

# ASPHER Report

## COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

### Week of April 26<sup>th</sup> 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?*

ASPHER celebrates the extraordinary and dramatic falls of deaths from COVID-19 in Israel, Spain, UK and urges all countries to address their internal problems with vaccination programmes and get these sorted.

We are concerned at the [disastrous explosion of the pandemic in India](#). We call on the international community to respond to needs identified by the public health authorities in India and offer every feasible support. The situation in India presents an extreme case of need that cannot be met within a country and why we need international health action agencies capable of responding to need, as set out in our [BMJ piece this week](#). It also shows the need for further efforts to promote [internationalism in vaccination programmes](#) for the protection of everyone.

We are concerned about contradictory policies on lockdown and travel and urge governments to work together with the World Health Organization, ECDC and the European Commission to create a coherent framework for control on international movement. We call on all governments to work together to create a practical strategic approach for suppressing the virus, saving lives, and reopening social and economic life.

ASPHER is concerned about the recognition of an increasing number of new variants of the SARS-COV2 virus. We believe there should be increasing international collaboration and capacity in the surveillance of the variants of the virus, surveillance of the outcomes of vaccination, resistance to infection and timespan of immunity. There needs to be coordinated global effort towards anticipating new variants, and adapting vaccinations to meet mutating changes of the virus. (see also: <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/01/28/we-need-an-equitable-and-coordinated-global-approach-to-covid-19-vaccination/>)

*The data on the transmission of variants is very limited and the criteria for sequencing of samples tested across countries is not yet standardized.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has entered its second year since the time WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak as a global pandemic on 11th March 2020 (1). From the experiences of initial lockdown, countries have learned to develop strategies to sustain economic stability by imposing strict regulations instead of complete lockdown. Continuing the non-pharmacological interventions alongside vaccine rollout, some countries have significantly reduced the number of deaths and the infection rate (UK, Spain, Israel, Portugal). A few countries in individual European sub-regions have started easing lockdown restrictions (UK, Bulgaria, Hungary, Estonia, Israel, Portugal). However, some countries are still experiencing a mounting infection rate, which is a major concern (Turkey, France, Germany).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid spread of the virus in almost all countries has resulted in considerable disruption of public health at a global level. The pandemic has cost over three million lives to date (3,116,444) and the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has surpassed 0.1 billion (147,539,302). Individual WHO regions confirmed COVID-19 cases are as follows (2).

Table 1

WHO Region	Confirmed COVID-19 cases
Americas	61,284,892
Europe	51,007,204
South-East Asia	20,669,435
Eastern Mediterranean	8,918,834
Africa	3,284,051
Western-Pacific	2,373,140

As per the WHO weekly epidemiological report, the European Region is contributing 35% of cumulative COVID-19 confirmed cases worldwide. The number of new cases and deaths in the past 7 days has reduced by 12% and 5% respectively compared to the previous week. In Turkey, France and Germany high incidence of coronavirus is reported at 449.1, 325.5, 174.5 per 100,000 population respectively (3). IHME analysis shows, as on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the European population has been infected with COVID-19. In most of the region in Europe B.1.1.7 is the dominant variant. Although community transmission of P1 and B.1.351 intermittently, evidence for continued transmission is lagging (4).

The following table shows the incidence of daily new coronavirus confirmed cases and deaths across European countries as reported on 26/04/2021 (table 2) (5).

