Global Governmental Response to COVID-19 in accordance to WHO guidelines

Actions taken by the Republic of Austria to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as of May 29, 2021.

Omar S. Abdellatif, Ali Behbehani, Mauricio Landin
Our Organization

The UN Compliance Research Group is a global organization which specializes in monitoring the work of the United Nations (UN). Through our professional team of academics, scholars, researchers and students we aim to serve as the world's leading independent source of information on members' compliance to UN resolutions and guidelines. Our scope of activity is broad, including assessing the compliance of member states to UN resolutions and plan of actions, adherence to judgments of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and commitments made at UN pledging conferences. We're proud to present the international community and global governments with our native research findings on states’ annual compliance with the commitments of the UN and its affiliated agencies. Our goal as world citizens is to foster a global change towards a sustainable future; one which starts with ensuring that the words of delegates are transformed into action and that UN initiatives don’t remain ink on paper. Hence, we offer policy analysis and provide advice on fostering accountability and transparency in UN governance as well as tracing the connection between the UN policy-makers and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Yet, we aim to adopt a neutral path and do not engage in advocacy for issues or actions taken by the UN or member states. Acting as such, for the sake of transparency. The UN Compliance Research Group dedicates all its effort to inform the public and scholars about the issues and agenda of the UN and its affiliated agencies.
Purpose

The International Health Regulations (2005) are legally binding on 196 States Parties, including all WHO Member States. The IHR aims to keep the world informed about public health risks, through committing all signatories to cooperate together in combating any future “illness or medical condition, irrespective of origin or source, that presents or could present significant harm to humans.” Under IHR, countries agreed to strengthen their public health capacities and notify the WHO of any such illness in their populations. The WHO would be the centralized body for all countries facing a health threat, with the power to declare a “public health emergency of international concern,” issue recommendations, and work with countries to tackle a crisis.

Although, with the sudden and rapid spread of COVID-19 in the world, many countries varied in implementing the WHO guidelines and health recommendations. While some countries followed the WHO guidelines, others imposed travel restrictions against the WHO’s recommendations. Some refused to share their data with the organization. Others banned the export of medical equipment, even in the face of global shortages. The UN Compliance Research group will focus during the current cycle on analyzing the compliance of the WHO member states to the organization’s guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.
### School/educational institutions:

- Decision makers should consider the following if they decide to open or close schools: Current understanding about COVID-19 transmission and severity in children, Local situation and epidemiology of COVID-19 where the school(s) are located, School setting and ability to maintain COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
- Recommended to promote: Hygiene and environmental cleaning to limit exposure, Screening and management of sick students, teachers and other school staff, Communication with parents and students, Physical distancing at school, Tele-schooling and distance learning.

### Workplaces and institutions:

- Partial closure of workplaces as of early March.
- Hand hygiene: Regular and thorough handwashing, Hand hygiene stations.
- Respiratory hygiene: Promote respiratory etiquette, Develop a policy on wearing a mask or a face covering.
- Physical distancing: less people, implementing shifts.
- Reduce and manage work-related travels.
- Regular environmental cleaning and disinfection.
- Risk communication, training, and education: Provide posters, videos, and electronic message boards.
- Management of people with COVID-19 or their contacts: introduce thermal screening.
- Take more measures when it comes to jobs at medium and high risk.

### Public events:

- Restriction to host gatherings or events that exceed a large number of individuals. ex) sport games, religious functions, restaurants, etc.
- Planning phase: Liaison with all relevant stakeholders, Development of a preparedness and response plan, Assessment of capacities and resources.
- Operational phase: Modifications of the event, Risk communication, Surveillance of participants, aimed at detecting and managing individuals developing symptoms during the event.
- Post-event phase: Liaison between event organizers and health authorities.

