COVID-19 Results Briefing

The European Union

May 5, 2022

This document contains summary information on the latest projections from the IHME model on COVID-19 in European Union. The model was run on May 5, 2022, with data through May 3, 2022.

In most of the EU, the secondary Omicron wave appears to have peaked and transmission is declining, with the exception of some regions in Spain, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, and Croatia. Our models, however, suggest that transmission should decline in the weeks ahead even in these locations. In the absence of a new variant or the spread of BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants, we expect infections, reported cases, hospitalizations, and deaths to continue declining over the summer months.

The increase in cases in South Africa associated with the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants raises the possibility that these subvariants have lower cross-variant immunity with BA.1 and BA.2, which could trigger a third Omicron increase depending on the degree of cross-variant immunity. An alternative explanation is declining infection-acquired immunity in South Africa from the initial Omicron wave in November and early December. Our forecasts do not take into account the possibility of a BA.4 and BA.5 tertiary Omicron wave fueled by lower cross-variant immunity, but they do factor in declining immunity in general. If evidence accumulates on BA.4 and BA.5 cross-variant immunity, this will be incorporated into the models in subsequent releases. To date, there is no evidence that BA.4 and BA.5 have increased severity, so even an increase in cases should not lead to much increase in deaths, especially as antiviral use expands.

Given the strong likelihood of further behavioral relaxation across the EU, controlling COVID-19 over the next months should focus on three factors. First, maintaining good epidemiological surveillance will be important. As focus on the pandemic fades in some countries, changes in reporting may complicate analysis of the situation. The shift to rapid antigen testing in settings that are not reported to public health authorities may also add to the difficulty making sense of trends. At present, the best metric to follow is hospital admissions, as this most likely has a more standardized assessment of severity. Unfortunately, many countries still do not report hospital admissions on a daily or weekly basis. Second, efforts should be made to scale up access to Paxlovid and potentially other antivirals to reduce the infection-fatality rate in those who are infected, particularly in at-risk groups. Third, the use of other strategies, such as encouraging mask use, may be needed if evidence on reduced cross-variant immunity for BA.4 and BA.5 becomes clearer and these subvariants have a higher infection-fatality rate than BA.1 and BA.2.

Current situation

- Estimated daily infections in the last week decreased to 900,000 per day on average compared to 1.1 million the week before (Figure 1.1).

- Estimated daily hospital census in the last week (through May 3) decreased to 70,000 per day on average compared to 71,000 the week before.
- Daily reported cases in the last week decreased to 261,000 per day on average compared to 316,000 the week before (Figure 2.1).
- Reported deaths due to COVID-19 in the last week decreased to 770 per day on average compared to 830 the week before (Figure 3.1).
- Total deaths due to COVID-19 in the last week decreased to 1,200 per day on average compared to 1,300 the week before (Figure 3.1). This makes COVID-19 the number three cause of death in the European Union this week (Table 1). Estimated total daily deaths due to COVID-19 in the past week were 1.6 times larger than the reported number of deaths.
- The daily rate of reported deaths due to COVID-19 is greater than 4 per million in one country and four subnational locations (Figure 4.1).
- The daily rate of total deaths due to COVID-19 is greater than 4 per million in six countries and 21 subnational locations (Figure 4.2).
- We estimate that 75% of people in the European Union have been infected at least once as of May 2 (Figure 6.1).
- Effective R, computed using cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, is greater than 1 in 10 countries and 18 subnational locations (Figure 7.1).
- The infection-detection rate in the European Union was close to 22% on May 2 (Figure 8.1).
- Based on the GISAID and various national databases, combined with our variant spread model, we estimate the current prevalence of variants of concern (Figures 9.1–9.5). Omicron is the dominant variant throughout the EU.

Trends in drivers of transmission

- Thirteen countries have mask mandates in place (Table 2). Some form of gathering restrictions are in place in three countries and in some regions of Spain.
- Mobility last week was 3% lower than the pre-COVID-19 baseline (Figure 11.1). Mobility was lower than 15% of baseline in two countries and 13 subnational locations (Figure 12.1).
- As of April 24, in the COVID-19 Trends and Impact Survey, 27% of people self-reported that they always wore a mask when leaving their home (Figure 13.1). Mask use is over 50% in Portugal, Italy, and Cyprus.
- There were 397 diagnostic tests per 100,000 people on May 2 (Figure 15.1).

- As of May 2, 17 countries and 52 subnational locations have reached 70% or more of the population who have received at least one vaccine dose, and 15 countries and 50 subnational locations have reached 70% or more of the population who are fully vaccinated (Figures 17.1 and 17.2). 76% of people in the European Union have received at least one vaccine dose, and 71% are fully vaccinated.
- In the EU, 81.6% of the population that is 12 years and older say they would accept a vaccine for COVID-19 (Figure 18.1). Note that vaccine acceptance is calculated using survey data from the 18+ population. The proportion of the population who are open to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine ranges from 40% in Bulgaria to 99% in Malta (Figure 19.1).
- As of April 25, 2022, 2.9% of the population in the EU say they would accept a vaccine for COVID-19 but have not yet been vaccinated.
- In our current reference scenario, we expect that 338.3 million people will be vaccinated with at least one dose by September 1 (Figure 21.1). We expect that 71% of the population will be fully vaccinated by September 1.

Projections and scenarios

We produce three scenarios when projecting COVID-19. The **reference scenario** is our forecast of what we think is most likely to happen:

- Vaccines are distributed at the expected pace. Brand- and variant-specific vaccine efficacy is updated using the latest available information from peer-reviewed publications and other reports.
- Future mask use is the mean of mask use over the last seven days.
- Mobility increases as vaccine coverage increases.
- Omicron variant spreads according to our flight and local spread model.
- 80% of those who have had two doses of vaccine (or one dose for Johnson & Johnson) receive a third dose at six months after their second dose.

The **80% mask use scenario** makes all the same assumptions as the reference scenario but assumes all locations reach 80% mask use within seven days. If a location currently has higher than 80% use, mask use remains at the current level.

The **third dose scenario** is the same as the reference scenario but assumes that 100% of those who have received two doses of vaccine will get a third dose at six months.

Projections

Infections

- Daily estimated infections in the **reference scenario** will decline to 76,000 by mid-August (Figure 23.1).
- Daily estimated infections in the **80% mask use scenario** will decline to 12,000 by late August (Figure 23.1).

