

## I. Executive summary

### EU Threats

#### **New! SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 variant of concern (Omicron) - Multi country (World) - 2021**

Opening date: 3 December 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

On 26 November 2021, ECDC classified a SARS-CoV-2 variant belonging to Pango lineage B.1.1.529 as a variant of concern (VOC) due to concerns regarding immune escape and potentially increased transmissibility compared to the Delta variant. WHO also classified the variant as a VOC and assigned it the label Omicron. The number of countries reporting SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant of concern (VOC) cases continues to increase globally.

#### →Update of the week

As of 2 December 2021, and since 26 November 2021, globally, 415 confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron VOC have been confirmed in 34 countries. The majority of confirmed cases have a history of travel to African countries, with some having taken connecting flights at other locations. Several European countries reported cases with no direct links to travel (Belgium, Germany, Spain, and United Kingdom), indicating previously undetected community transmission. Almost all cases for which there is available information on severity were either asymptomatic or mild, one person was hospitalised in Iceland.

## COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – Multi-country (World) – 2019 - 2021

Opening date: 7 January 2020

Latest update: 3 December 2021

On 31 December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health and Health Commission reported a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology with a common source of exposure at Wuhan's South China Seafood City market. Further investigations identified a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of respiratory symptoms for these cases. The outbreak rapidly evolved, affecting other parts of China and other countries worldwide. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared that the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), accepting the Committee's advice and issuing temporary recommendations under the International Health Regulations (IHR). On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meetings for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, 14 January 2021, 15 April 2021, 14 July 2021 and 22 October 2021 respectively. The Committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

### →Update of the week

Since week 2021-46 and as of week 2021-47, 3 753 692 new cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) and 45 325 new deaths have been reported.

Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 2021-47, 261 812 322 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including 5 209 959 deaths.

As of week 2021-47, 46 087 450 cases and 844 880 deaths have been reported in the EU.

The figures reported worldwide and in the EU/EEA are probably an underestimate of the true number of cases and deaths, due to various degrees of under-ascertainment and under-reporting.

The latest daily situation update for the EU/EEA is available [here](#).

Since the last update on 25 November 2021 and as of 02 December 2021, no changes have been made to ECDC variant classifications for variants of concern (VOC), variants of interest (VOI), variants under monitoring and De-escalated variants. For the latest information about variants, please see [ECDC's webpage on variants](#).

## Non EU Threats

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### Ebola - Democratic Republic of the Congo - 2021

Opening date: 14 October 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

On 8 October 2021, the Ministry of Health for the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced a new laboratory-confirmed case of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Butsili Health Area in Beni Health Zone, North Kivu Province. This Health Area is about 50 kilometres from Butembo city, where the DRC's 12th EVD outbreak occurred in 2021, lasting for around three months until it was declared over on 3 May 2021. The city of Beni is a commercial hub with links to the neighbouring countries of Uganda and Rwanda.

### →Update of the week

Since the last report published on 26 November and as of 28 November, no new Ebola virus disease (EVD) cases nor deaths have been reported in North Kivu province in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In total, eight confirmed and three probable EVD cases, including nine deaths (six among the confirmed cases), were reported since the start of the outbreak (8 October 2021). The last confirmed case was reported on 30 October 2021 and all contacts have completed the 21-day follow-up period.

## Influenza – Multi-country – Monitoring 2021/2022 season

Opening date: 15 October 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

Reported influenza activity in Europe remains at low levels.

→Update of the week

### **Week 47 2021 (22-28 November 2021)**

Influenza activity was low throughout the European Region.

Of the 1 471 specimens tested for influenza viruses in week 47/2021, from patients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI) or acute respiratory illness (ARI) symptoms to sentinel primary healthcare sites, 26 (2%) were positive for influenza type A viruses; 24 were positive for influenza type A (the 14 subtyped were A(H3)) and two for influenza type B (neither ascribed to a lineage).

Hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported from ICU wards (one influenza A virus), and from Severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) cases (26 influenza A virus detections).

Influenza viruses were detected sporadically from non-sentinel sources (such as hospitals, schools, primary care facilities not involved in sentinel surveillance, or nursing homes and other institutions). Both influenza type A and type B were detected.

