

ASPHER Report: COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

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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 latest [WHO weekly epidemiological update](#) highlighted that new weekly cases and confirmed deaths has continued the declining trend globally. As of 22 May 2022, over 522 million confirmed cases and over six million deaths have been reported globally. At the regional level, the number of new weekly cases increased in the Region of the Americas (+13%) and in the Western Pacific Region (+6%), while decreasing trends were observed in the remaining four regions. The number of new weekly deaths increased in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (+30%), remained stable in the Western Pacific and the Region of the Americas (both <1%), and decreased in the other three regions.
- The [ECDC country overview report](#) highlights that overall transmission continues to decline in most countries, as shown by both overall case notification rates and case rates among people aged 65 years and above. Four countries reported an increasing trend in hospital or ICU admissions/occupancy compared with the previous week. By the end of week 20, the cumulative uptake of the primary course of COVID-19 vaccination in the EU/EEA was 83.4% (country range: 35.5–94.4%) among adults. The cumulative uptake of a booster/additional dose was 62.5% (country range: 11.1–85.4%) among adults. As of 12 May 2022, [ECDC has reclassified Omicron sub-lineages BA.4 and BA.5 from variants of interest to variants of concern](#).
- The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [issued an update to the health safety measures for air travel](#). Wearing face masks at airports and inflight should be aligned with national measures on wearing masks in public transport and transport hubs. If either the departure or destination States require the wearing of face masks on public transport, aircraft operators should require passengers and crew to comply with those requirements inflight, beyond 16 May 2022. Further, as of 16 May 2022, aircraft operators, during their pre-flight communications as well as during the flight, should continue to encourage their passengers and crew members to wear face masks during the flight as well as in the airport, even when wearing a face mask is not required.
- A [new online modelling hub launched](#) on May 30th, the European COVID-19 Scenario Hub, which

will present modelling projections on how the COVID-19 pandemic may evolve in terms of cases, hospitalisations and deaths. It will serve as a resource for Member States in their pandemic planning and inform decisions aimed at minimising the expected burden caused by COVID-19 under different scenarios. In its first round of scenario analysis, it will explore the impact of different timings of a second booster campaign while considering uncertainty around the speed of waning immunity.

ASPHER is concerned about talk of 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 concerned with the rapid dismantling of non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19 across Europe. In a [recent opinion paper](#), we advocate for European governments’ continued recommendation for the use of face masks in high traffic public areas like public transport. The reality remains that the future evolution of the pandemic is highly uncertain. Primary health care and social care provision across Europe are not yet restored to pre-pandemic levels due to the burden of ever new variants of the virus. Occupational health services are non-existent 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. 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 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.

