



Round Table Report

19 March 2021

For restricted use

This report summarizes the ECDC daily roundtable discussion and provides update on threats detected and monitored by Epidemic Intelligence.

Active threats

COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – multi-country (world) – 2019-2021

Update: Since the previous RT report published on 18 March 2021 and as of 19 March 2021, 166 818 new cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) and 2 293 new deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA.

New cases have been reported from EU/EEA. The five countries reporting most new cases are: France (34 998), Poland (27 274), Italy (24 901), Germany (17 482) and Hungary (10 759).

New deaths have been reported from EU/EEA. The five countries reporting most new deaths are: Italy (423), Poland (356), France (269), Germany (226) and Czechia (214).

Summary: Since 31 December 2019 and as of 19 March 2021, 24 718 235 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported in the EU/EEA, including 586 540 deaths.

EU/EEA cases:

As of 19 March 2021, 24 718 235 cases have been reported in the EU/EEA: France (4 181 607), Italy (3 306 711), Spain (3 212 332), Germany (2 629 750), Poland (1 984 248), Czechia (1 449 696), Netherlands (1 178 123), Romania (881 159), Belgium (822 707), Portugal (816 055), Sweden (738 537), Hungary (549 839), Austria (501 389), Slovakia (344 470), Bulgaria (295 777), Croatia (254 507), Greece (230 317), Ireland (228 796), Denmark (223 415), Lithuania (207 469), Slovenia (203 545), Latvia (95 902), Estonia (92 780), Norway (83 519), Finland (69 497), Luxembourg (58 674), Cyprus (41 111), Malta (27 515), Iceland (6 091) and Liechtenstein (2 697).

EU/EEA deaths: As of 19 March 2021, 586 540 deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA: Italy (103 855), France (91 706), Germany (74 358), Spain (72 910), Poland (48 388), Czechia (24 331), Belgium (22 624), Romania (21 877), Hungary (17 841), Portugal (16 743), Netherlands (16 178), Sweden (13 236), Bulgaria (11 817), Slovakia (8 814), Austria (8 780), Greece (7 297), Croatia (5 726), Ireland (4 566), Slovenia (4 239), Lithuania (3 442), Denmark (2 397), Latvia (1 801), Finland (805), Estonia (769), Luxembourg (705), Norway (648), Malta (363), Cyprus (241), Liechtenstein (54) and Iceland (29).

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EU:

As of 19 March 2021, 24 625 928 cases and 585 809 deaths have been reported in the EU.

Other News

On 18 March 2021, EMA's Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC), [concluded](#) its preliminary review of a signal of blood clots in people vaccinated with AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine. PRAC confirmed that:

- the benefits of the vaccine in combating the still widespread threat of COVID-19 (which itself results in clotting problems and can be fatal) continue to outweigh the risk of side effects;

- the vaccine is not associated with an increase in the overall risk of blood clots (thromboembolic events) in those who receive it;

- there is no evidence of a problem related to specific batches of the vaccine or to particular manufacturing sites; but

- the vaccine may be associated with very rare cases of blood clots associated with thrombocytopenia, i.e. low levels of blood platelets (elements in the blood that help it to clot) with or without bleeding, including rare cases of clots in the vessels draining blood from the brain (cerebral venous sinus thrombosis).

Steps are already being taken to update the product information for the vaccine to include more information on these risks. A causal link with the vaccine is not proven, but is possible and EMA will undertake further analysis.

According to media reports quoting authorities, the following countries plan to restart Astra Zeneca's COVID-19 vaccine: [Bulgaria](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Portugal](#), [Italy](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Spain](#), [the Netherlands](#), [Cyprus](#) and [Slovenia](#). However, [Norway](#), [Sweden](#) and [Denmark](#) will continue their suspension until further notice.