## II. Detailed reports

### New! SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 variant of concern (Omicron) - Multi country (World) - 2021

Opening date: 3 December 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

#### Epidemiological summary

As of 2 December 2021, and since 26 November 2021, overall, 415 confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron VOC have been confirmed in 34 countries. Ninety-five cases have been reported by 16 European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) countries: [Austria](#) (4), [Belgium](#) (3), [Czechia](#) (1), [Denmark](#) (14), [Finland](#) (1), [France](#) (3, including 1 in [Reunion](#)), [Germany](#) (13), [Greece](#) (1), [Iceland](#) (1), [Ireland](#) (1), [Italy](#) (9), [the Netherlands](#) (16), [Norway](#) (5), [Portugal](#) (14), [Spain](#) (3) and [Sweden](#) (6) according to information from public sources. A number of probable cases have been reported in the EU/EEA, with confirmation pending.

The majority of confirmed cases have a history of travel to African countries, with some having taken connecting flights at other locations between Africa and Europe. Several European countries reported cases with no direct links to travel ([Belgium](#), [Germany](#), [Spain](#), and [United Kingdom](#)), indicating previously undetected community transmission. [Finland](#) reported cases with travel history within the EU/EEA (Sweden, Denmark). The [United States of America](#) reported a case with travel history within the country (Minnesota to New York).

Almost all cases for which there is available information on severity were either asymptomatic or mild. Among 415 cases there was one hospitalisation (Iceland); no additional severe cases or deaths have been reported among these cases so far.

Cases have been reported in 18 countries and territories outside of the EU/EEA ([Australia](#), [Botswana](#), [Brazil](#), [Canada](#), [Hong Kong](#) Special Administrative Region, [Ghana](#), [India](#), [Israel](#), [Japan](#), [Malaysia](#), [Nigeria](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [South Africa](#), [South Korea](#), [Switzerland](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [United States of America](#) and [United Kingdom](#)).

For the latest information about variants, please see [ECDC's webpage on variants](#).

#### ECDC assessment

ECDC has classified a SARS-CoV-2 variant belonging to Pango lineage B.1.1.529 as a variant of concern (VOC) due to concerns regarding immune escape and potentially increased transmissibility compared to the Delta variant. The majority of cases reported in the EU/EEA remain travel-associated and mild, however there are indications of community transmission in a number of countries.

At the moment, there is considerable uncertainty related to the transmissibility, vaccine effectiveness, risk for reinfections and other properties of the Omicron variant. However, given its immune escape potential and potentially increased transmissibility advantage compared to Delta, we assess the probability of further introduction and community spread in the EU/EEA as high. In a situation where the Delta variant is resurgent in the EU/EEA, the impact of the introduction and possible further spread of Omicron could be very high. In conclusion, the overall level of risk for the EU/EEA associated with the SARS-CoV-2 variant Omicron is assessed as high to very high.

#### Actions

ECDC is continuously monitoring the situation through Epidemic Intelligence. TESSy reporting for B.1.1.529 has been implemented. A daily updated on reported cases is available on the [ECDC website](#).

ECDC published a Threat Assessment Brief on 26 November 2021 - '[Emergence of SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.529](#)' and is actively monitoring, assessing and reporting about the situation with the Omicron variant. ECDC published the Threat Assessment Brief '[Implications of the emergence and spread of the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.529 variant of concern \(Omicron\) for the EU/EEA](#)', on 2 December 2021.

## COVID-19 associated with SARS-CoV-2 – Multi-country (World) – 2019 - 2021

Opening date: 7 January 2020

Latest update: 3 December 2021

## Epidemiological summary

Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 2021-47, 261 812 322 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including 5 209 959 deaths.

### Cases have been reported from:

**Africa:** 8 661 700 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are South Africa (2 961 406), Morocco (949 732), Tunisia (717 309), Libya (372 209) and Ethiopia (371 262).

**Asia:** 71 454 808 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are India (34 580 832), Iran (6 108 882), Indonesia (4 256 112), Philippines (2 831 807) and Malaysia (2 623 816).