### Public Transport:

- Reduce crowding, limit access to, or close public spaces, restaurants, sporting events, 24 sports clubs, entertainment venues, places of worship, 25 or venues with limited ventilation.
- Encourage physical distancing in public places and transportation.
- Reduce mixing between individuals and households.
- Communicate to recommend wearing masks in public.
**WHO Guidelines and Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Public Information Campaign:</strong></th>
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</table>
|  ● Communicate risk clearly with information on how to protect oneself and others.  
  ● Simplify messages, encourage sharing of information.  
  ● Engage with communities in decision-making and to strengthen engagement for public health measures.  
  ● Identify local networks and engage communities, businesses, religious leaders, and local influencers. |  ● Reduction in Travel to prevent the spread of COVID-19.  
  ● International travel should not occur unless in an emergency.  
  ● Recommended to adhere to safety measures while travelling.  
  ● Establish effective contingency plans and arrangements for responding a Public Health Emergency. |  ● Set up testing centers in large venues or in check points.  
  ● Require travellers to self-quarantine after being tested.  
  ● Molecular (e.g. PCR) testing of respiratory tract samples is the recommended method for the identification and laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 cases.  
  ● To inform WHO policy on the use of immunodiagnostic rapid tests for COVID-19. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Contact Tracing:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lockdown/Curfew:</strong></th>
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</table>
|  ● Set up relational databases linking lists of contacts to line lists of cases.  
  ● Allow for tailored case investigation forms, contact listing forms, and contact follow-up forms to be set up.  
  ● Used for self-checking and self-reporting of signs and symptoms by people through mobile phone apps or SMS technology. |  ● Implementation of curfew hours.  
  ● Require citizens to stay in home unless of an emergency.  
  ● Monitor locations to abide by the curfew hours. |  ● Implementation of curfew hours.  
  ● Require citizens to stay in home unless of an emergency.  
  ● Monitor locations to abide by the curfew hours. |
This report draws on the methodology developed by the G8 Research Group, which has been monitoring G7/8 compliance since 1996 (the International Organisations Research Institute at the Higher School of Economics (IORI HSE) joined this multi-year project in 2005, and Bond University participated in 2014). The use of this methodology builds cross-institutional and cross-member consistency and also allows compatibility with compliance assessments of other institutions. The methodology uses a scale from −1 to +1, where +1 indicates full compliance with the stated commitment, −1 indicates a failure to comply or action taken that is directly opposite to the stated instruments or goal of the commitment, and 0 indicates partial compliance or work in progress, such as initiatives that have been launched but are not yet near completion and whose full results can therefore not be assessed. Each member assessed receives a score of −1, 0 or +1 for each commitment. For convenience, the scores in the tables have been converted to percentages, where −1 equals 0 percent and +1 equals 100 percent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>State does not comply with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), nor does it comply with any of the World Health Organization's guidelines and recommendations to curb the spread of the Coronavirus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>State complies with the IHR and partially complies with the WHO recommendations on combating the Coronavirus, through implementing policies and actions which adhere to at least two commitments of the WHO guidelines on curbing the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>State fully complies with the IHR and the WHO guidelines on combating the Coronavirus, through implementing policies and actions which adhere to all nine areas of the WHO guidelines on curbing the pandemic.</td>
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</table>
**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No Compliance</th>
<th>Partial Compliance</th>
<th>Full Compliance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>+1</td>
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</table>

*Austria complied with the International Health Regulations (IHR) and fully complied with the World Health Organization’s guidelines and recommendations on curbing the Coronavirus (COVID-19), through implementing complying policies and actions in all nine commitment features. Thus, Austria receives a compliance score of +1.*
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Austria