On 17 March 2021 the European Commission (EC) proposed the creation of a [Digital Green Certificate](#) to ensure safe free movement inside the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic. This certificate will cover three types of certificates: a vaccination certificate against COVID-19; a test certificate (NAAT/RT-PCR or antigen test); and a certificate of recovery from COVID-19. It will be available to EU citizens and their family members, regardless of their nationality, free of charge, in digital or paper format, and will be valid in all EU Member States and open for Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC):

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 constitutes a PHEIC. On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of the [WHO](#) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The [third](#), [fourth](#), [fifth](#) and [sixth](#) International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meeting for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, and 14 January 2021, respectively. The committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

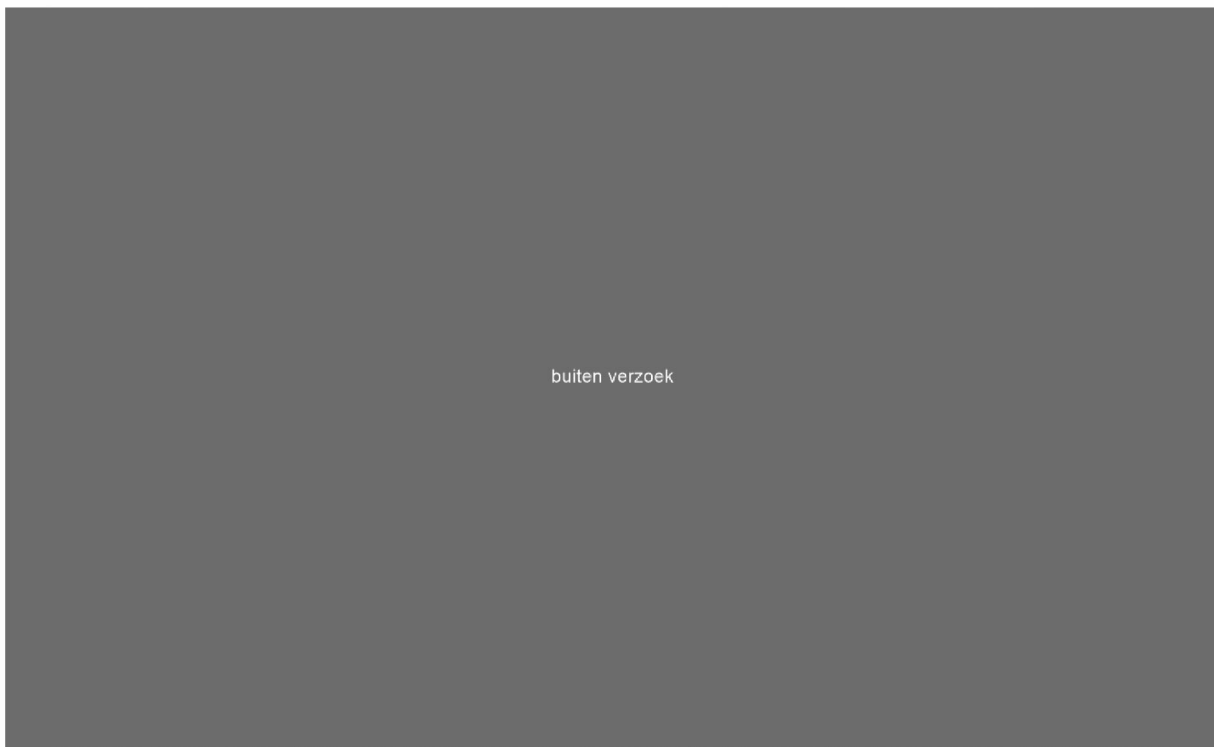
Assessment: For the last available risk assessment, please visit [ECDC's dedicated webpage](#).

Actions: ECDC has published the 14th update of its [rapid risk assessment](#). A [dashboard](#) with the latest updates is available on ECDC's website. ECDC's [rapid risk assessment](#) on the risk related to the spread of new SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern in the EU/EEA was published on 29 December 2020, and a [first update](#) published on 21 January 2021.