- Daily estimated infections in the **third dose scenario** will decline to 73,000 by mid-August (Figure 23.1).

Cases

- Daily estimated cases in the **reference scenario** will decline to 21,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.2).
- Daily estimated cases in the **80% mask use scenario** will decline to 4,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.2).
- Daily estimated cases in the **third dose scenario** will decline to 20,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.2).

Hospitalizations

- Daily hospital census in the **reference scenario** will decline to 5,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.3).
- Daily hospital census in the **80% mask use scenario** will decline to 1,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.3).
- Daily hospital census in the **third dose scenario** will decline to 5,000 by September 1, 2022 (Figure 23.3).

Deaths

- In our **reference scenario**, our model projects 1,119,000 cumulative reported deaths due to COVID-19 on September 1. This represents 30,000 additional deaths from May 2 to September 1. Daily reported COVID-19 deaths in the **reference scenario** will rise to 770 by May 7, 2022 (Figure 23.4).
- Under our **reference scenario**, our model projects 1,784,000 cumulative total deaths due to COVID-19 on September 1. This represents 50,000 additional deaths from May 2 to September 1 (Figure 23.5).
- In our **80% mask use scenario**, our model projects 1,113,000 cumulative reported deaths due to COVID-19 on September 1. This represents 24,000 additional deaths from May 2 to September 1. Daily reported COVID-19 deaths in the **80% mask use scenario** will rise to 770 by May 7, 2022 (Figure 23.4).
- In our **third dose scenario**, our model projects 1,119,000 cumulative reported deaths due to COVID-19 on September 1. This represents 30,000 additional deaths from May 2 to September 1. Daily reported COVID-19 deaths in the **third dose scenario** will rise to 770 by May 7, 2022 (Figure 23.4).
- Figure 24.1 compares our reference scenario forecasts to other publicly archived models. Forecasts are widely divergent.
- At some point from May through September 1, no countries will have high or extreme stress on hospital beds (Figure 25.1). At some point from May through September 1, six countries will have high or extreme stress on intensive care unit (ICU) capacity (Figure 26.1).

Model updates

No model updates.