**America:** 96 924 712 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are United States (48 234 746), Brazil (22 080 906), Argentina (5 325 560), Colombia (5 067 348) and Mexico (3 884 566).

**Europe:** 84 385 671 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are United Kingdom (10 146 915), Russia (9 604 233), Turkey (8 724 400), France (7 589 961) and Germany (5 799 244).

**Oceania:** 384 726 cases; the five countries reporting most cases are Australia (207 982), Fiji (52 506), French Polynesia (45 609), Papua New Guinea (35 090) and Guam (19 179).

**Other:** 705 cases have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

### Deaths have been reported from:

**Africa:** 222 776 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are South Africa (89 797), Tunisia (25 365), Egypt (20 347), Morocco (14 774) and Ethiopia (6 740).

**Asia:** 1 112 769 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are India (468 790), Indonesia (143 819), Iran (129 629), Philippines (48 361) and Malaysia (30 309).

**America:** 2 350 100 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are United States (776 647), Brazil (614 278), Mexico (293 950), Peru (201 144) and Colombia (128 473).

**Europe:** 1 519 845 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are Russia (273 964), United Kingdom (144 775), Italy (134 212), France (122 917) and Germany (100 832).

**Oceania:** 4 463 deaths; the five countries reporting most deaths are Australia (1 994), Fiji (696), French Polynesia (636), Papua New Guinea (545) and New Caledonia (276).

**Other:** six deaths have been reported from an international conveyance in Japan.

### EU/EEA:

As of week 2021-47, 46 372 317 cases have been reported in the EU/EEA: France (7 589 961), Germany (5 799 244), Spain (5 153 904), Italy (5 005 122), Poland (3 492 739), Netherlands (2 599 447), Czechia (2 132 315), Romania (1 764 291), Belgium (1 754 248), Sweden (1 203 175), Slovakia (1 159 767), Austria (1 147 723), Portugal (1 144 331), Hungary (1 096 799), Greece (927 575), Bulgaria (688 628), Croatia (604 347), Ireland (564 646), Denmark (475 197), Lithuania (456 911), Slovenia (418 413), Norway (262 535), Latvia (252 411), Estonia (211 386), Finland (183 163), Cyprus (131 927), Luxembourg (91 117), Malta (38 663), Iceland (17 766) and Liechtenstein (4 566).

As of week 2021-47, 846 293 deaths have been reported in the EU/EEA: Italy (134 212), France (122 917), Germany (100 832), Spain (88 005), Poland (83 410), Romania (55 358), Hungary (33 236), Czechia (32 937), Bulgaria (28 043), Belgium (26 967), Netherlands (19 401), Portugal (18 427), Greece (18 028), Sweden (15 148), Slovakia (14 814), Austria (11 959), Croatia (10 826), Lithuania (6 585), Slovenia (5 540), Ireland (5 331), Latvia (4 468), Denmark (2 883), Finland (1 762), Estonia (1 697), Norway (1 317), Luxembourg (917), Cyprus (709), Malta (468), Liechtenstein (61) and Iceland (35).

The latest daily situation update for the EU/EEA is available [here](#).

In week 2021-47, in the EU/EEA overall, the reported weekly cases increased by 10.4 % compared to the previous week. The highest weekly increases in descending order were observed in Sweden, France, Portugal, Spain, and Norway. The countries with the highest 14-day notification rates per 100 000 population are: Slovakia (2 534), Czechia (2205), Belgium (2 064), Austria (2 034) and Liechtenstein (1 920). Thirteen of the 30 EU/EEA countries (Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Austria, Denmark, Italy, Liechtenstein, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Iceland, Ireland, Greece and Lithuania) reported a decrease in the weekly cases.

ECDC's assessment of each country's epidemiological situation is based on a composite score based on the absolute value and trend of five weekly COVID-19 epidemiological indicators. As shown below, for week 47, seven countries (Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia) were categorised as of very high concern, 15 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway and Portugal) as of high concern and eight countries (Estonia, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) as of moderate concern. Compared with the previous week, one country (Lithuania) moved to a higher category, five countries (Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Iceland and Slovenia) moved to a lower category and 24 countries stayed in the same category.