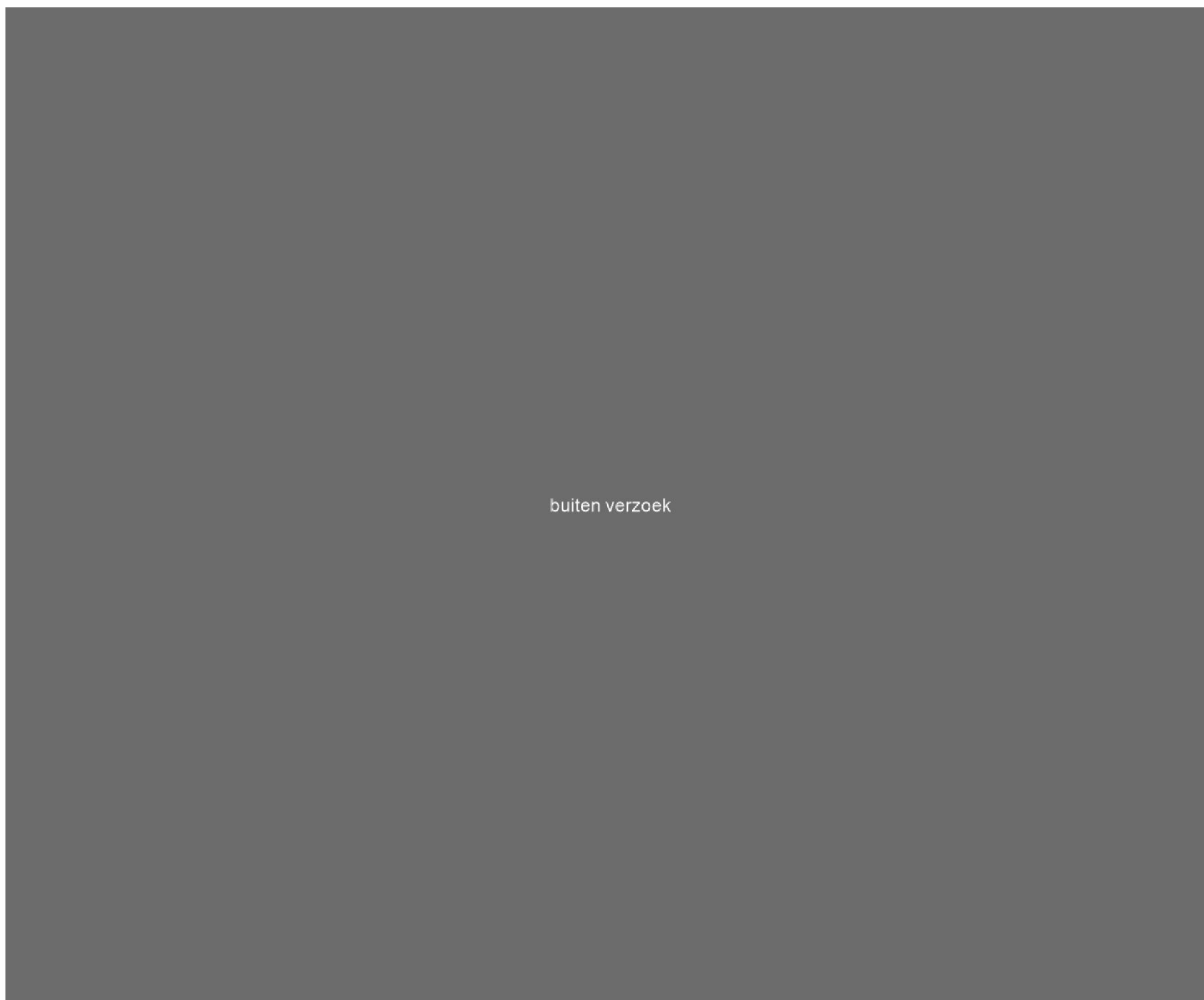
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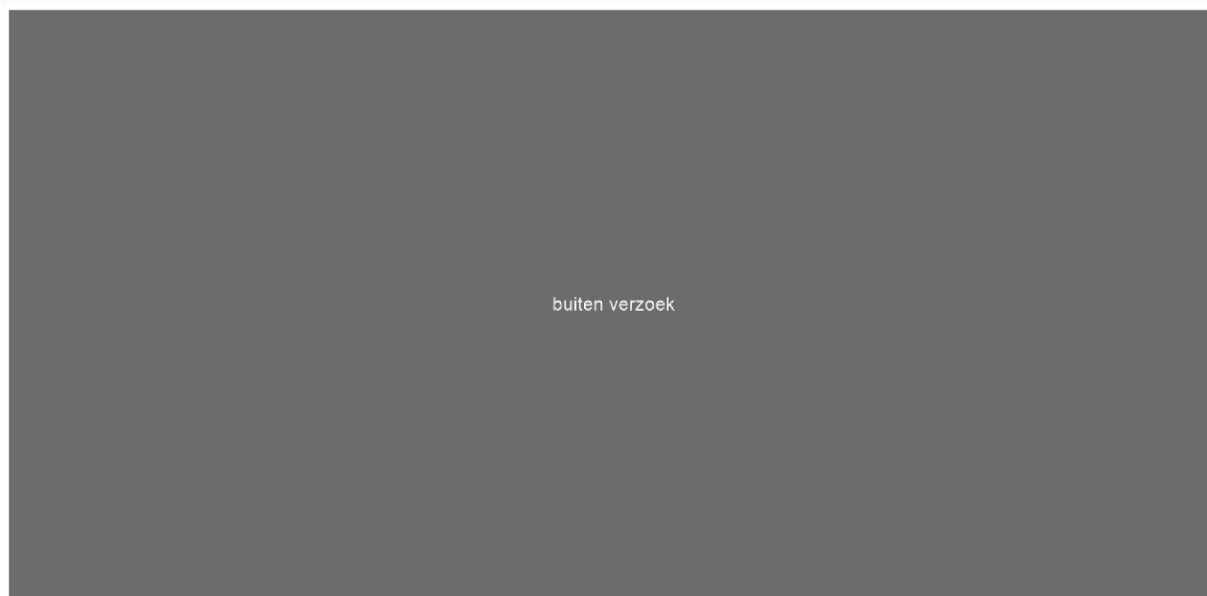
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The COVID-19 pandemic affected healthcare seeking behaviours, healthcare provision, and testing practices and capacities in countries and areas of the European Region, which negatively impacted on the collection of influenza epidemiologic and virologic data from March 2020. Surveillance improved over the course of the 2020-2021 season and although there was a small decrease in the number of samples tested (~20%) as compared with previous seasons, there was remarkable decrease (>99%) in the number of influenza infections detected, similar to patterns usually observed during interseasonal periods.