Table 2

WHO Europe region	Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases/mill population rolling 7-day average	Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths/mill population rolling 7-day average	Effective reproduction number estimate (R)
Cyprus	958.95	1.14	1.12
Turkey	582.15	4.14	0.81
Sweden	540.42	1.91	1.03
Andorra	514.00	1.85	0.91
Netherlands	473.85	1.21	0.99
Croatia	435.71	10.58	1.02
France	435.71	4.35	0.93
Lithuania	400.92	4.57	1.08
Serbia	350.23	4.85	0.79
Slovenia	337.26	3.23	0.85
Latvia	302.95	3.79	1.08
Georgia	298.52	3.37	1.15
Luxembourg	280.70	1.14	1.01
Estonia	279.57	4.85	0.77
Hungary	270.12	21.00	0.69
Ukraine	255.40	8.39	0.85
Poland	252.88	12.47	0.65
Germany	248.11	2.82	1.06
Montenegro	246.36	7.96	0.82
Greece	240.63	7.50	0.94
Switzerland	239.64	1.02	1.07
Austria	238.00	2.79	0.89
North Macedonia	236.09	16.18	0.69
Czech Republic	233.38	6.27	0.81
Armenia	224.22	6.99	0.87
Italy	217.66	5.42	0.92
Bulgaria	214.72	14.17	0.77
Bosnia and Herzegovina	209.75	17.94	0.82
Spain	183.68	1.94	1.07
Kosovo	180.87	3.99	0.91
Azerbaijan	171.20	3.28	0.80
Kazakhstan	150.12	0.21	1.11
Belarus	132.07	1.04	1.01
Monaco	127.41	3.64	0.88
Belgium	124.41	3.49	0.94
Denmark	122.16	0.44	1.00
Romania	122.14	8.39	0.72
Moldova	111.45	5.45	0.68
San Marino	105.23	8.42	0.50
Slovakia	103.17	9.39	0.82
Ireland	91.36	1.10	1.04
Norway	82.58	0.71	0.85
Russia	58.55	2.56	0.99
Malta	52.74	1.29	0.68
Portugal	47.87	0.27	0.94
Albania	45.27	1.59	0.73
Finland	42.54	0.39	0.81
Kyrgyzstan	42.37	0.64	1.18
Iceland	41.86	0.00	1.21
United Kingdom	34.61	0.34	0.90
Israel	14.67	0.20	0.64
Uzbekistan	10.13	0.03	1.23
Tajikistan	0.00	0.00	0.00

## South-East Europe Region

### Croatia:

- Since mid-March 2021, the 7-day moving average of daily new cases has been showing an **increasing trend** (6). Between 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April, nearly 3000 new cases were recorded. 2,278 patients are in hospital out of which 253 are on respirators.
- **Until 30th April all epidemiological measures will be in place.** Public gatherings and events of all types must end by 22hrs, limited to a maximum of 25 people. Private gatherings between two households are permitted with a maximum of 10 people. Sale of alcoholic beverages is banned between 22:00hrs and 6am. Restricted services at catering facilities and family farms limiting working hours from 6:00 to 22:00, strict rules at gyms and fitness centres, etc. (7).

### Bulgaria:

- The **infection rate in Bulgaria is decreasing compare to the previous week.** However, for six consecutive weeks all 28 districts in Bulgaria are in COVID-19 “red zones”(8).
- From 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> April, a total of 1,850 new cases and 81 new deaths were confirmed. Currently 7,450 patients are hospitalized with COVID-19 and 714 patients are in intensive care units (9). The current state of measures has been extended to 31st May 2021 and tourism may open soon (10).
- By 28th April, 177,795 individuals have been fully vaccinated (11).

### North Macedonia:

- As on 25th April the cumulative incidence in North Macedonia is 7,281.8/100,000 population and the **reproduction number is 0.79.**
- The proportion of **new positive cases reduced by 33.8% and deaths increased by 2.4%** compared to previous week (12).
- Considering the current situation the government has made certain changes to the current state of measures and **extended the state of emergency until 15<sup>th</sup> May.** The changes include, restriction on movement from 21hrs instead of 20hrs till 5am next morning with exceptions for religious reasons (Easter and Ramadan) on the evenings of May 1st and 12<sup>th</sup>. Catering services are open and allowed to operate in open spaces such as terraces until 20:30 (13).