Lockdown/ Curfew

❖ On 11 March 2020, all federal museums, libraries, cultural and tourist sites shut to curb the COVID-19 outbreak.
❖ On 16 March 2020, the federal government announced the closure of all non-essential shops, as well as restaurants, bars and cafes. The federal government also announced a nationwide curfew: leaving the house is only permitted for the following purposes: 1) aiding people in urgent need; 2) providing care and support to people in need; 3) necessary daily needs incl. grocery shopping and funerals if only a small number of people attend; 4) work engagements and activities that cannot be delayed or carried out from home and if a distance of one meter can be kept (unless special protective equipment is available); 5) going outside alone or with persons living in the same household (keeping a distance of at least one meter).
❖ On 19 March 2020, opening hours for essential shops (e.g. supermarkets) were limited to 7pm and playgrounds and parks were partially closed (with regional differences).
❖ On 1 April 2020, the government announced that hotel tourism is strictly prohibited.
❖ On 14 April 2020, local restrictions eased to non-essential shops can reopen with social distancing in place and wearing of face masks. Other measures remain.
❖ On 15 May 2020, cafes and restaurants permitted to partially re-open with limited hours.
❖ On 29 May 2020, hotels and recreational facilities reopened nationwide with precautionary measures required.
❖ On 21 September 2020, restaurants and bars must limit tables to ten, can only serve seated customers and must close by 01:00 daily. Some regions with a wider COVID-19 outbreaks must shut restaurants by 22:00.
❖ On 3 November 2020, the federal government introduces a nationwide curfew from 20:00-06:00 daily. Until the end of November at least. Cafes, bars and restaurants are closed but for delivery and take-away.
❖ On 17 November 2020, nationwide lockdown implemented. All non-essential businesses close. Essential businesses to operate only between 06:00 to 19:00. People may only leave their home for essential reasons.
❖ On 7 December 2020, the 20:00-06:00 daily curfew is extended, residents may only leave home for limited essential purposes during this time. Non-essential retail may reopen but must close by 19:00. Cultural sites such as museums and libraries, and personal care services, including hairdressers, are permitted to reopen. Fitness and leisure facilities as well as entertainment venues must remain closed. Restaurants, bars, and cafes are to remain closed, except for takeaway and delivery services. All businesses and services permitted to reopen must adhere to strict hygiene and social distancing requirements. Face masks are mandatory in all enclosed public spaces and outdoor public spaces where social distancing cannot be maintained.
❖ On 26 December 2020, 24 hours curfew introduced residents may only leave their homes for essential reasons. Non-essential business (personal care services, cultural site, retailer) must close.
❖ As of 6 January 2021, restrictions to stay until 8 February at least.
❖ On 7 February 2021, restrictions to remain.
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Austria

Lockdown/ Curfew

❖ On 8 February 2021, curfew changed to 20:00-06:00. Non-essential retail stores allowed to reopen.
❖ As of 8 March 2021, curfew remains nonessential retailers can open from 06:00-19:00 with social distancing protocols in place.
❖ On 23 March 2021, cafes, restaurants and bars are to remain closed indefinitely. Other restrictions remain.
❖ On 1 April 2021, lockdown placed in Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland until 11 April 2021 (Burgenland and Lower Austria originally scheduled until 6 April 2021 but was changed to the 11th of April). During this time in the areas non-essential business close, curfew will be replaced with general restriction on movement limiting it to residents only allowed to leave their homes for essential reasons. Elsewhere in the country other restrictions remain.
❖ On 6 April 2021, extension on lockdown of Burgenland, Lower Austria and Vienna. No change in regulations in these areas and nationwide. Until 18 April 2021.
❖ On 14 April 2021, authorities maintain regulations in Lower Austria until 2 May 2021.
❖ On 18 April 2021, Burgenland has the same restrictions as the rest of the nation. Curfew of 20:00-06:00, residents may only leave their home for limited purposes. Retail stores can open between 06:00-19:00 with social distancing protocols in place.
❖ On 19 May 2021, Austria announced the reopening of restaurants, cafes, bars, hotels, sports and cultural facilities. A maximum of ten people is allowed per table at outdoor restaurants and four people per table when indoors. Gyms reopened at a lower capacity.
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Austria