Summary:
2020-2021 season overview

For the Region as a whole, influenza activity has been at baseline level since the start of the season.

In total, 727 specimens have tested positive for influenza viruses, 35 from sentinel sources and 692 from non-sentinel sources, with type A (both subtypes) and type B (both lineages) viruses being detected.

Since the start of the 2020-21 surveillance season, few hospitalized laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported: 11 from ICUs (all infected with type A viruses); 9 (all type A viruses) in wards outside ICUs; and 18 from severe acute respiratory infection (SARI)-based surveillance (17 infected with type A viruses and 1 with type B).

Assessment:

Despite widespread and regular testing for influenza, reported influenza activity remains at a very low level. The start of the influenza season is usually observed at this point of the year, so it is unusual for this season that there is still very low influenza activity reported. This is likely due to the impact of the various public health and social measures implemented to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has also affected healthcare-seeking behaviour, healthcare provision, and testing practices and capacities in countries and areas of the European Region and this

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has had a negative impact on the reporting of influenza epidemiological and virological data during the 2020–2021 season.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the influenza data we present will need to be interpreted with caution, notably in terms of seasonal patterns.

Action: ECDC and WHO monitor influenza activity in the WHO European Region between week 40–2020 and week 20–2021. They publish their weekly report on the [Flu News Europe](#) website.

Expert deployment

One EPIET fellow has been deployed in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, until 21 March 2021 to work with GOARN on the Go.Data implementation to strengthen the COVID-19 surveillance and response.

The Round Table Report contains information that could be considered sensitive or is still under verification. Its distribution is restricted to intended users only.

Participants

Senior Management: -

EI and Response Head of Section: -

Duty Officers:

24/7: -

Threat Detection: -

Rapid Assessment and Outbreaks: -

Communication: -

Representative of:

Epidemic Intelligence: -

Response: -

Vaccine Preventable Diseases: -

Emerging and Vector-borne Diseases: -

Food and Water-borne Diseases: -

Influenza: -

Microbiology Coordination: -