Figure 1

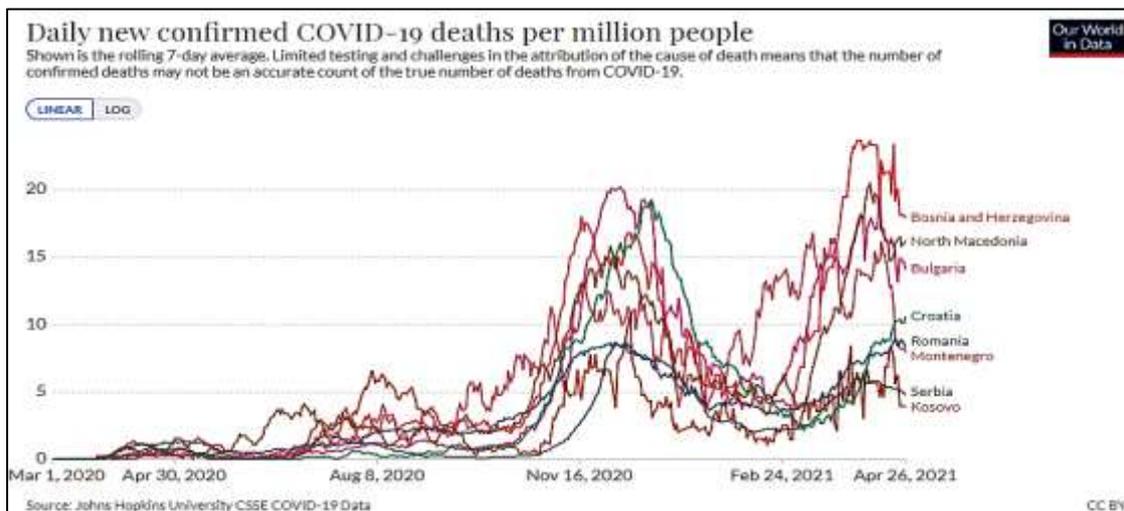
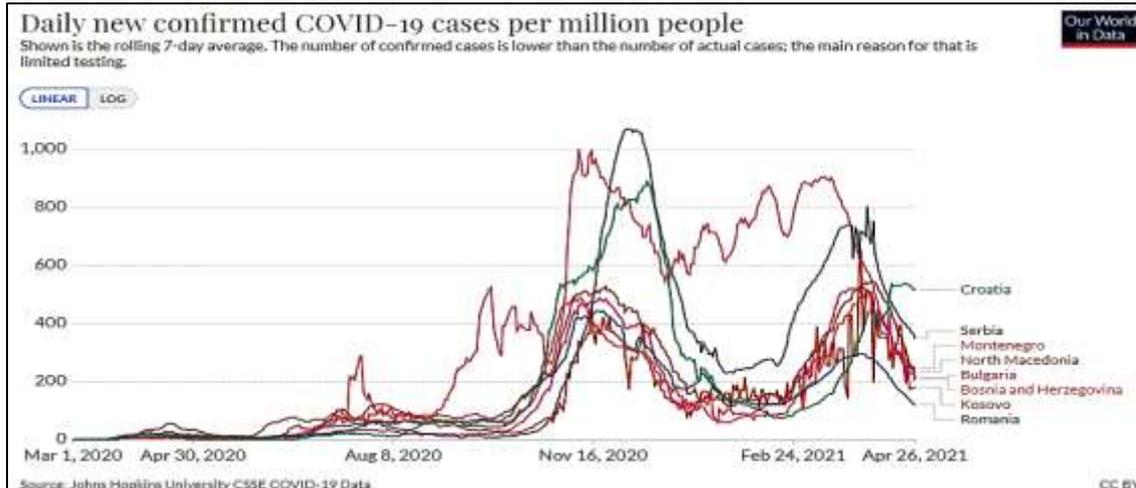


Figure 2



**Mediterranean Region:**

**Cyprus:**

- For **two consecutive weeks the rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million population in Cyprus was high (958.95)** not only among other countries in the Mediterranean region but also WHO Europe Region (Figure 3) (5).
- Between 27th and 28th April, 845 new cases were confirmed (14). To control the spread of COVID-19 the Ministry of Health of Cyprus has initiated new measures that will be effective until 9th May. These include night curfew from 21hrs to 5am, ban on gatherings both indoors and outdoors with the exception on 2nd May (persons from two families (up to 10) can meet and curfew lasts until 1am (15).