Figure 1.1: Daily COVID-19 hospital census and estimated infections

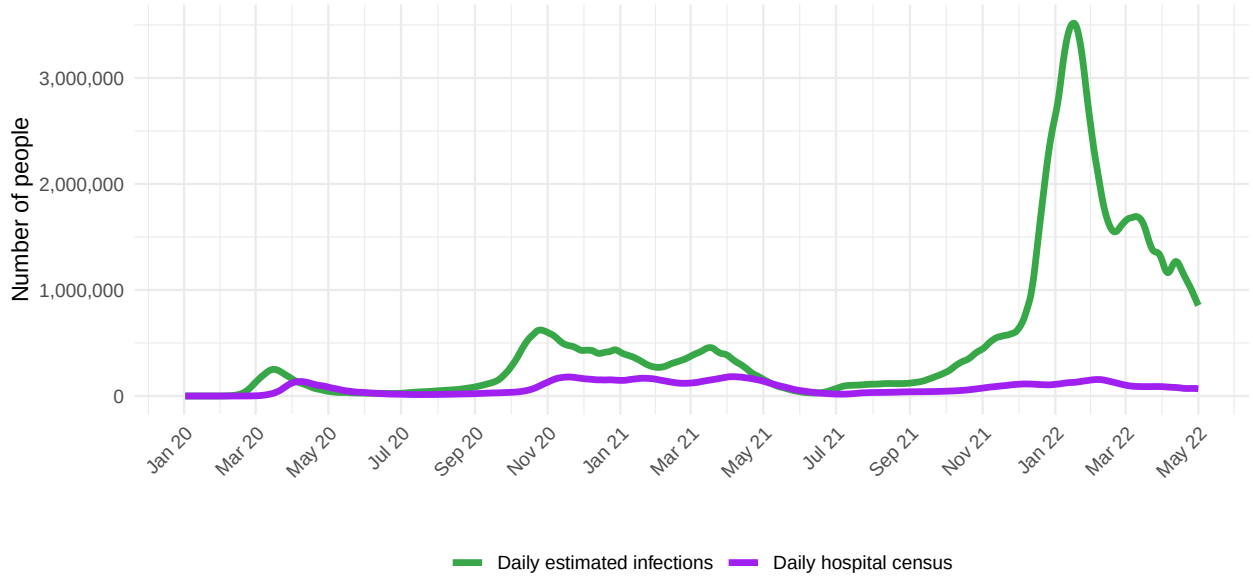


Figure 2.1: Reported daily COVID-19 cases, moving average

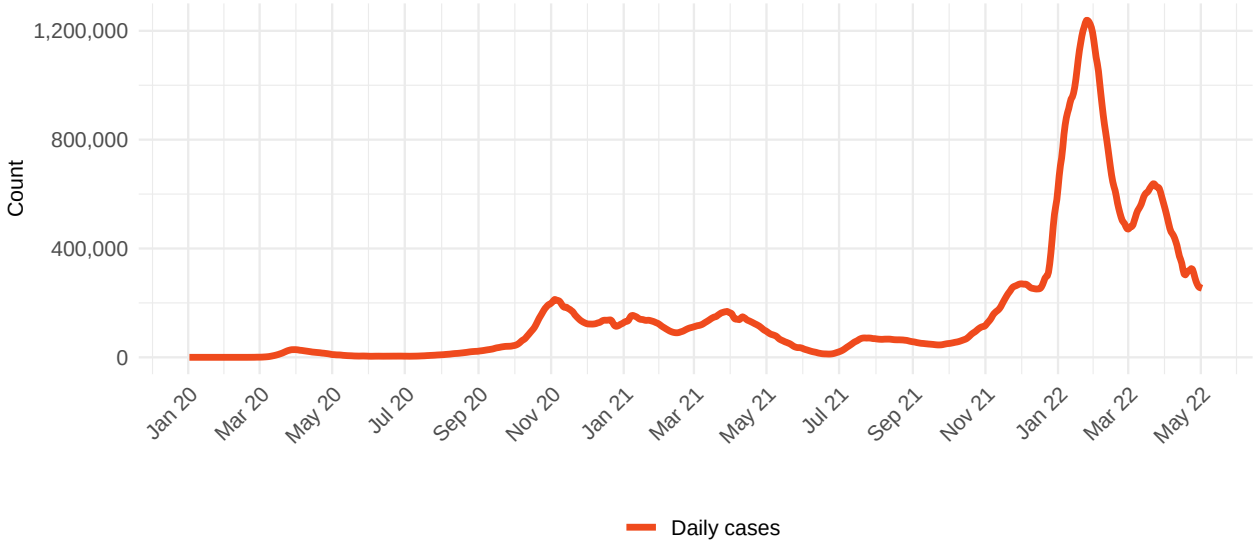
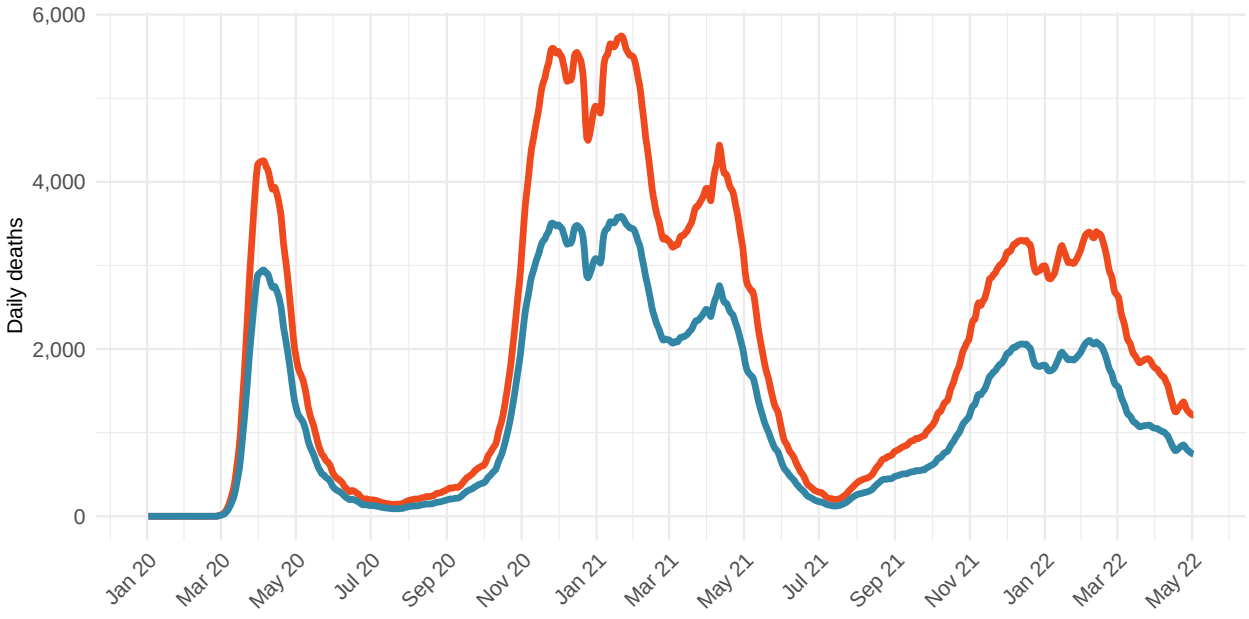


Table 1: Ranking of total deaths due to COVID-19 among the leading causes of mortality this week, assuming uniform deaths of non-COVID causes throughout the year

Cause name	Weekly deaths	Ranking
Ischemic heart disease	18,714	1
Stroke	10,303	2
COVID-19	8,695	3
Tracheal, bronchus, and lung cancer	6,216	4
Alzheimer's disease and other dementias	5,827	5
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	4,608	6
Colon and rectum cancer	4,100	7
Lower respiratory infections	3,503	8
Hypertensive heart disease	2,797	9
Chronic kidney disease	2,430	10

Figure 3.1: Smoothed trend estimate of reported daily COVID-19 deaths (blue) and total daily deaths due to COVID-19 (orange)