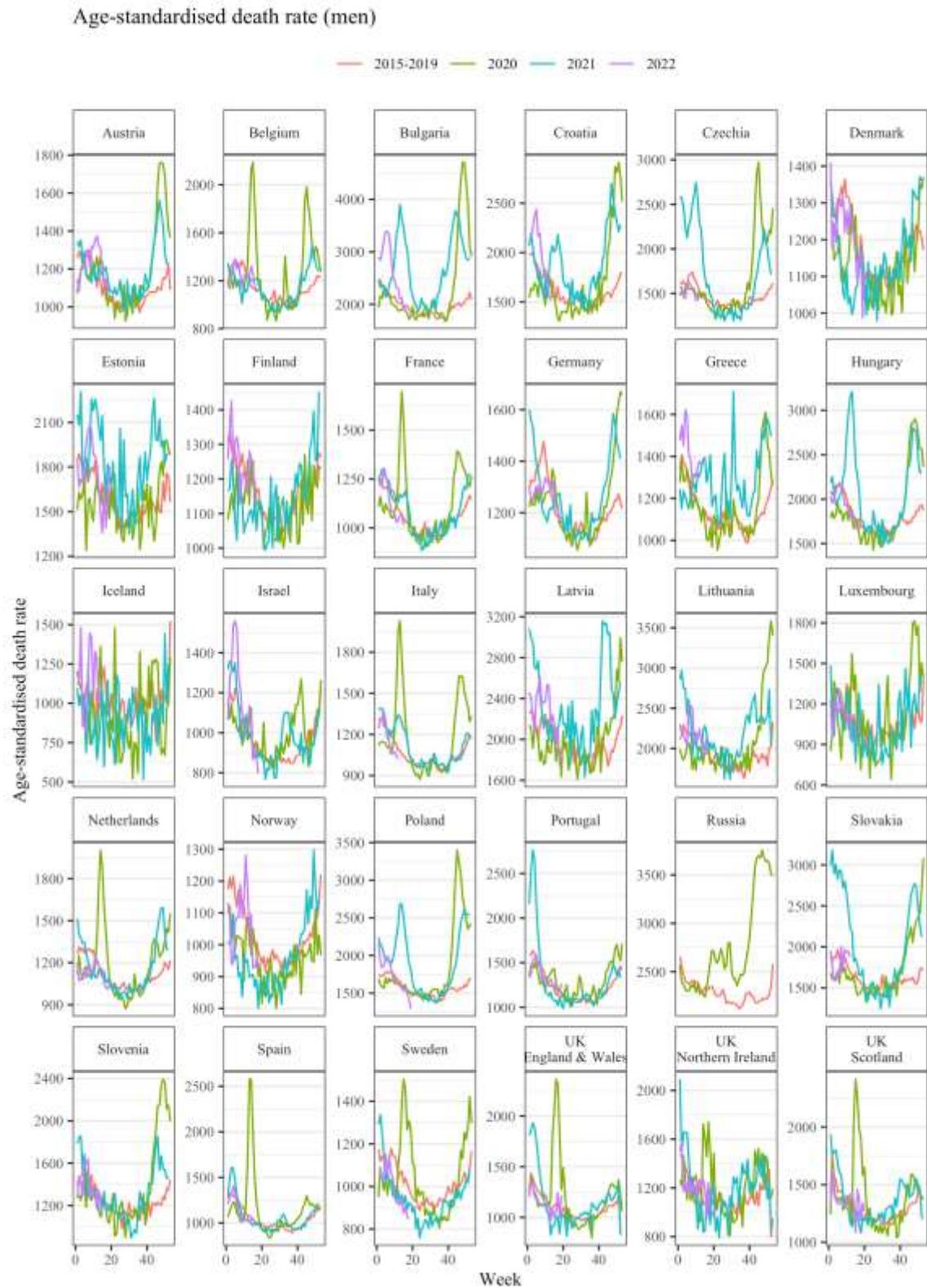
Rolling average of latest COVID-19 test, case, and hospitalization rates in the countries of the WHO-Europe region ([Source: Our World in Data](#)).

WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million people	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Portugal	4.89		2,447.49			
Andorra	1.18		594.67			
Spain	1.19		449.34		115.05	
Greece	8.58		349.50		63.58	
Germany	1.35		343.68		21.63	
Italy	3.20		315.03		49.60	