Domestic/International Travel

- On 29 January 2020, Austrian Airlines suspends flights to mainland China.
- On 4 February 2020, Austrian Airline flights to China remain canceled until 29 February.
- On 23 February 2020, Austria halts all trains to and from Italy.
- On 10 March 2020, travel to and from Italy is banned. Exemptions are made for those who can self isolate for 14 days, have a medical certificate proving they aren’t infected or are travelling through Austria without stop.
- On 13 March 2020, flights to France, Spain and Switzerland are suspended until further notice.
- On 17 March 2020, all citizens abroad were asked to return to Austria. As of this date, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has organised different return flights for Austrians. Incoming nationals were urged to stay in home-quarantine for 14 days. Airports closed for domestic flights and most international flights were cancelled. Freight flights still operate. Foreign travellers from outside the Schengen area were prohibited from entering Austria until further notice.
- As of 30 March 2020, with few humanitarian exceptions much of the country's land borders with Hungary, the Czech Republic, Germany, Switzerland and Italy were blocked.
- On 10 April 2020, Czechia and Slovakia now require people entering to provide a medical certificate to prove they are not infected.
- On 15 June 2020, borders with Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary fully reopened. Also, quarantine is no longer required when entering Austria from countries that have a respective agreement with Austria. As of June 15, Austria also opens its borders to 31 European countries, except to Sweden, Portugal and the United Kingdom (UK).
- On 28 June 2020, travel warning to North Rhine-Westphalia removed. Due to increasing COVID-19 infection rates in the Western Balkans, the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued travel warnings for the region.
- As of 1 July 2020, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia were classified by the highest danger level of six.
- On 10 August 2020, all travellers returning from Spain must present a negative COVID-19 test upon arrival.
- On 16 October 2020, Kuchi (Salzburg) goes on lockdown, entry and exit is limited to essential workers and deliveries.
- On 11 December 2020, train connections between Austria and Italy are restricted due to COVID-19 surge.
- As of 17 December 2020, those arriving from a travel warning country must undergo a 10 day quarantine and present a negative PCR test certificate. Non-EEA/Schengen/UK nationals are banned from entering Austria except nationals from countries with controlled virus outbreak.
- On 28 December 2020, authorities require all incoming travelers to fill out a Pre-Travel-Clearance form.
- On 23 January 2021, all flights to Brazil, UK and South Africa are banned until 8 February 2021.

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Austria

Domestic/ International Travel

On 10 February 2021, travellers incoming from countries with large COVID-19 outbreak must provide a negative COVID-19 test taken 72 hours prior to the arrival. All arriving individuals must quarantine for 10 days after five days a second COVID-19 test can be taken and self-isolation can end. Authorities require travelers to fill a Pre-Travel-Clearance form. All people leaving Tyrol are required to show a negative covid test. Extension of previous travel bans. Suspension of flights to Brazil, South Africa and UK is extended until 22 February 2021.

As of 22 February 2021, flights suspension to Brazil, South Africa and UK is extended until further notice. All countries except Australia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea and Vatican City are classified by Austria as risk areas.

On 8 March 2021, authorities extend ban on flights from Brazil, South Africa and UK until 21 March 2021. Other restrictions for entry remain.

On 21 March 2021, extension of ban of flights from Brazil and South Africa, ban on UK flights is lifted.

On 5 April 2021, ban on flights to Brazil and South Africa extended until April 18. Travel is permitted but only allowed to EEA countries and some Schengen members. Entry regulations of February 10 remain.

On 30 April 2021, ban on entry to all travelers from India, extension of ban from Brazil and South Africa until 19 May 2021. Travel to Austria is permitted from EEA-associated countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and South Korea. Exceptions are in place for nationals and residents of the permitted countries arriving from third countries, as well as for health workers, freight workers, diplomats, individuals in transit, and those traveling for urgent or essential reasons. Those entering Austria must follow rules placed on 10 February 2021.

Educational Institutions

On 16 March 2020, the Austrian government announced the closure of all schools (K-12) and higher education institutes (universities, colleges, research centers) until a further notice. Universities were directed to operate remotely.

On 4 May 2020, Austrian schools reopen for graduating classes in-person instruction.

On 18 May 2020, students of all levels return to schools. Partial reopening of in-person instruction in universities begin, through a hybrid system.