Daily COVID-19 death rate per 1 million on May 2, 2022

Figure 4.1: Daily reported COVID-19 death rate per 1 million

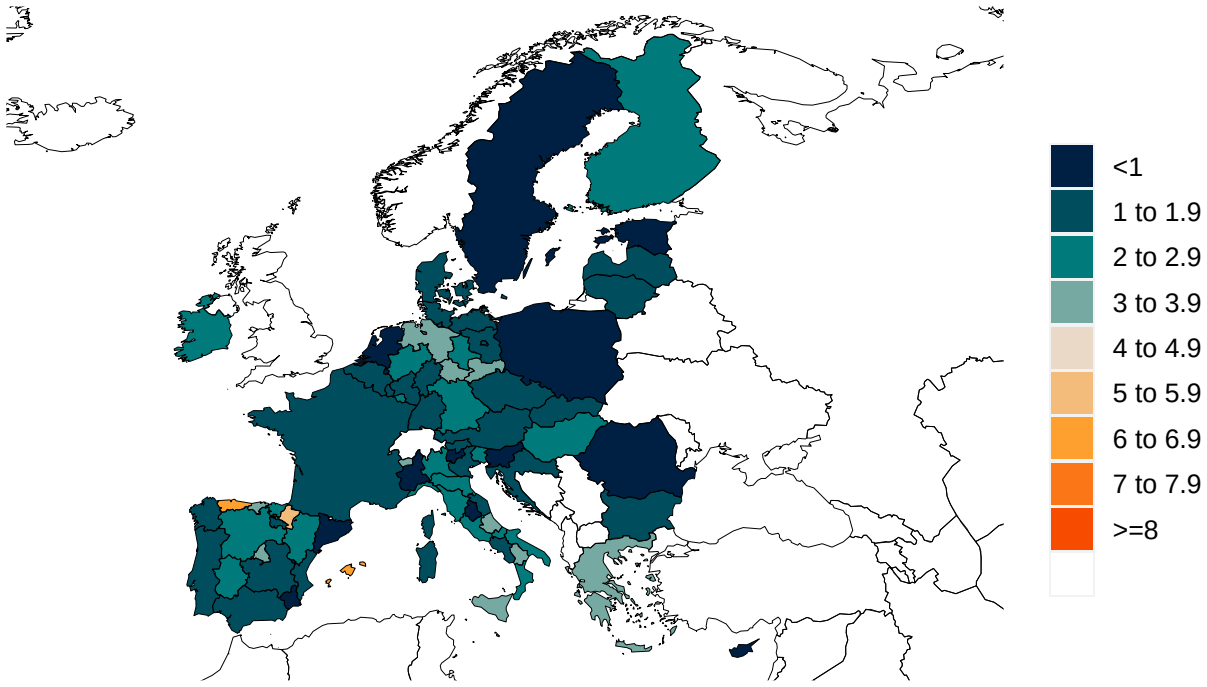
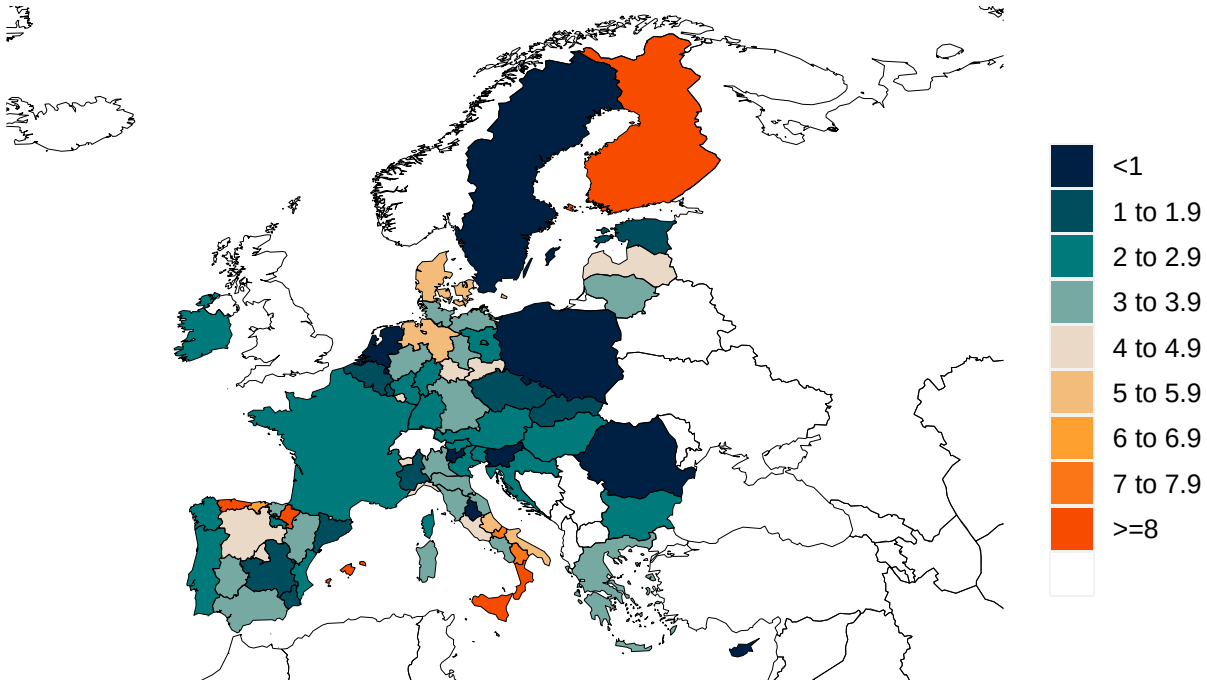


Figure 4.2: Daily total COVID-19 death rate per 1 million



Cumulative COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 on May 2, 2022