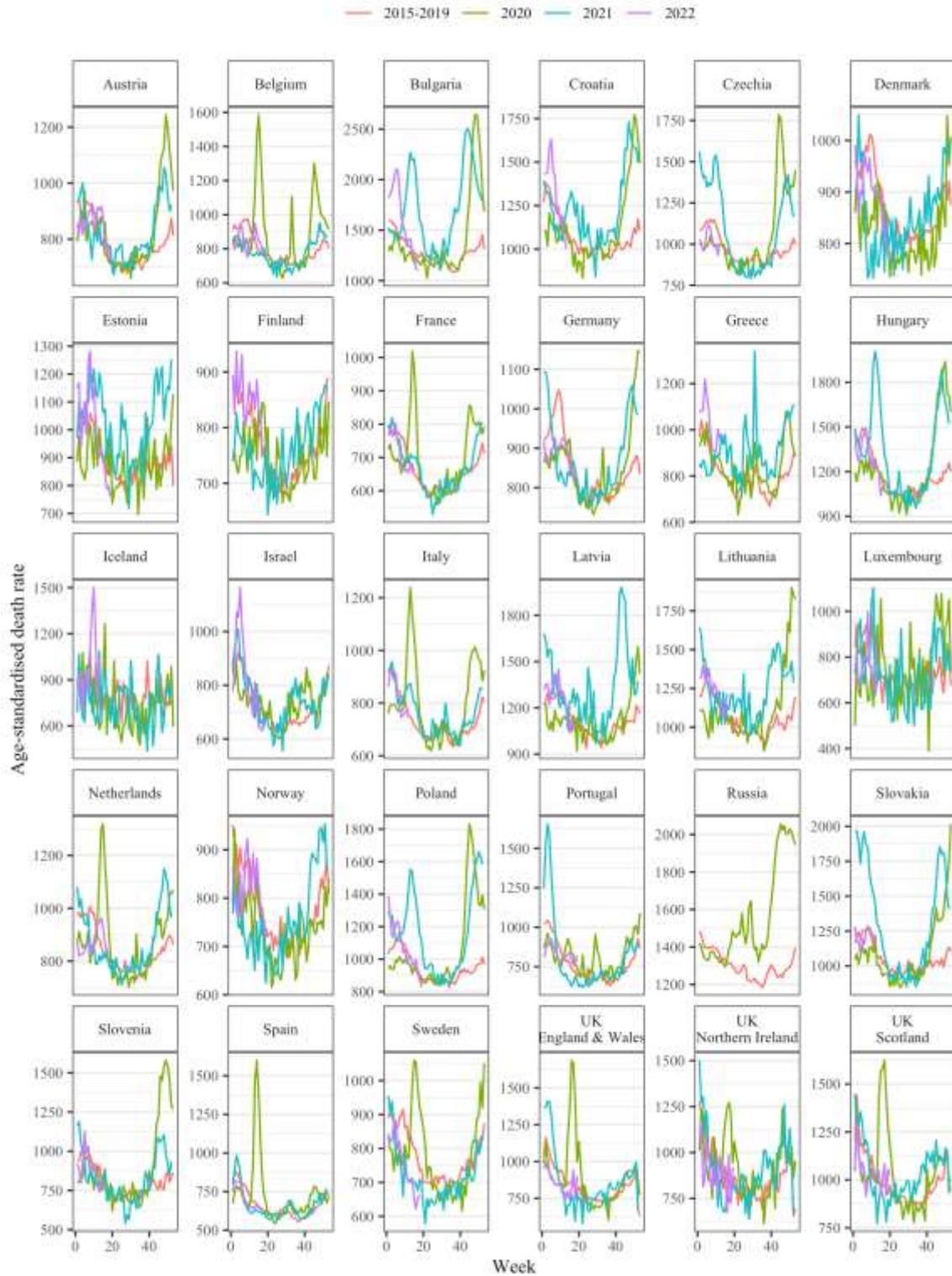
WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Cyprus	75.00		282.84		24.55	
Finland	0.88		282.40			
Ireland	0.88		280.88		48.74	
France	2.21		270.98		41.06	
Iceland	2.98		242.88		200.66	
Austria	15.97		222.08			
Israel	2.10		176.78		20.45	
Malta	2.25		148.64		40.69	
Slovenia	1.89		126.38		16.60	
Switzerland	0.95		113.62		7.11	
Belgium	1.16		112.37		36.11	
Estonia	1.09		88.72		56.39	
Denmark	1.00		83.28		33.89	
United Kingdom	3.80		70.84		57.85	
Croatia	0.56		68.56		61.19	
Netherlands	0.09		57.93		13.51	
Hungary	0.45		45.67			
Sweden	0.26		42.94			
North Macedonia	0.51		40.20			
Lithuania	0.43		39.57			

WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Serbia	1.01		36.24			
Slovakia	0.55		34.29			
Russia	0.97		28.84		89.57	
Bulgaria	0.66		28.19			
Czechia	0.48		20.81		8.86	
Romania	3.96		18.07			
Turkey	1.58		12.13			
Albania	0.03		8.05			
Poland	0.22		5.93			
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.07		5.91			
Kosovo	0.28		3.05			
Armenia	0.54		1.16			
Azerbaijan	0.23		0.74			
Kazakhstan	2.10		0.44			
Belarus	0.75		0.00			
Georgia	0.88		0.00			
Luxembourg	1.81		0.00		1.57	
Moldova	3.17		0.00			
Ukraine	1.21		0.00			

