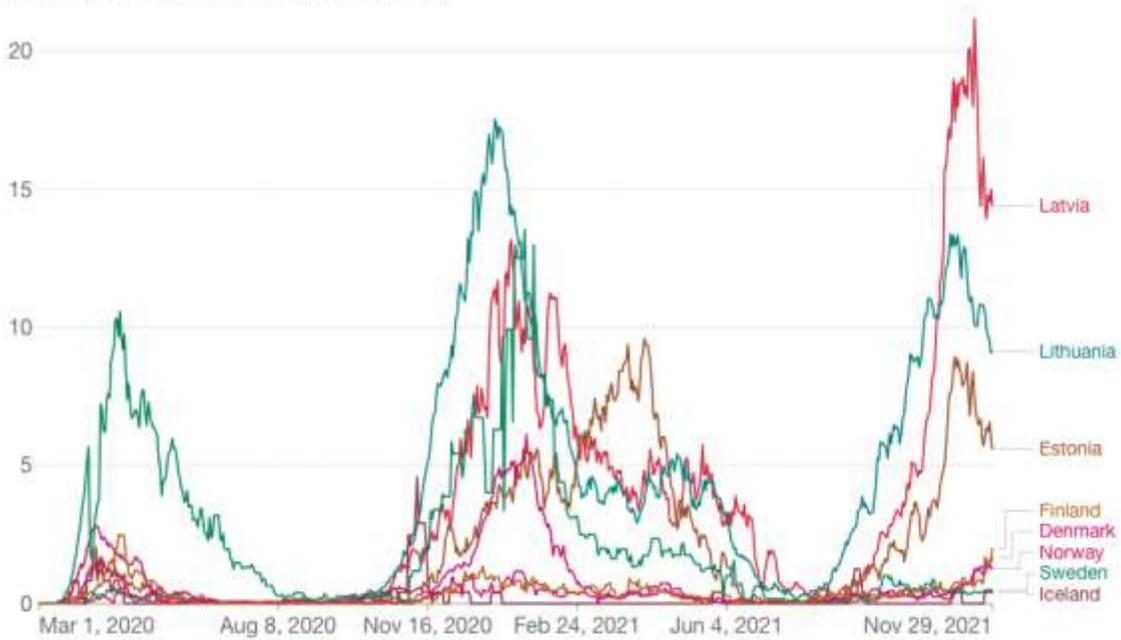


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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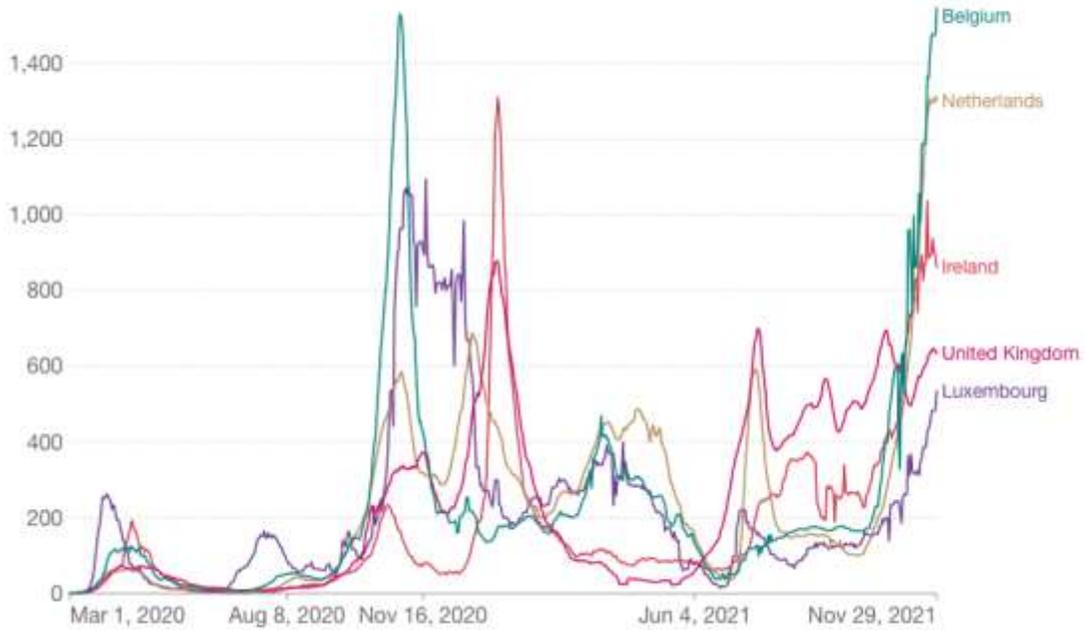
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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North-western Europe