Figure 5.1: Reported cumulative COVID-19 deaths per 100,000

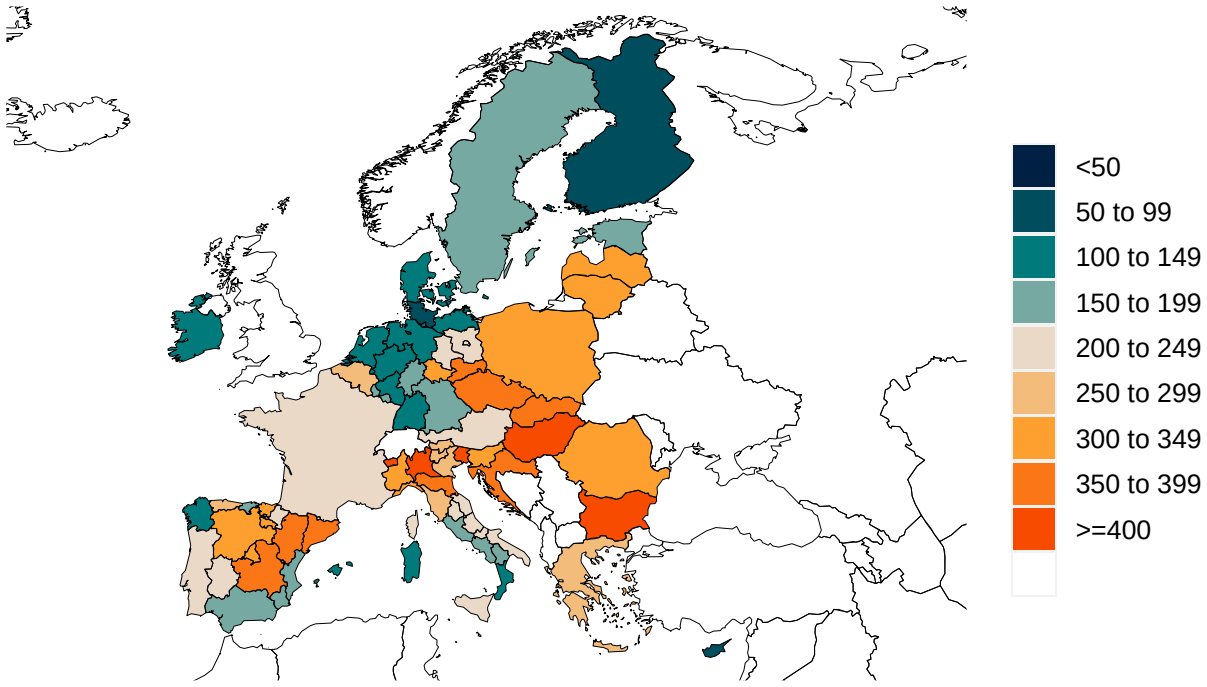


Figure 5.2: Total cumulative COVID-19 deaths per 100,000

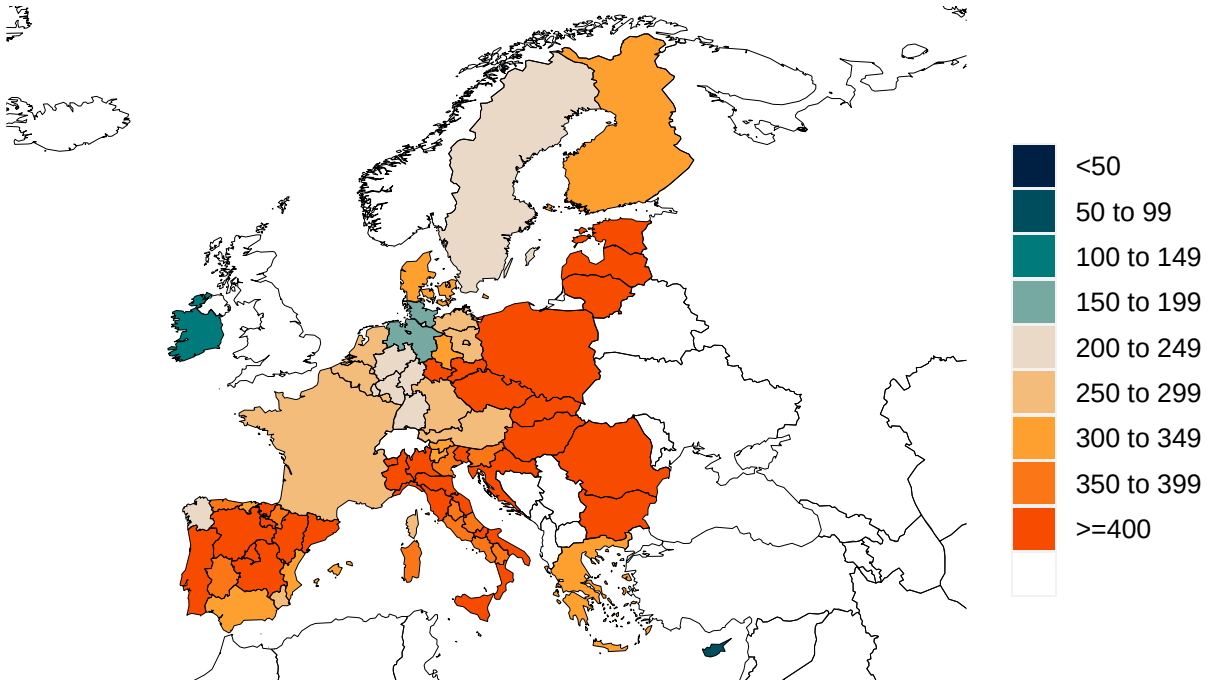


Figure 6.1: Estimated percent of the population infected with COVID-19 on May 2, 2022

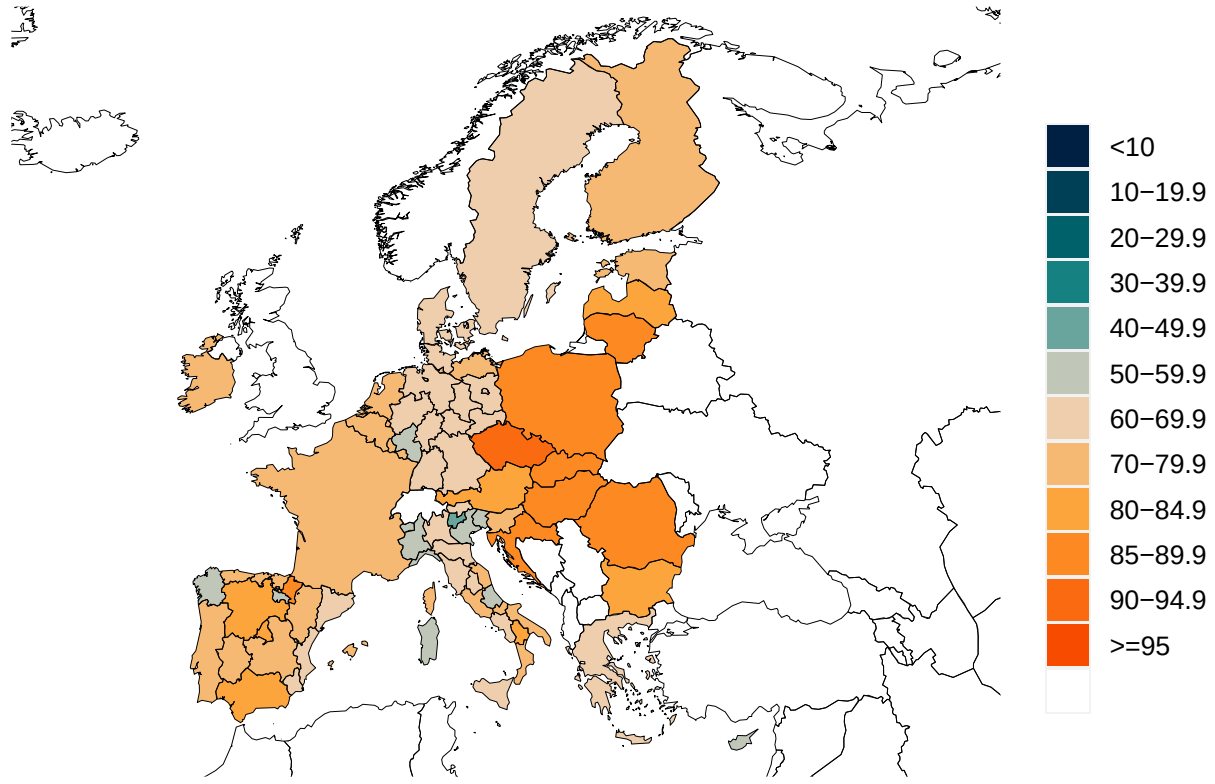


Figure 7.1: Mean effective R on April 21, 2022. Effective R less than 1 means that transmission should decline, all other things being held the same. The estimate of effective R is based on the combined analysis of deaths, case reporting, and hospitalizations where available. Current reported cases reflect infections 11-13 days prior, so estimates of effective R can only be made for the recent past.