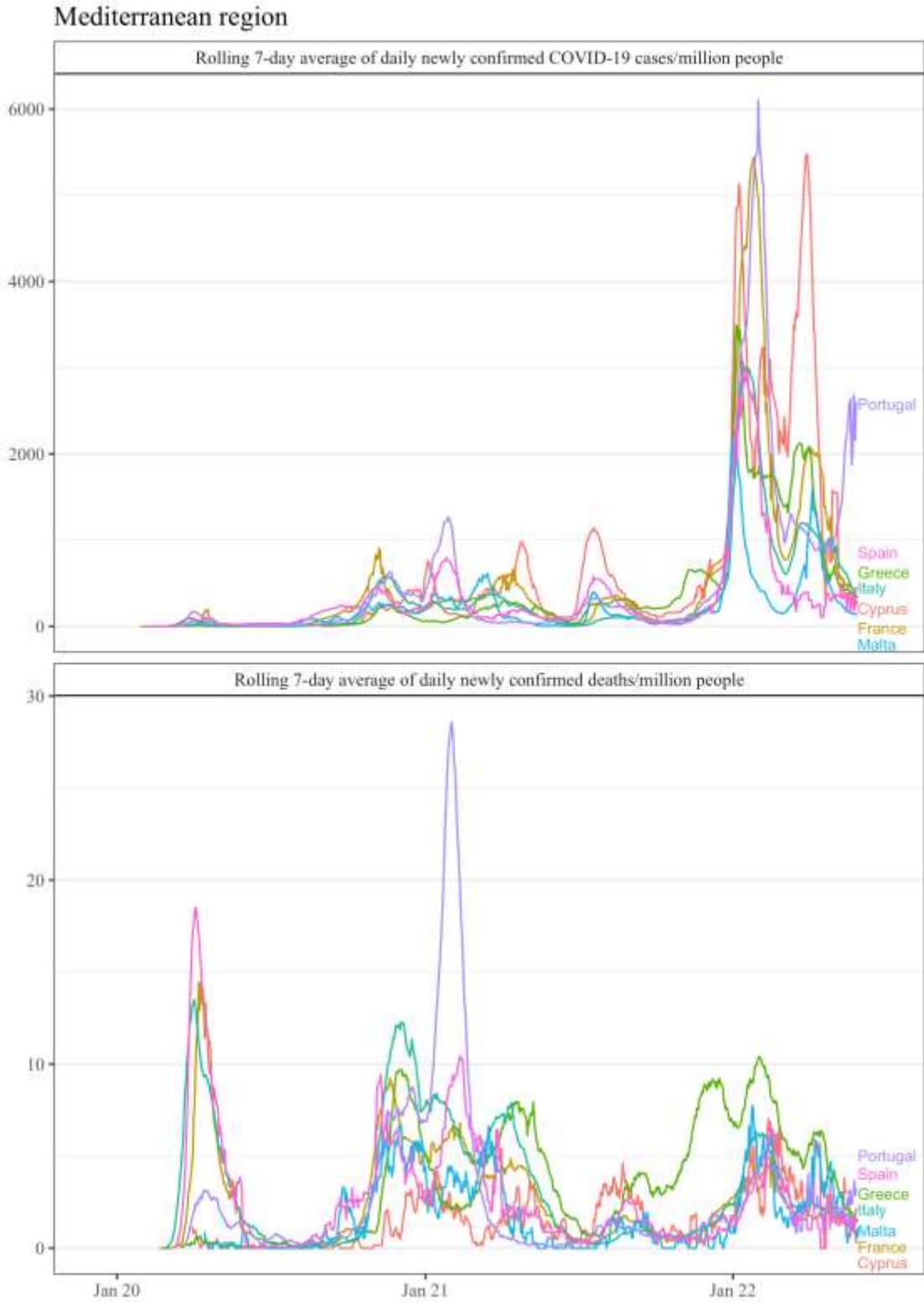
The age-standardised all-cause death rates in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and the 2015-2019 average by week and sex in selected countries of the WHO-Europe (Source: Human Mortality Database).