**Portugal:**

- Since mid-March, Portugal has begun easing its lockdown restrictions and **the country is in final phase of lockdown (from 1st May)** opening its borders with Spain which were closed since earlier this year (16). Gatherings such as weddings are allowed with 50% capacity. Both outdoor and indoor events are allowed with limited capacity. Restaurants, cafes, and pastry shops can open without any time restriction (6 people inside and 10 people at terrace) (17). **Apart from the low infection rate the country reported no new COVID-19 deaths this week on 29th April (18).**

Figure 3

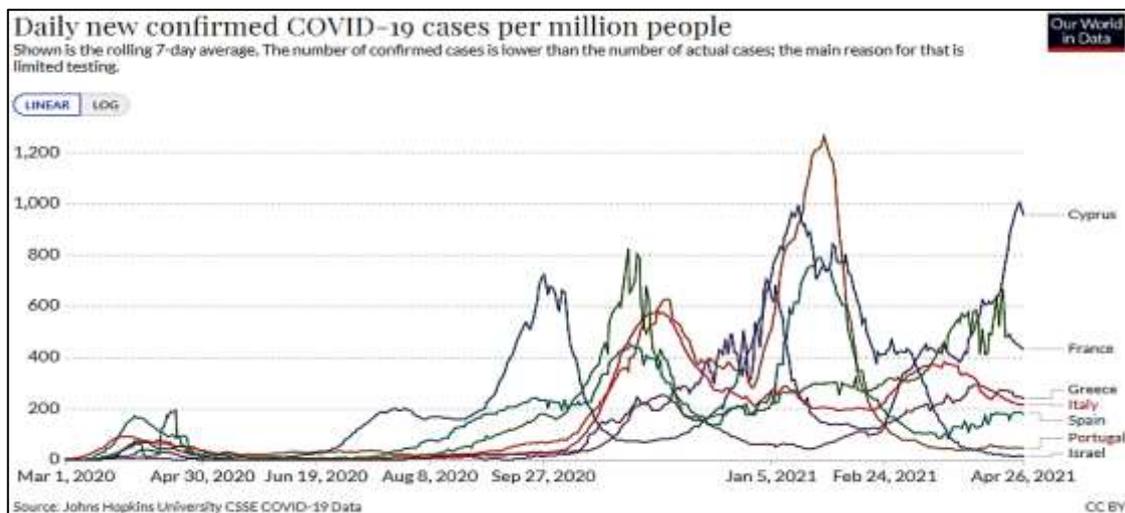
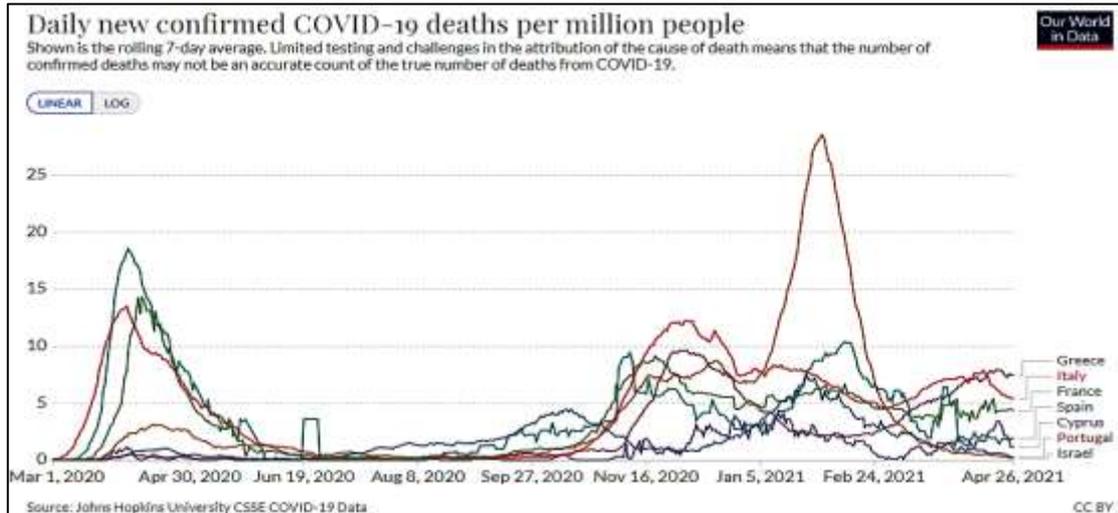


Figure 4



**Central Europe:**

**Poland:**

- With adherence to the strict rules and regulations, accelerating number of people receiving vaccine against COVID-19, **Poland was able to see decline in infection rate** and has plans for reopening its economy, social life, education, sport and leisure activities, scheduled throughout May if the trend continues to be low (19) (20).
- Poland has vaccinated 8.5 million people with first dose and nearly three million people are fully vaccinated according to the recent vaccination report against COVID-19 (21).