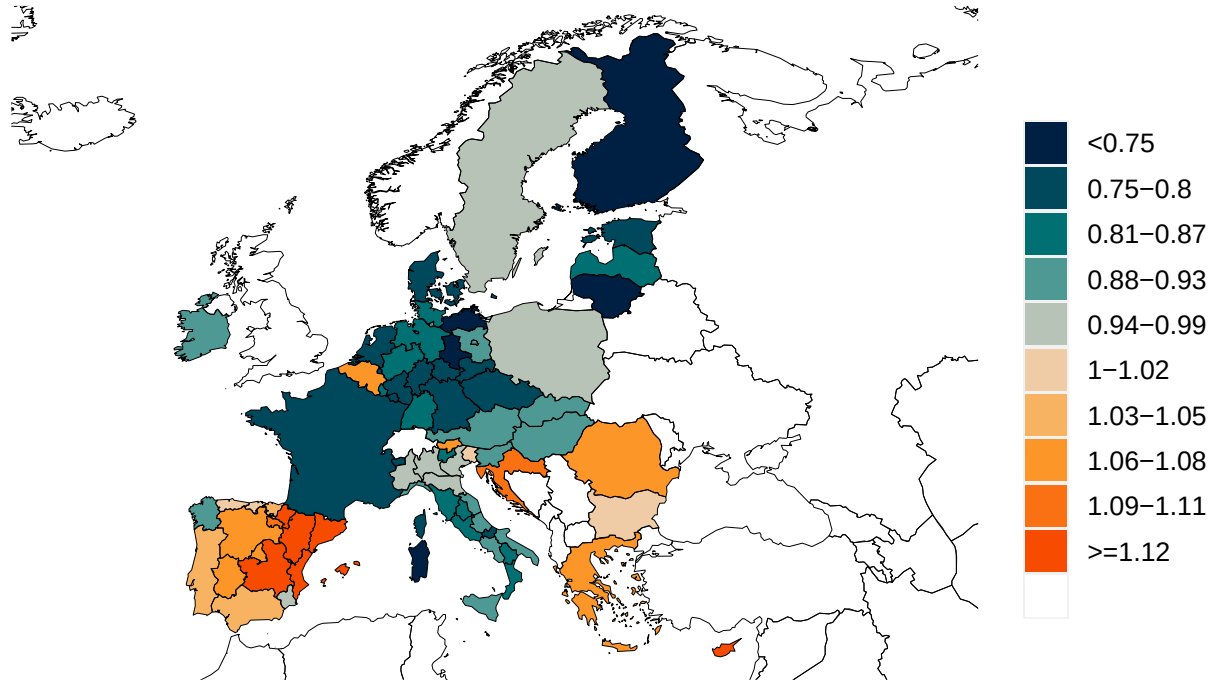
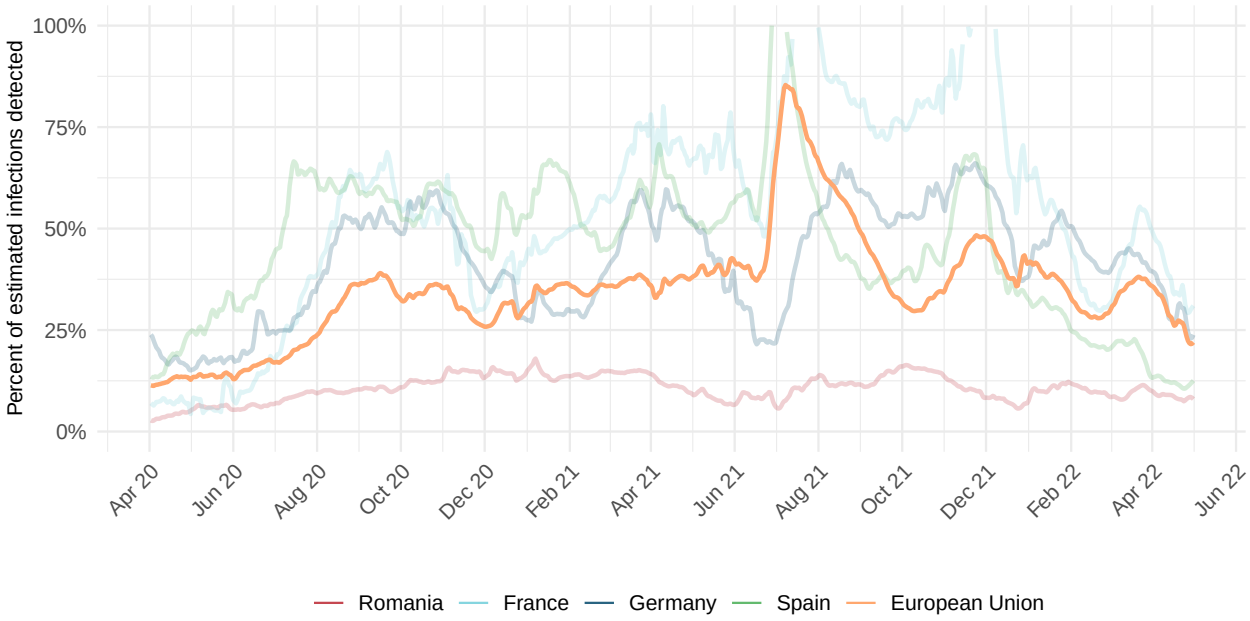


Figure 8.1: Percent of estimated COVID-19 infections detected. This is estimated as the ratio of reported daily COVID-19 cases to estimated daily COVID-19 infections based on the SEIR disease transmission model. Due to measurement errors in cases and testing rates, the infection-detection rate can exceed 100% at particular points in time.



Estimated percent of circulating SARS-CoV-2 for primary variant families on May 2, 2022