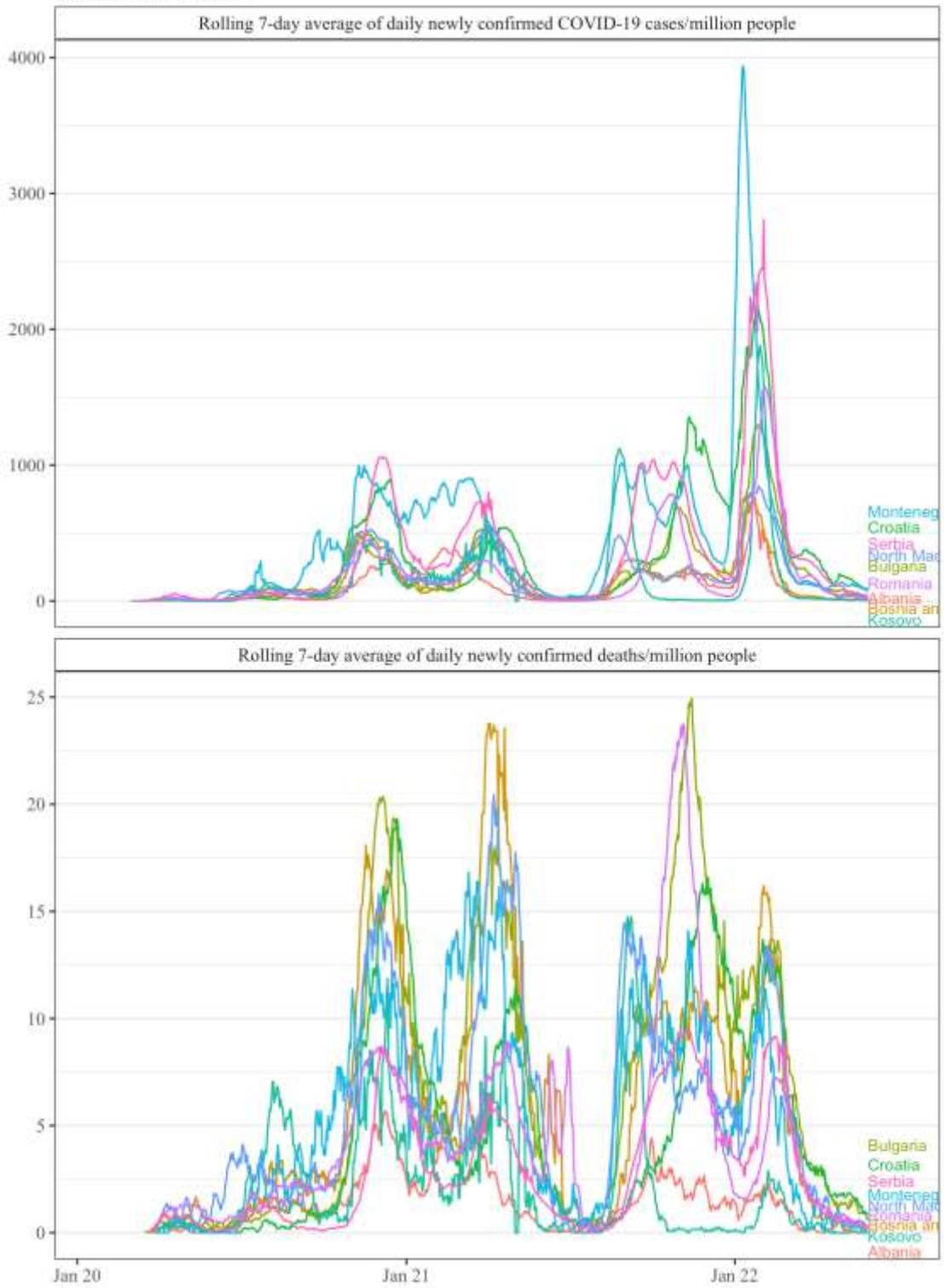
Age-standardised death rate (women)