**Hungary:**

- In Hungary, between 29 and 30th April, the number of new cases and deaths of COVID-19 were 2,365 and 182 respectively. Nearly six thousand people are hospitalized with COVID-19 out of which 677 patients are on ventilators (22).
- **The country has vaccinated around 4 million people with at least one dose by 30th April and moving on with further easing of lockdown restrictions** by changing curfew hours to midnight, extending opening hours for shops, restaurants until 11pm (23). **Those who are vaccinated are allowed to enter indoor restaurants, and entertainment areas, spas, gyms, museums, zoos and libraries using their vaccine card as a permit for entry** (24).

Figure 5

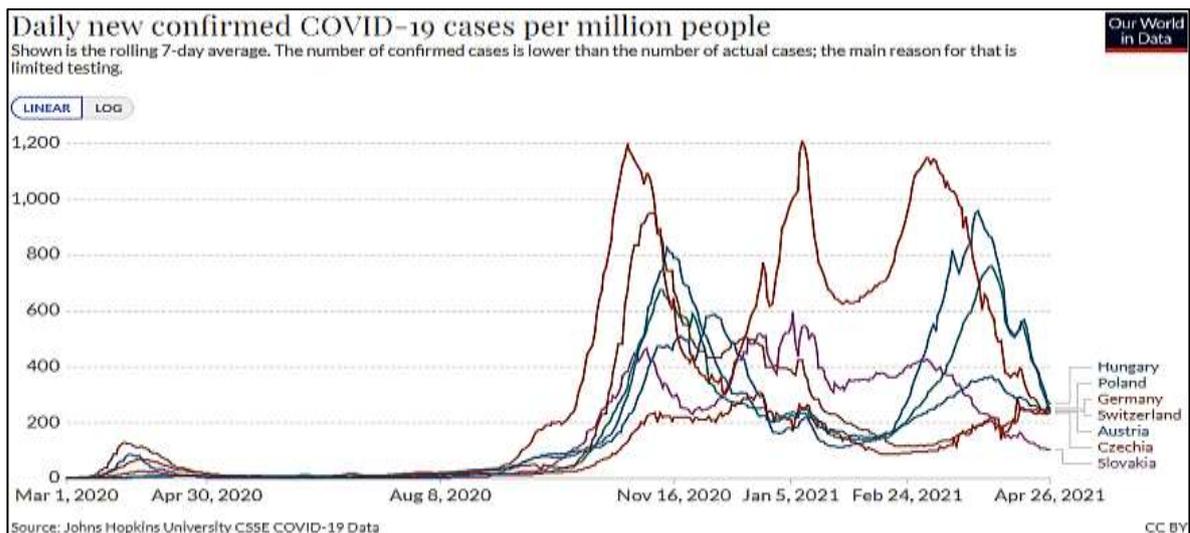
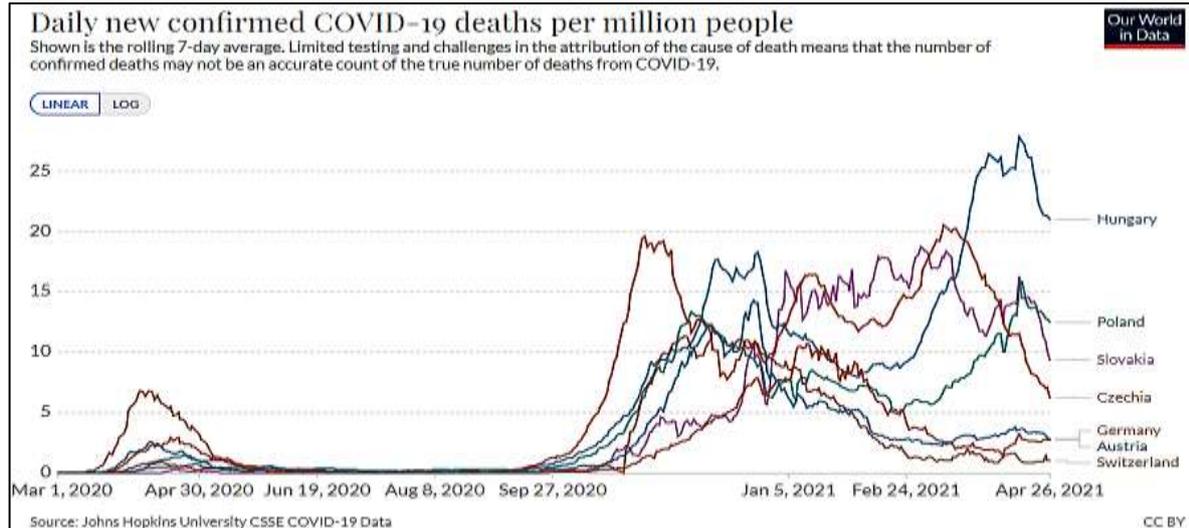