On 14 September 2020, face masks made compulsory in all schools and universities. In-person instruction resumes with the start of the new academic year.

On 3 November 2020, secondary schools and universities switch to distance learning. Kindergarten and primary schools remain open.

On 17 November 2020, primary schools go to distance learning. Schools are open in case parents cannot take care of their children during working hours.

On 7 December 2020, compulsory education facilities will resume in-person teaching.

On 8 February 2021, schools reopen for in-person instruction. Schools in the eastern states (Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria) remain online.

As of 21 February 2021, the government of Austria has announced that testing will be conducted twice a week to make sure students are completely safe and COVID-19 free.
### Public Events

- **On 10 March 2020**, Austria limited all outdoor events to a maximum of 500 people and indoor events to 100 people.
- **On 15 March 2020**, a ban was imposed by the federal government on all public gatherings of more than 5 people.
- **On 1 April 2020**, the government announced that it is mandatory to wear a mask in supermarkets and social distancing is necessary.
- **On 24 July 2020**, face masks made compulsory in shops, banks and post offices.
- **On 14 September 2020**, face masks made compulsory in all public spaces.
- **On 14 September 2020**, events without seating are limited to 100 people and 50 people when indoors. Events with seating can hold 3,000 people outdoors and 1,500 indoors.
- **On 21 September 2020**, indoor gatherings limited to ten people, outdoor gatherings limited to 100 people, events with seats can have 3,000 people outdoors and 1,500 people indoors.
- **On 23 October 2020**, gatherings at home are limited to six people indoors and 12 outdoors. Professional events are limited to 1,500 people outdoors and 1,000 indoors.
- **On 7 December 2020**, gatherings of six adults and six children are allowed for up to two hours during non-curfew hours. Birthdays and weddings are prohibited; funerals may take place with 50 participants maximum.
- **On 8 February 2021**, during non-curfew hours people from two different households are permitted to meet.
- **As of 12 April 2021**, a two meters distance is required between members of different households.
- **On 19 May 2021**, cultural and sports events are permitted with a maximum of 3,000 spectators outdoors and 1,500 indoors with masks and social distancing.

### Public Transportation

- **On 14 April 2020**, face masks made compulsory in public transport. Wiener Linien the operator of public transport in Vienna reduced operating capacity, using the weekend timetable throughout all days of the week.
- **On 5 February 2021**, FFP2 masks or an equivalent are required onboard all transports. Until further notice.
- **As of 13 March 2021**, Austria has announced public transport to be operating at full capacity and that masks are still required.

### Workplace and Institutions

- **On 1 April 2020**, high risk populous must work from home or will be placed on leave.
- **As of 5 May 2020**, the government announced that only essential workplaces are allowed to resume operation while non-essential workplaces are to remain closed.
- **As of 8 May 2020**, Austria announced that workplaces are required to take temperature checks for employers entering the building.
- **As of 29 July 2020**, the government of Austria announced that workplaces must reduce daily working hours.
- **On 14 November 2020**, Chancellor Kurz announced that working from home should occur whenever possible.
- **As of 1 February 2021**, Austria has announced that all workers are allowed to return to their workplace and operate at normal capacity.
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Austria

Testing Framework

❖ As of February 2020, the Austrian government has:
   ➔ Established a hotline which initiates further steps such as home visits and testing to suspected cases.
   ➔ Conducted testing at home. Some drive-through stations have also been implemented.
   ➔ Conducted random sample tests. In early April, 2,000 randomly selected people have been tested. The random tests were conducted by the SORA Institute who contacted 2,000 randomly selected candidates in regions affected by the virus; 1544 of the candidates were tested.

❖ As of 3 March 2020, testing capacity has been extended from a few hundred tests per day at the end of February to up to 6,000 tests per day at the end of March. To increase testing capacity tests are evaluated in different laboratories. By March 30, more than 40 laboratories provided analyses of COVID-19 tests. The target is to increase testing capacity up to 15,000 tests per day.