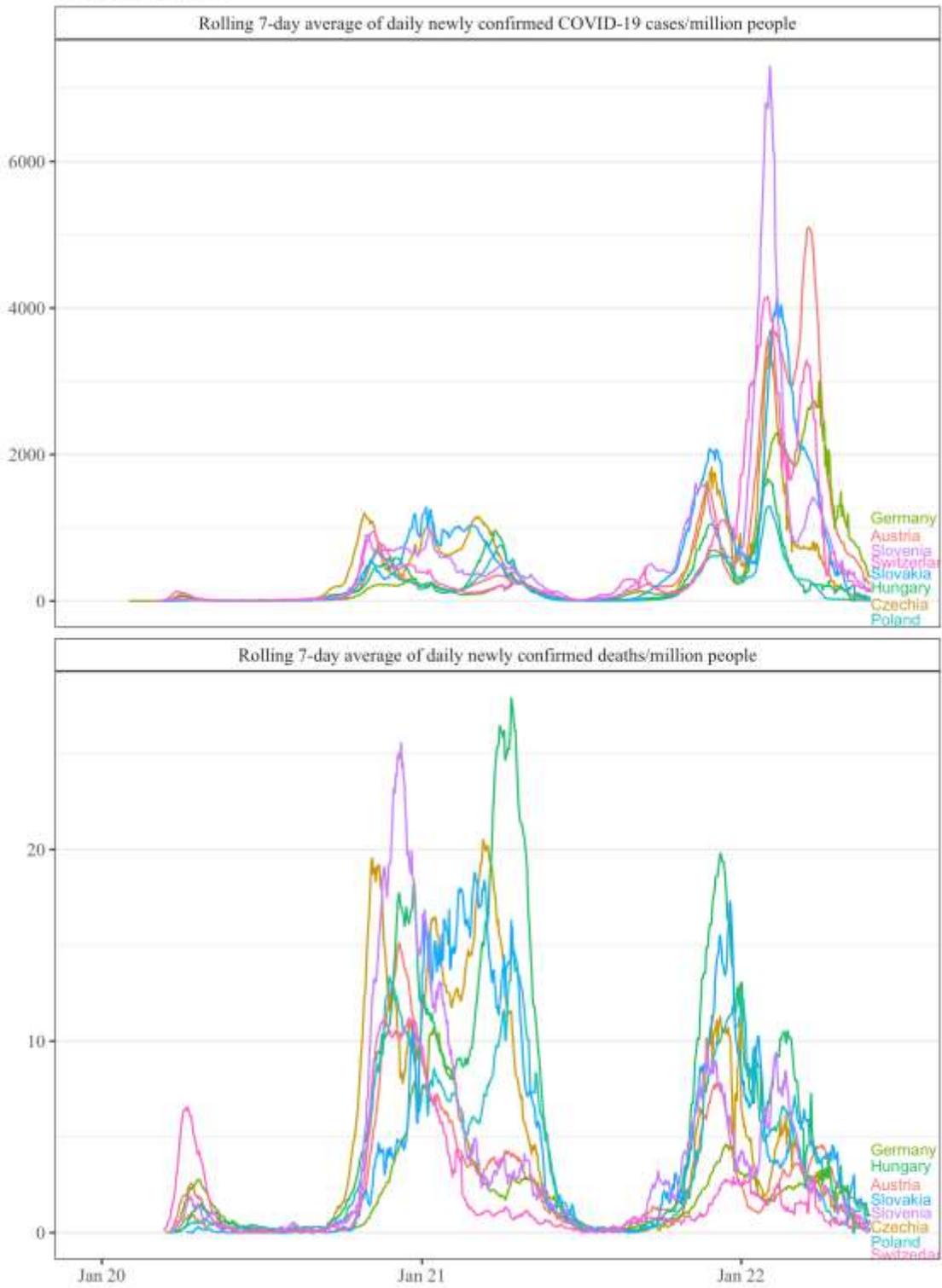
Rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases and daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths in sub-regions of Europe (Source: Our World in Data).