Figure 6



### Baltics and Nordic countries:

#### Sweden:

- According to weekly epidemiological report (from 18th to 25th April) **the number of new cases confirmed with coronavirus has decreased** (12% lower than the previous week).
- Overall incidence during this week is 349/100,000 inhabitants. Among the age groups 10-19 years and 40-49 years the incidence is high and is low over 75 years, people with home care and who are living in special housing for elderly. **However the number of new admissions to intensive care units with COVID-19 is still high (25) and the health care system is overburdened (26).**
- In view of the current situation in Sweden, restrictions have been extended until 17th May such as prohibition of alcohol sales between 22:00 and 11:00, closure of restaurants by 20:30, travel restrictions to enter Sweden from outside the EU Region till 31st May. Children and youth of age no more than 20 years are allowed to participate in sports or any other leisure activities taking all the measures in to consideration (27) (26).
- By 30th April Sweden has vaccinated 30.7% of the population with one dose and 9.7% with two doses (28).

#### Lithuania:

- The rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths per million population in Lithuania was 400.92 and 4.97 respectively (table 2).
- **The entire nation is in lockdown until end of May.** Some exceptions will apply for business and education sectors and also for vaccinated people. From 3rd May, as recommended by the Ministry of Education, students in the final year of secondary education can follow blended learning, and from 10<sup>th</sup> May, similar recommendations will apply for students of pre-secondary education. Restaurants, bars, cafes, and catering facilities are allowed to work between 7:00 and 21:00. Public gatherings are limited to 5 people. **Those who are vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 can participate in private gatherings, outdoor tours in a group of up to 10 individuals. Certain exceptions for vaccinated people are, possibility to arrange private parties with ten vaccinated or recovered individuals (29).**