Figure 9.1: Estimated percent of new infections that are Alpha variant

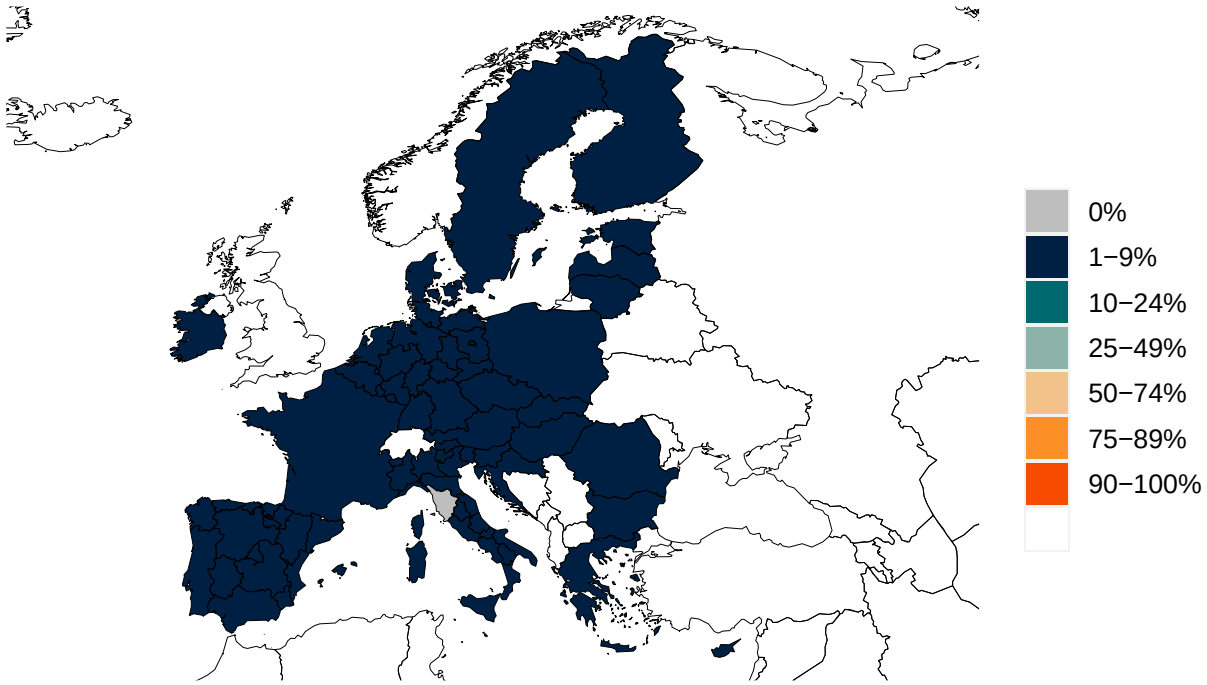


Figure 9.2: Estimated percent of new infections that are Beta variant

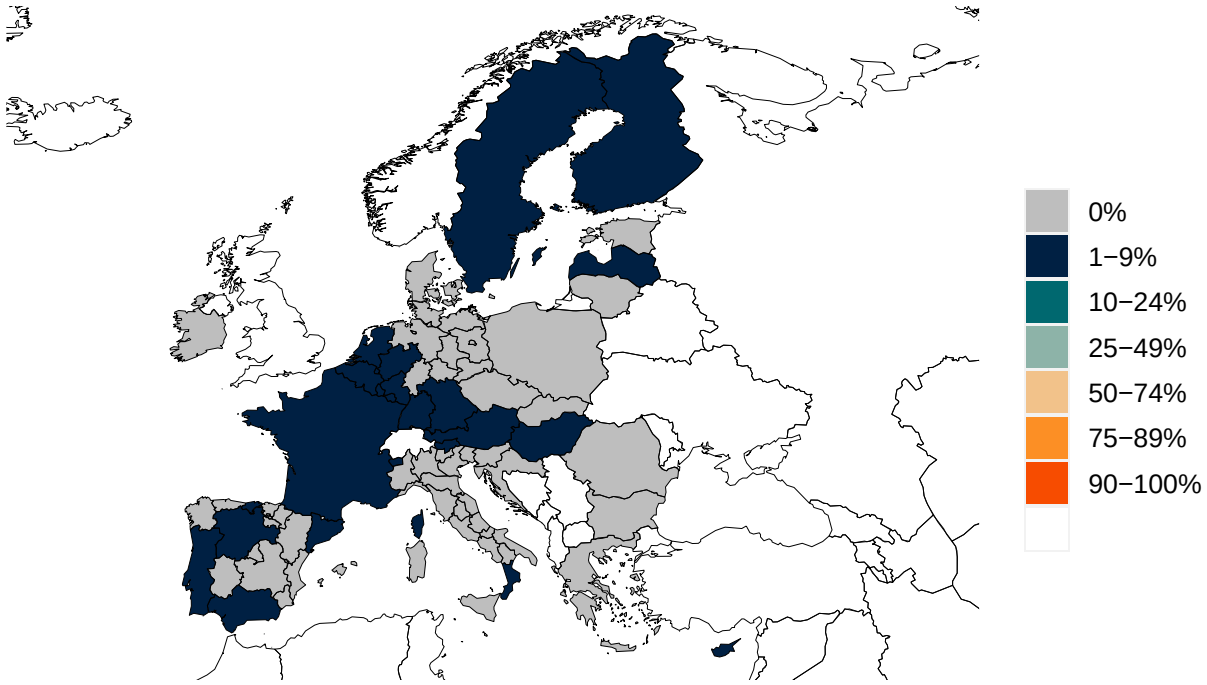


Figure 9.3: Estimated percent of new infections that are Delta variant