For the latest COVID-19 country overviews, please see the [dedicated webpage](#).

### 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 [WHO](#) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The [third](#), [fourth](#), [fifth](#), [sixth](#), [seventh](#), [eight](#) and [ninth](#) International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee meetings for COVID-19 were held in Geneva on 30 April 2020, 31 July 2020, 29 October 2020, 14 January 2021, 15 April 2021, 4 July 2021 and 22 October 2021 respectively. The Committee concluded during these meetings that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to constitute a PHEIC.

### ECDC assessment

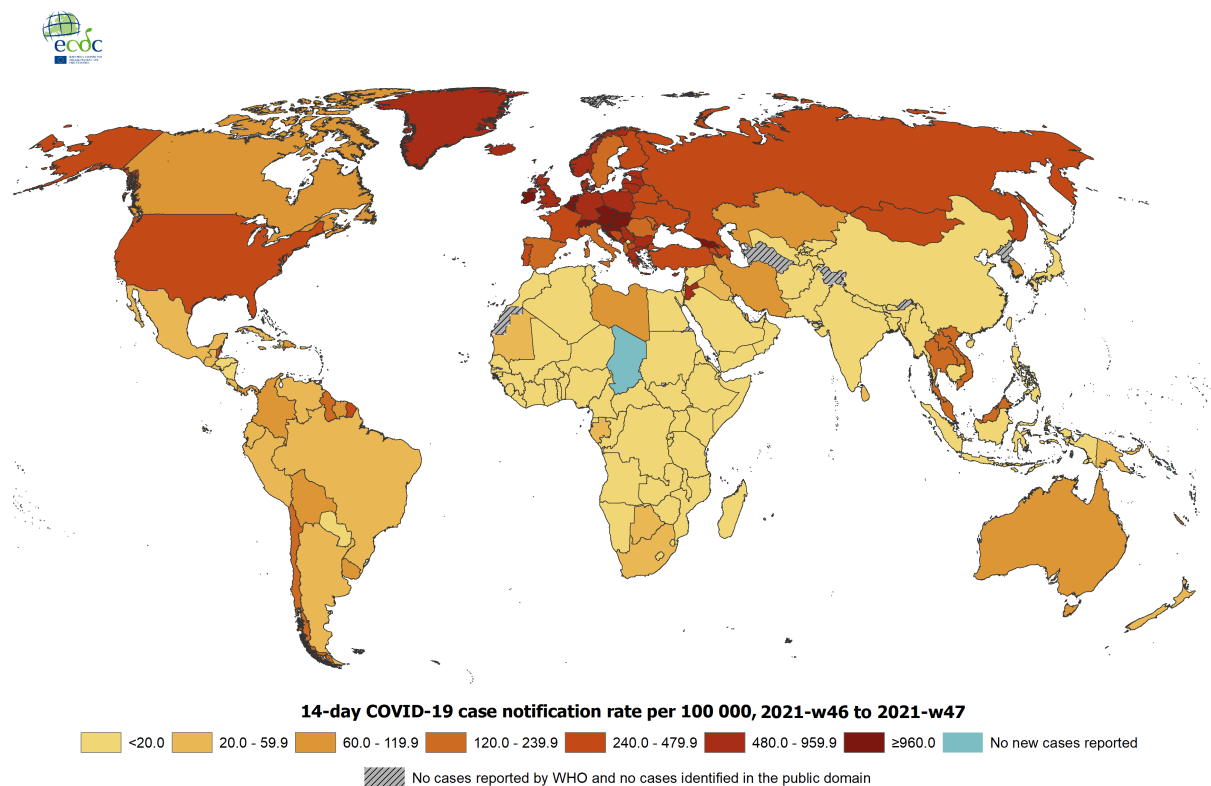
For the most recent risk assessment, please visit [ECDC's dedicated webpage](#).

### Actions

On 24 November 2021, ECDC published the [rapid risk assessment](#), 'Assessment of the current SARS-CoV-2 epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA, projections for the end-of-year festive season and strategies for response, 17th update'. A [dashboard](#) with the latest updates is available on ECDC's [website](#). For the latest rapid risk assessment on SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern, please see [ECDC's webpage on variants](#).