❖ On 16 April 2020, the Minister of Health announced plans to test all personnel and inhabitants in the nation's retirement and nursing homes, as part of an increase and targeting in their testing strategy. Austria aimed to test around 130,000 people in 918 retirement and care facilities. As of April 11, Austria had already run 140,000 tests within the genera.

❖ On 19 November 2020, Austrian health authorities began the rollout of antigen tests in pharmacies nationwide. The tests will cost between €25 and €40 with a pre-appointment being necessary. The person taking the test must be symptom free.

❖ On 4 December 2020, Austria launched a voluntary mass COVID-19 testing campaign in lead up to the holiday season. Ten million testing kits have been ordered for the initiative and two thousand army recruits have been mobilised to staff the testing centers in Vienna alone.

❖ On 23 February 2021, Austria announced it has conducted more than three million COVID-19 tests within the past 7 days. 1.5 million tests were conducted at schools. Students were required to undergo twice-weekly tests as they return to campus. The Health Minister Chief Medical Officer, Katharina Reich announced an optimistic plan for the ministry to test between 60-70% of the population twice a week for COVID-19.

❖ On 1 March 2021, the Austrian Health Authorities allocated up to five “living-room” antigen tests to every person, which could be performed at home.

❖ As of 29 May 2021, Austria conducted a total of 4,553,696 COVID-19 tests per 1 million people.
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Austria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Info Campaign</th>
<th>Contact Tracing</th>
<th>Vaccine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On 29 February 2020</strong>, the Austrian government launched a national public info campaign on COVID-19 virus, setting two hotlines to answer the public inquiries.</td>
<td><strong>As of 20 February 2020</strong>, monitoring of COVID-19 infections is conducted through the epidemiological reporting (EMS-system). New cases with diagnostic laboratory evidence are recorded.</td>
<td><strong>On 27 December 2020</strong>, Austria kicks off its national vaccination campaign using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Austria received 10,000 doses as a first batch. Frontline health workers and elderly to be the first vaccinated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As of 19 May 2020</strong>, the government of Austria has announced that daily information regarding COVID-19 will be posted on the government’s website.</td>
<td><strong>As of 13 March 2020</strong>, the local health office (local authority level) does contact tracing and monitors quarantine for contacts. People with positive COVID-19 test are asked for names of close contacts.</td>
<td><strong>On 7 January 2021</strong>, Austria approved the use of the Moderna vaccine receiving its first batches.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>As of 9 March 2021</strong>, the WHO has collaborated with the Austrian government in posting up-to-date information regarding safety guidelines on COVID-19.</td>
<td><strong>As of 25 March 2020</strong>, an app (“Stopp Corona”) provided by the Austrian Red Cross is available and may be used on a voluntary basis. The app allows users to record who they’ve been in contact with anonymously (via a so-called electronic handshake). If a user develops symptoms of COVID-19, all recorded contact persons receive a notification.</td>
<td><strong>On 7 February 2021</strong>, Austria receives the first batch of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine (36,000 doses).</td>
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<td><strong>As of 2 May 2021</strong>, the government of Austria announced that updated information regarding travel, vaccine and safety guidelines will be updated weekly on austria.info.</td>
<td><strong>On 5 January 2021</strong>, Austrian Health Minister announced conducting excessive contact tracing to detect all those who were in connection with the country’s first five cases infected with the mutant variants (B.1.1.7 and 501. V2). All contacts were traced and tested.</td>
<td><strong>On 7 March 2021</strong>, Austria halts the use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine over fears of blood clots.</td>
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<td><strong>On 7 February 2021</strong>, the Health Ministry announced that Vaccine shots to be prioritized to hard-hit areas. The use of the Johnson&amp;Johnson vaccine was approved in Austria.</td>
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<td><strong>On 3 May 2021</strong>, three million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered since the start of the vaccination campaign.</td>
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<td><strong>On 18 May 2021</strong>, Austria announced it will phase out the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from its vaccination programme due to delivery problems and worries among the public from possible side effects of the vaccine.</td>
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Sources