Figure 7

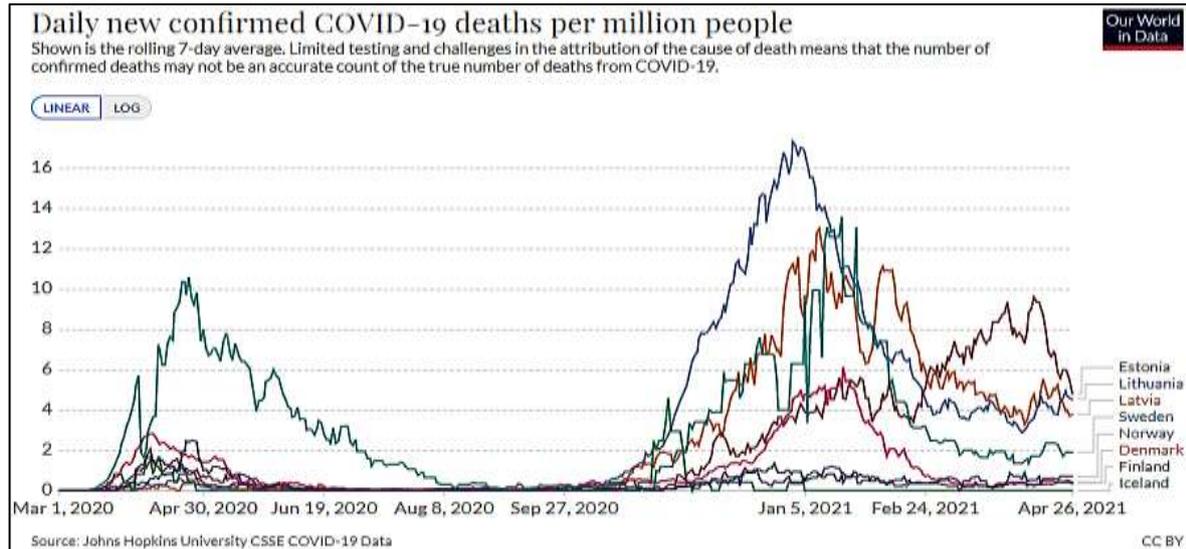
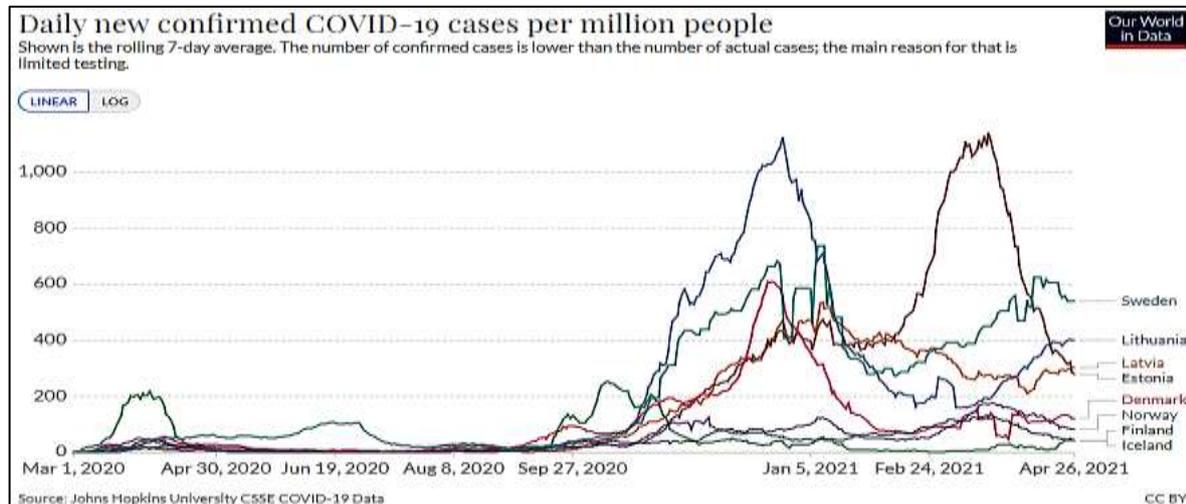


Figure 8



### Northwestern Europe:

#### Netherlands:

- The weekly update on the epidemiological situation in the Netherlands (from 21st to 27th April) shows no significant increase in the number of people who received positive test results for COVID-19 this week (317/100,000 inhabitants) as compared to the previous week (310/100,000 inhabitants).
- **Among other age groups, between 0-12 years the test positivity was high (an increase of 12% compared to the week before).** The number of new COVID-19 hospital admissions and new ICU admissions this week (1661, 374) remains the same as the previous week (1672, 375) (30).
- **Current regulations will apply until 11<sup>th</sup> May** such as no more than two guests (age 13 or above) are allowed per day, reopening day care centers, all schools from primary schools to universities, outdoor dining at restaurants and cafes is allowed from 12:00 to 18:00 along with takeaway and delivery service. Under strict measures non-essential shops are also opened and night curfew is lifted from 28<sup>th</sup> April. Up to 30 people can attend weddings and for funerals the limit is 100. Utilizing public transport is permitted if necessary and until 15<sup>th</sup> May foreign travel is prohibited (31).

