



**Fédération Européenne
des Médecins Salariés**
European Federation
of Salaried Doctors

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FALL REPORT AUSTRIA – FEMS & AEMH SEPTEMBER 2021

Covid-19 situation in Austria

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Tests performed so far: 78.261.780

Cases confirmed overall: 693.909

Current active cases: 23.240

In hospital: 552

Intensive care unit: 157

Persons recovered: 660.073

Confirmed deaths: 10.596

Vaccinations: 62,07% with at least once dose, 58,75% fully vaccinated

Overview of current measures

With vaccinations becoming more readily available but the challenge of a potential fourth wave looming, Austria has gone through a number of adaptations to its rules and regulations concerning COVID-19.

Austria follows a 3-G-rule (“geimpft, getestet, genesen” – “vaccinated, tested or recovered”) in the following areas: gastronomy, close contact services, hotels and other accommodations, leisure facilities (e.g. dance schools, zoos), cultural establishments (with the exception of museums, libraries and archives), non-public sports facilities, meetings (starting at more than 100 people), trade and consumer fairs, congresses, coaches and excursion boats. In addition, the 3G rule can further apply in specific areas and for specific persons, such as care facilities, nursing homes, hospitals or health services. A 2-G-rule (vaccinated or tested) is in place for the night gastronomy.

Contact tracing is in place for persons remaining for more than 15 minutes in gastronomy and accommodation businesses, non-public sports and leisure facilities as well as gatherings with more than 100 people.

Mask mandates were lifted in all areas in which the 3-G-rule applies, but remain in place in retirement and nursing homes as well as health care facilities and in the following enclosed spaces: public transport, cabs, cable cars and cog railways, customer areas of retail, pharmacies, banks, post offices and administrative authorities and courts.

Stricter measures may be in place in certain regions, depending on the situation. Most recently, a strengthening of measures will also depend on the vaccination rate in regions.

In the area of travel, travellers from low-risk areas are required to provide proof of 3-G (vaccination, recovery or a negative test), for example via the European “green pass”. Those unable to do so have to register and do a test within 24 hours of arrival. Travellers from regions with variants are generally refused entry, with certain exceptions (business travel, EU-residency, etc.). All other travellers must provide proof of 3-G, register, and remain in quarantine for 10 days, with some exceptions (business travel, EU-residency, etc.).

Vaccinations

Austria currently averages around 11.000 vaccinations a day. 58,75% of the population is fully immunized, with a further 3,32% having received a first dose. Vaccinations are currently available for all persons over 12.

While a majority of the eligible population is now vaccinated, the Austrian government and regional authorities are aiming at a higher rate, with a number of easily accessible vaccination offers, such as vaccinations (by licensed physicians) in some supermarkets, vaccination buses and pop-up vaccination centres.

Way ahead

A number of options are currently planned in order to ensure that the fall and winter will not lead to a significant rise in hospitalizations, deaths and a potential breakdown of the health care services. These include but are not limited to potentially making tests chargeable or the implementation of a 1-G rule for certain locations (access only for vaccinated persons).

Legislative developments

In June, the Austrian parliament decided on an amendment to the Austrian Medical Act, which was heavily criticized by the Austrian Medical Chamber for its egregious changes to the medical training regulations. Starting in January 2023, the competencies concerning medical training and quality control, which have up until now been performed by the Austrian Medical Chamber, would from then on be under the purview of regional, non-medical, authorities. Instead of doctors, civil servants will decide how many doctors will be trained and in which locations. This would lead to a de-centralized system developed by non-medical staff instead of a centrally organized approach developed by physicians and experts. The Austrian Medical Chamber condemns this approach and discussions with the ministry and the local authorities are currently ongoing.

In a further blow to doctor's rights, a controversial regulation regarding the working times of hospital physicians has been extended for another seven years. The regulation, which was originally in place until 30 June and was a compromise between physicians and the legislature, stipulates that doctors working in hospitals may not work longer than 48 hours per week, unless they opt-out of this system and there exists a collective agreement at company-level. Until June 2025, the maximum hours per week for doctors who have opted out will remain at 55. From 2025 to 2028, the maximum will be reduced to 52 hours per week. The government argued that the regulation, which was highly criticised by the opposition parties and the Austrian Medical Chamber, is necessary as there is a significant lack of doctors in the existing care structures and the fact that the workload is only expected to rise given the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Austrian Medical Chamber criticized that instead of increasing working hours, the solution to a lack of personnel lies in ensuring that there are enough young doctors.