
Netherlands: surge in Covid-19 infections. Government to agree measures today, Bishops reintroducing restrictions

Covid-19 infections have started to rise again in the Netherlands. Yesterday's data show 12,648 new cases, a record high in these pandemic times. The death rate, however, remains relatively low (25 reported deaths yesterday). 84.4% of the population over 18 are fully vaccinated, 82.4% of the 12-year-olds and older. A government meeting is scheduled today to decide which line to follow to contain infections. According to the Pandemic Management Committee, it would be appropriate to close down cinemas and theatres again for the next two weeks, and to further limit the number of customers allowed in restaurants. Meanwhile, the Bishops have already called for the reintroduction of a series of measures previously applied in Catholic churches, namely the 1.5-metre social distancing during celebrations and other church events, and face masks to be used while moving around the church or the venue of the meeting. It is still possible for choirs and the assembly to sing, but "choirs are strongly advised to rehearse only in large, sufficiently ventilated rooms", a statement from by the Bishops' Secretariat reads. "Further restrictions may be imposed in the future if needed". The Bishops invite "all believers, vaccinated or not, to continue to treat others with respect". Thanking those involved in implementing and enforcing precautionary measures, the Bishops "hope and pray that a concerted effort may have the intended effects on the health of all, especially the most vulnerable".

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