



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 6, 2022

European Countries Expand COVID Mandates

European countries are doubling down on coercive measures to get their populations vaccinated against COVID. On Thursday, France and Italy moved to “p*ss off” the unvaccinated, as French President Emmanuel Macron put it.

France

Once the motherland of fundamental principles of liberal democracy and civil rights, France is moving to a vaccinated-only economy, where only those who are considered fully vaccinated can participate.

On Thursday, in a vote of 214-93, the National Assembly approved [the bill](#) “On strengthening the tools of management of the health crisis and amending the code of public health.” Per its text, the legislation is intended to “protect the population without having to resort to generalized restrictive measures, and in a context where vaccination is the tool for lasting control of the virus.”

Among the measures introduced in the bill is the replacement of the currently used “health passes” with “vaccine passes,” which French have to present in order to visit various public venues, such as cafes, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas, museums, fairs, public seminars and trade shows, and to board interregional public transport.

Under the current rules, “health passes” are issued to people who have either recovered from COVID within the past six months or have been vaccinated. There is another avenue still open under this system: Those who can present a negative PCR or antigen COVID test may be given a 24-hour “health pass.”

The latter option, however, will not be available anymore in the event the new legislation gets approved by the Senate next Tuesday, with Macron’s government set to pass it into law by January 15. As the name suggests, the “vaccine pass” will be issued only to those who have been fully vaccinated against COVID, and also to those who could present a certificate of a recent COVID recovery.

The mandate would cover all citizens age of 12 and older, excluding those with medical exemptions.

President Macron, whose plan was at the core of the bill, said shortly before the vote that he strove to make life difficult for the unvaccinated. [Speaking](#) with *Le Parisien* newspaper in an interview published late Tuesday, Macron stated:

The unvaccinated, I really want to piss them off. And so, we’re going to continue doing so,



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until the end. That's the strategy.

Christophe Castaner, Macron's close advisor, [argued](#) that the measure is justified since 90 percent of all eligible population is already vaccinated, and "are exasperated by the restrictions." That leaves some five million French unjabbed and now on the edge of becoming social pariahs.

Prime Minister Jean Castex [signaled](#) on Thursday the country is ready to move to give their people a fourth dose of the COVID jab, or a second booster, "When the health authorities will give us the go-ahead." Meaning, to maintain their "full-vaccinated" status, the French will have to get as many boosters as the government "recommends."

Italy

On Wednesday, Italy made COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for people age 50 and over, exempting only those who have recently recovered from the virus or who can't take the jab for confirmed medical reasons.

La Repubblica [reports](#) that the Council of Ministers approved the new mandate, which will make those who "stubbornly refuse" to get the shot pay a recurring monthly fine of €100 (\$88.45). That penalty comes in addition to [€600 to €1,500 fines](#) imposed last year for unvaccinated workers.

The measure takes effect on February 15 and will last until at least June 15.

"These decisions were taken to reduce hospitalizations," claimed Health Minister Roberto Speranza during the cabinet's meeting, while noting that two thirds of hospitalized COVID patients are unvaccinated, per the outlet.

Ministers from the right-wing League issued a statement decrying the measure, calling it "without scientific foundation, considering that the absolute majority of those hospitalized with COVID are well over 60," per [Reuters](#).

Prime Minister Mario Draghi's government previously imposed vaccine mandates on healthcare workers, teachers, police, and military. The healthcare workers, first to be mandated to receive a jab, are now required to get a booster, per media [reports](#).

In addition to that, since last September, all Italian workers have been [required](#) to get vaccinated, but were given an option to take tests to prove that they aren't infected before entering their job sites. Wednesday's order, however, will nullify that option for those who are 50 and older.

Elsewhere in Europe

The idea of forceful mandatory medical treatment is gaining momentum in the Old World, which seems to have failed to learn from its history's [darkest pages](#).

[Austria](#) is set to enact mandatory vaccinations on February 1 for everyone age 14 and above. Those who refuse to get vaccinated may face a [fine](#) of up to €3,600 (\$4,070), or jail time, if unable to pay. Those who have gotten their second jab will be [considered](#) fully immunized for seven months and could get their booster shot after four months after completing the initial vax series. Those who refuse to get boosted will be fined up to €1,300 (\$1,469).

[Germany](#) is closely considering voting on a similar near-universal mandate as early as February, with a measure enjoying support of Chancellor Olaf Scholz and majority of the nation's political parties.

[Greece](#) has announced mandatory jabs for all citizens who are 60 and older, threatening those who



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don't get the jab with a recurring monthly fine of €100 (\$113), starting on January 16.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen [implied](#) in November that it was time for the bloc to "think about mandatory [COVID] vaccination."

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