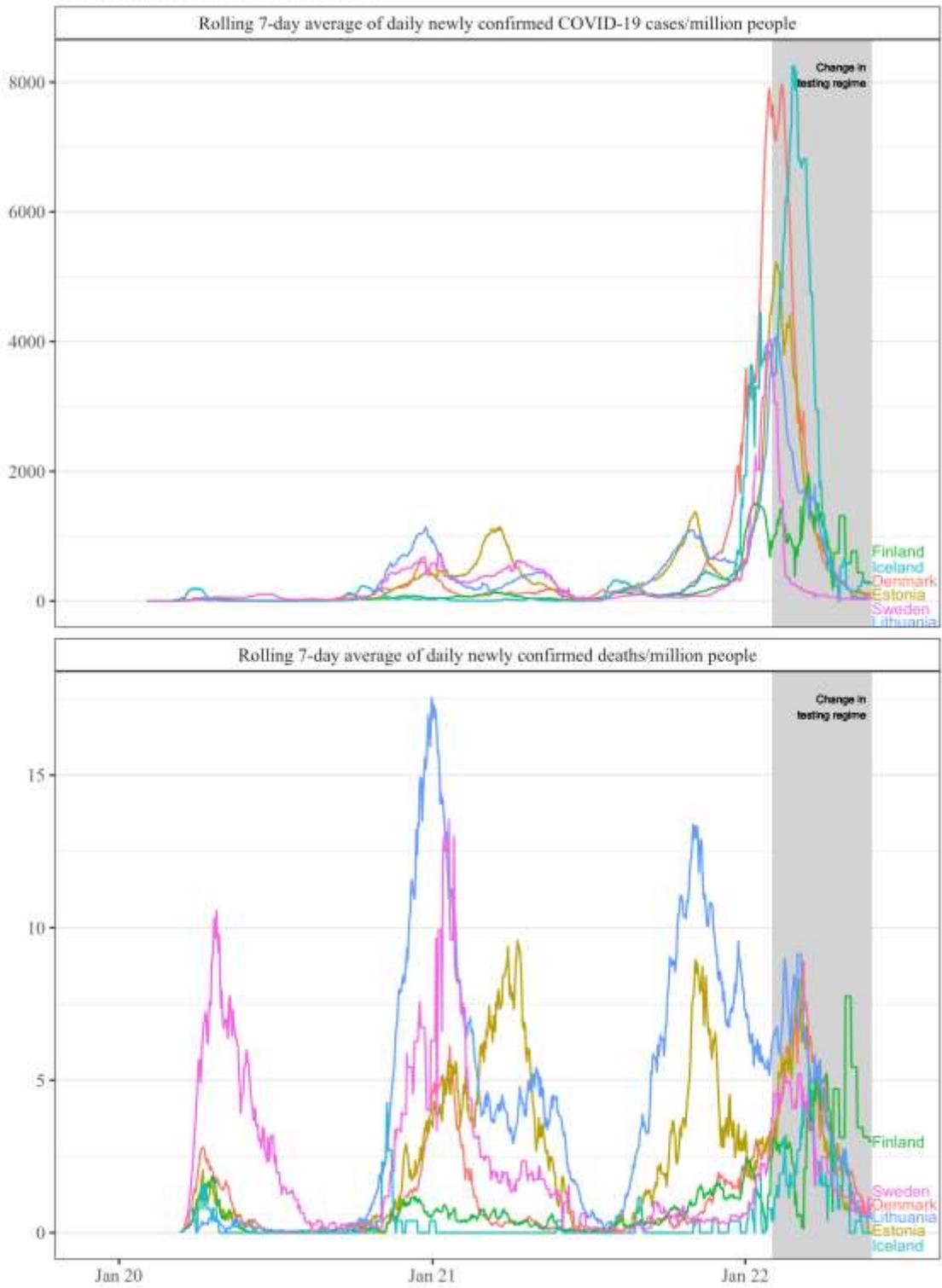
South-East region



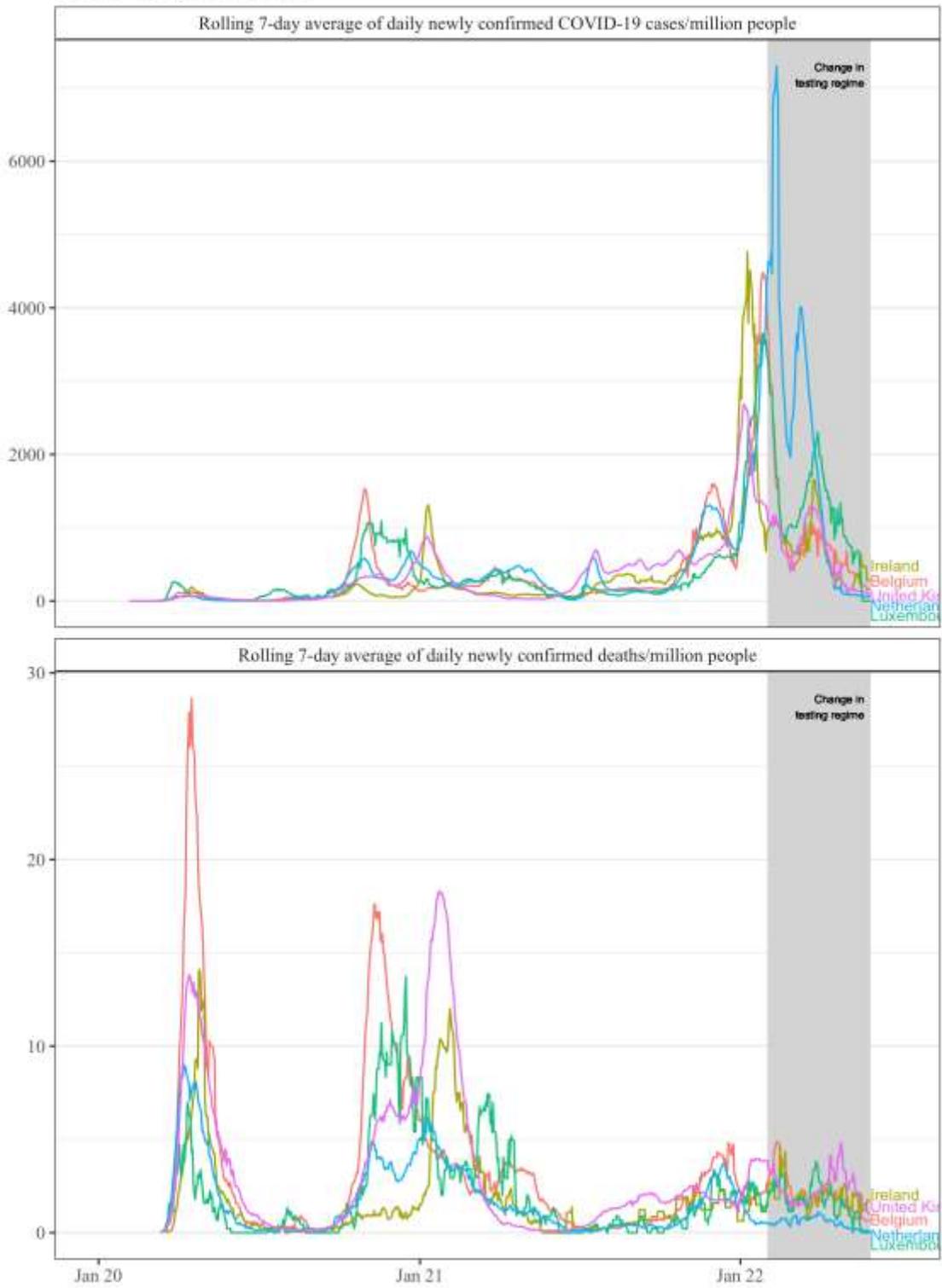
Central Europe



Baltics and Nordic Countries



North-Western Europe



Central Asia