## Geographic distribution of 14-day cumulative number of reported COVID-19 cases per 100 000 population, worldwide, 2021-w46 to 2021-w47

Source: ECDC



Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat. The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the European Union. Date of production: 01/12/2021

## Ebola - Democratic Republic of the Congo - 2021

Opening date: 14 October 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

### Epidemiological summary

Since the start of the outbreak (on 8 October 2021), and as of 28 November 2021, 11 EVD cases (eight confirmed and three probable), including nine deaths (six among confirmed cases), have been reported in the North Kivu province in the eastern region of the DRC. The index case was a three-year-old male who developed symptoms of EVD in early October 2021 and subsequently died. EVD was confirmed on 8 October by RT-PCR. The last known confirmed case was reported on 30 October 2021 and discharged on 4 November. All contacts that were under monitoring have completed the 21-day follow-up period.

Initial genomic sequencing at INRB Pathogen Genomic Sequencing laboratory in Kinshasa indicates that these EVD cases likely represent a flare-up event from the 2018-2020 North Kivu/Ituri outbreak.

All confirmed cases have been reported from three of the 18 health areas in Beni Health Zone: Butsili (six cases), Bundji (one case), and Ngilinga HA (one case). Children below the age of five years account for 50.0% (4/8) of the confirmed cases.

According to the WHO AFRO bulletin (W48), since the start of the vaccination activities 696 persons have been vaccinated (656 high risk contacts, contacts of contacts and probable contacts, with the rVSV-ZEBOV-GP vaccine and 40 frontline health care workers with the ERVEBO vaccine).

**Source:** [WHO AFRO tweet \(03.11.2021\)](#), [WHO HQ, virological.org EBOV sequencing report, Media, WHO AFRO Bulletin \(W44\)](#), [WHO DRC tweet \(26.10.2021\)](#), [WHO AFRO Bulletin \(W45\)](#), [WHO DRC tweet \(09.11.2021\)](#), [WHO DRC tweet \(10.11.2021\)](#), [WHO AFRO Bulletin \(W46\)](#), [WHO AFRO Bulletin \(W47\)](#), [WHO AFRO tweet \(24.11.2021\)](#), [WHO AFRO Bulletin \(W48\)](#)

### ECDC assessment

This is the second EVD outbreak reported in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2021 (see the Threat Assessment Brief published on 22 February 2021 for more information on the previous outbreak in 2021). Further spread of the virus cannot be excluded. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other ongoing outbreaks (such as malaria and meningitis) might challenge the response operations.

The age distribution of these EVD cases is unusual, as half of them are children. Investigations are ongoing to identify the source of the outbreak.

Although disease in unvaccinated people is severe and most EU/EEA citizens are not commonly vaccinated against the disease, there is a very low likelihood of infection of EU/EEA citizens in the DRC. The current risk for EU/EEA citizens living in or travelling to Beni Health Zone in the DRC is estimated to be low. The current risk for citizens in the EU/EEA is considered very low, as the likelihood of introduction and secondary transmission within the EU/EEA is very low.

### Actions

ECDC is following the situation through its epidemic intelligence activities. ECDC published the threat assessment brief [Outbreak of Ebola virus disease in North Kivu, DRC](#) on 22 February 2021, in which options for response measures are described.

## Influenza – Multi-country – Monitoring 2021/2022 season

Opening date: 15 October 2021

Latest update: 3 December 2021

### Epidemiological summary

#### 2021/2022 season overview

For the European Region as a whole, influenza activity has been at baseline level with sporadic detections, mostly of A(H3) viruses.

**Sources:** [Flu News Europe](#) |

### ECDC assessment

Reported influenza activity remains at a low level.

### Actions

ECDC and WHO monitor influenza activity in the WHO European Region. Data will be updated on a weekly basis until the end of the regular influenza season (week 20 data) and on a monthly basis during the interseason period. The data are available on the [Flu News Europe](#) website.



The Communicable Disease Threat Report may include unconfirmed information which may later prove to be unsubstantiated.