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

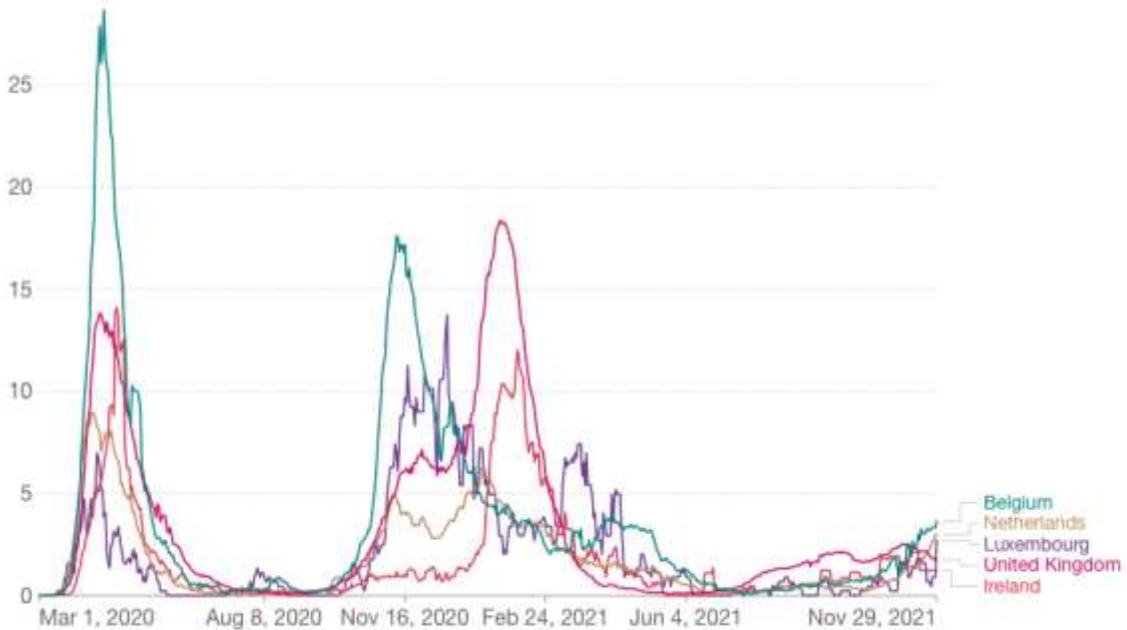


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

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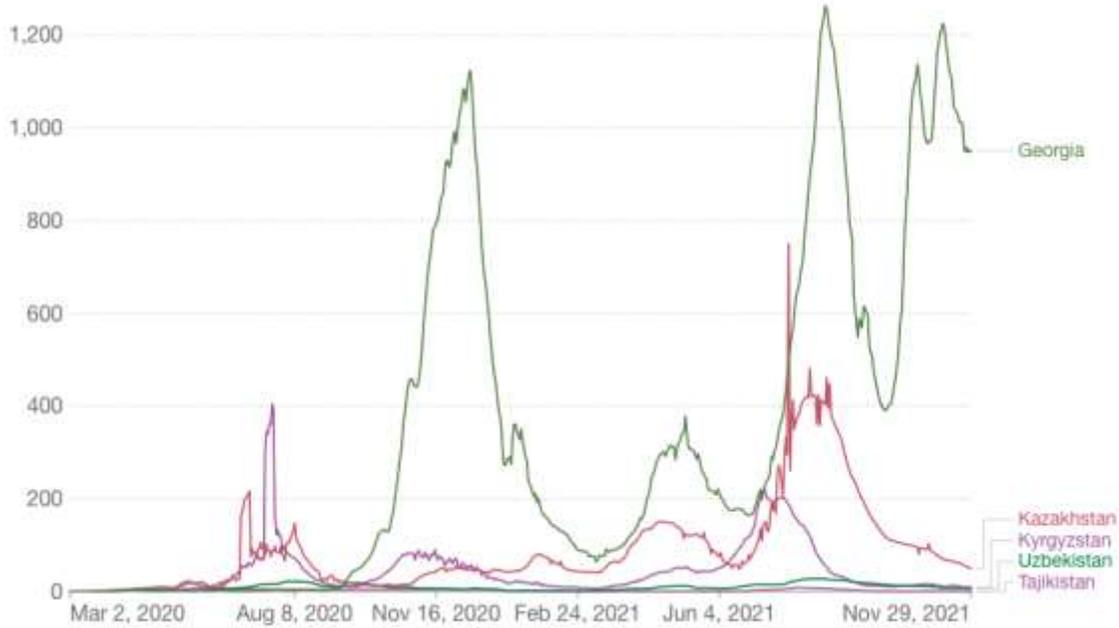
Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Central Asia

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

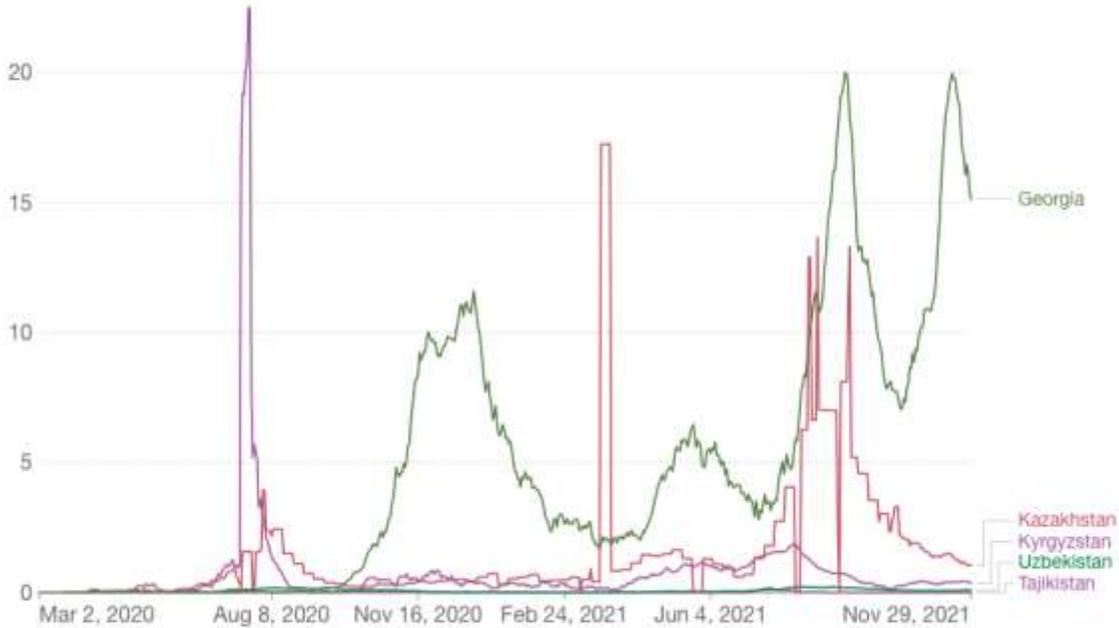


Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

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