

Austria Imposes Full Lockdown and Compulsory Vaccination



Austria is the first EU country to go into full lockdown this season after COVID-19 cases surged. Whereas incidence rates weeks ago were less than 250 cases per 100,000, it now exceeds 1300 per 100,000 and continues on a steep upward trajectory. Hospitals have been overwhelmed with many new COVID-19 patients, and deaths have been rising again, too. The lockdown is initially planned for ten days but may be extended. Austrian Health Minister, Wolfgang Mückstein, added that schools and kindergartens would remain open during the upcoming national lockdown. He also urged wearing FFP2 masks in all enclosed spaces and said that employees could request working from home where possible.

Earlier this week (15 November), Austria imposed a police-enforced lockdown on all unvaccinated individuals age 12 or older. Unvaccinated individuals were ordered to stay home except for a few limited reasons, with officers carrying out spot checks. Since virus cases continued to surge after this measure, the government said it had no choice but to extend it to everyone.

Furthermore, Austria now makes complete COVID-19 vaccination a legal requirement for all that are eligible. With vaccination coverage at 65.6% of the population, Austria's is one of the lowest in the EU. Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg told reporters in Vienna that they plan to impose the national vaccine mandate starting 1 February. Vaccinations in Austria are currently recommended for everyone aged 12 and above but not required.

'We don't want a fifth wave. We don't want a sixth and seventh wave. We don't want to have this discussion next summer', said Schallenberg.

Furthermore, Schallenberg called anti-vaccination activism an 'attack on the health system' and added: 'We have too many political forces in this country that are fighting against this [vaccination] vehemently, massively and publicly. That is irresponsible... And incited by these radical opponents of vaccination, by specious fake news, unfortunately too many of us have not been vaccinated. The consequence is overcrowded intensive care units and enormous human suffering.'

Source: [CNN](#)

Published on : Sat, 20 Nov 2021