**Ireland:**

- Between 26 and 27 April 426 new cases and 10 new deaths were reported in Ireland (32).
- Since April, Ireland has started stepwise reopening. Initially schools and outdoor training and entertainment services were opened. **From May, the country has planned to introduce new public health measures with further relaxation measures through to June (33).** As on 28<sup>th</sup> April, a total of 1,067,378 people have received first dose and 419,665 people received two doses (34).

Figure 9

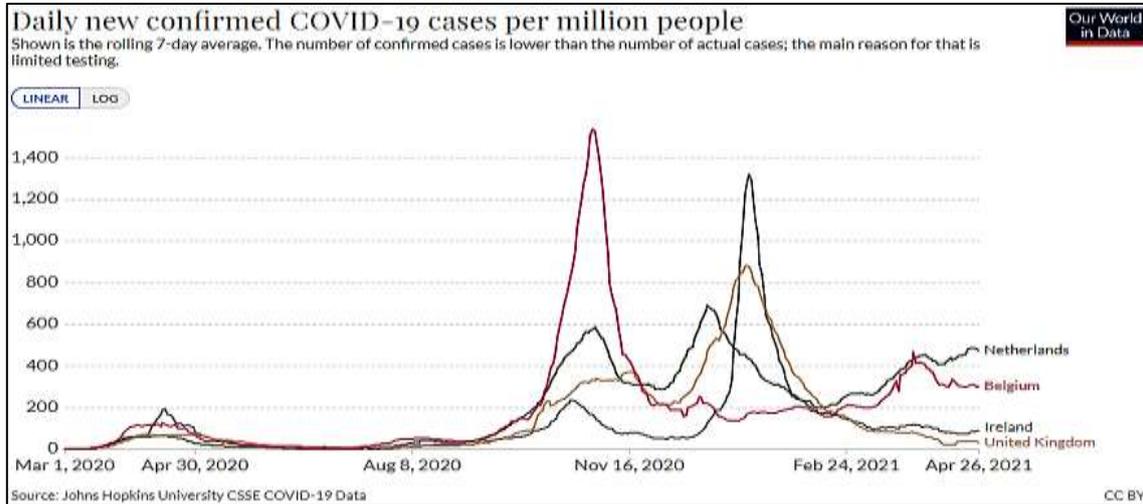
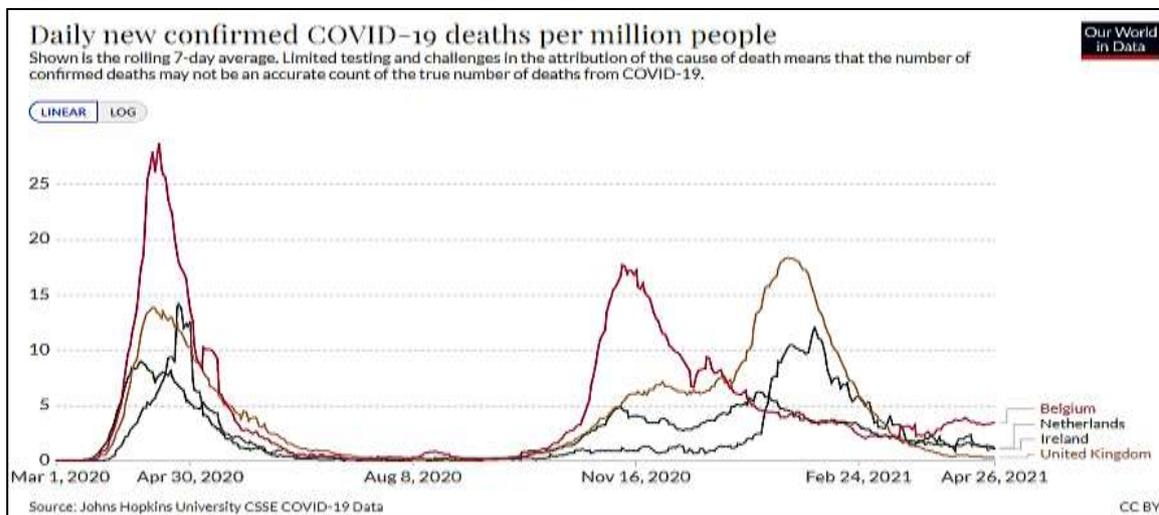


Figure 10



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