



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on November 21, 2021

Austria Enters Nationwide Lockdown, Makes COVID Jobs Mandatory for ALL Starting February

Austria introduced a nationwide lockdown that could last for three weeks in yet another attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19 after the targeted lockdown of the unvaccinated did not bring anticipated results. The government has also ordered all eligible Austrians ages 12 and up to get vaccinated against COVID by February 1, 2022 — or face fines and imprisonment.

The national lockdown is set to start Monday, and will last for 10 days minimum. Depending on the infection dynamics, it could be extended for another 10 days, Austrian Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg announced on Friday, according to Associated Press. The lockdown will last longer for the unvaccinated.



AP Images

Protestors against the COVID vaccine mandate in Vienna, Austria. Sign says "No to vaccine mandate"

The chancellor added that the decision was “painful,” but he had “no other choice” but to make it.

The report noted how Austrian authorities have repeatedly promised they would not impose new restrictions on those who have gotten a vaccine. For example, this past summer, then-Chancellor Sebastian Kurz declared the pandemic was “over” for vaccinated Austrians.

According to a local [media report](#), the government has tightened the existing restrictions while also introducing new measures.

First of all, most businesses deemed “nonessential,” including Christmas markets, restaurants, and most of retail stores have been ordered to close, and cultural events canceled. Austrians are allowed to leave their homes only for a handful of “legitimate” reasons, such as buying groceries, visiting a doctor, getting a COVID vaccine, or exercising.

The country does not plan to close its borders, but visitors will be subject to the same regulations.

The [FF2 masks](#) will be required to wear in all indoor venues.

While kindergartens and schools will remain open “for those who need it,” Austrian Health Minister Wolfgang Mückstein asked parents to keep their children at home if possible.

Authorities also provided that return to distance learning is possible in those cases when the whole school class chooses to stay at home.

Universities not subject to the government regulations will still remain closed for the duration of the lockdown, only offering laboratory and artistic activities in-person.

Employees considered at “high risk” of getting infected with COVID could request the option of working from home where possible.



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First in Europe, with the exception of [the Vatican](#), Austria will require all eligible populations to get fully vaccinated against COVID. While the penalties for violations are still being worked out, according to the [draft](#) of the legislation aimed at regulating the issue, those who refuse to comply with the new rule could face a fine of up to €3,600 (\$4,061) or a four-week imprisonment. Further, those Austrians who fail to receive their booster shots on time will be fined up to €1,450 (\$1,635) or jailed for four weeks.

According to the draft, some categories of public workers will be prioritized to receive vaccines. Among them are healthcare practitioners such as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, midwives, paramedics, and also music therapists, massage therapists, and psychologists.

“We haven’t been able to convince enough people to vaccinate. For too long, I and others have assumed that you can convince people to get vaccinated,” [said](#) Chancellor Schallenberg. He added, “For a long time, the political consensus was not to introduce mandatory vaccination ... but we must look reality in the eyes.”

The chancellor further blasted those “irresponsible” and “radical anti-vaxxers” who spread “fake news” about the vaccines and may cause the country a fifth wave of infections.

The COVID infection rate has recently risen in the Alpine nation, with 14,333 cases logged Friday, according to a government COVID-19 [dashboard](#).

According to [WorldOMeter](#), out of all 1,056,613 COVID-infected Austrians, 895,156 have recovered, and 12,015, or one percent of all infected, died.

To date, roughly two million people out of Austria’s population of nine million have so far refused to get vaccinated against COVID.

The local media [reports](#) that some 38,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Vienna on Saturday to protest the new rules.

[Reportedly](#), the sweeping vaccination mandate makes Austria the first country in Europe, and the fourth in the world, to introduce such a measure. Indonesia, Turkmenistan, and Micronesia [all introduced mandates](#) requiring all adults to get a COVID shot.

A large number of countries, including the United States, Canada, Denmark, Costa Rica, Italy, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and others made COVID shots mandatory for government employers and/or public- and private-sector workers.

Most of the healthcare workers in Australia, Great Britain, France, Greece, and New Zealand are required to get vaccinated against COVID.

Countries across the globe have also made COVID passports a requirement to enter public spaces.

Commenting on the COVID situation in Europe, the World Health Organization [warned](#) last week of a difficult winter on the horizon, and signaled that “This public health emergency is far from being over.”



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