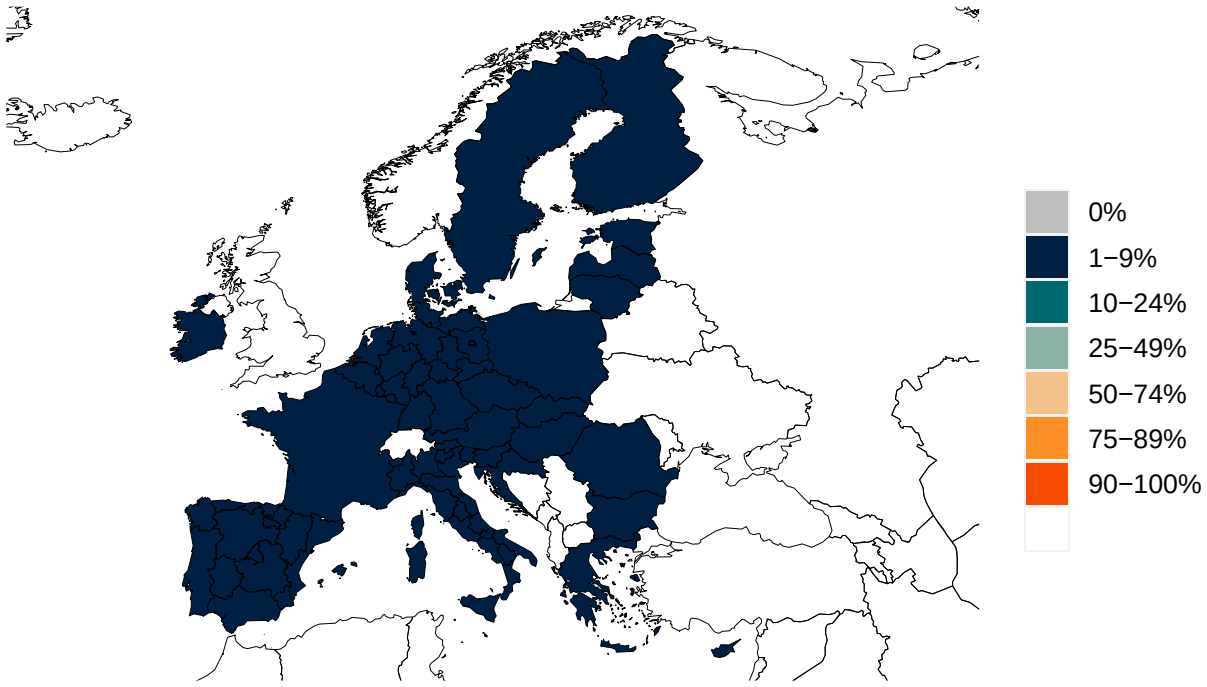


Figure 9.4: Estimated percent of new infections that are Gamma variant

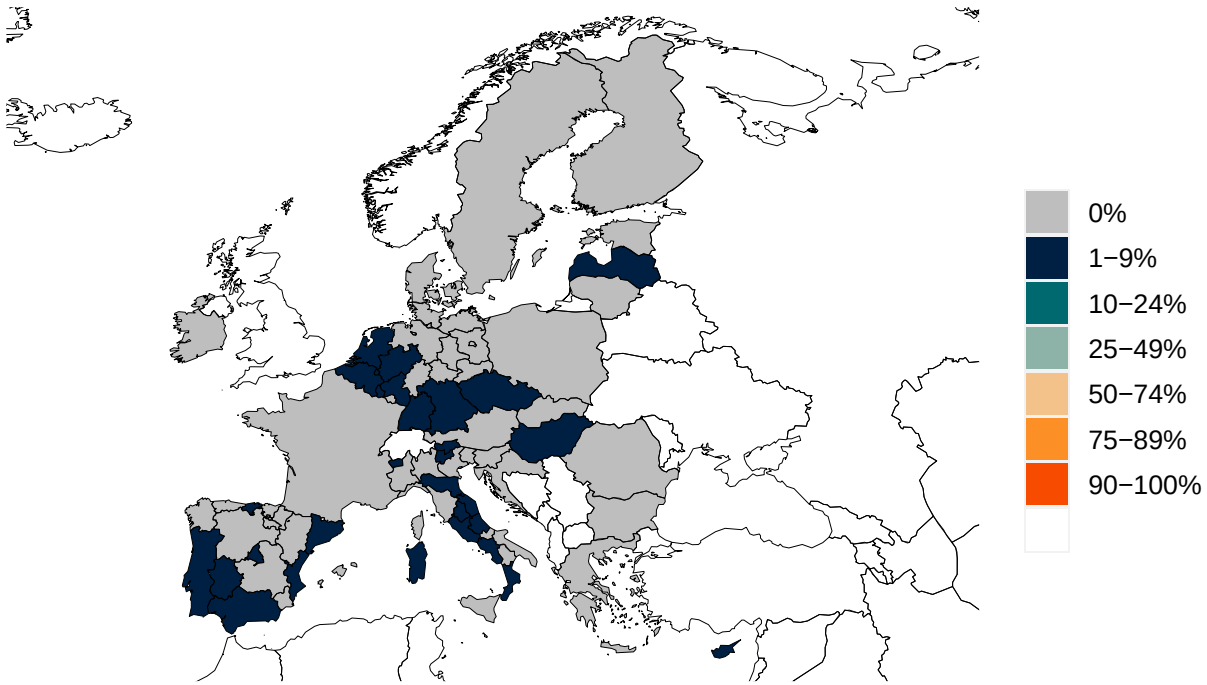


Figure 9.5: Estimated percent of new infections that are Omicron variant

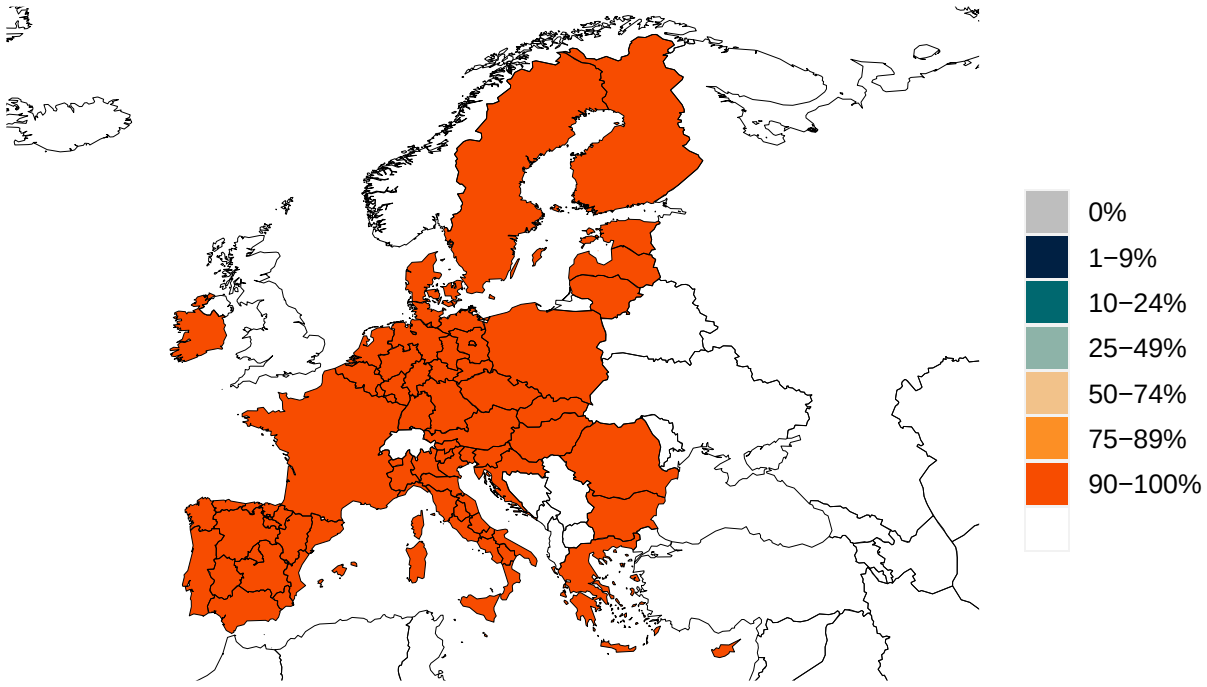
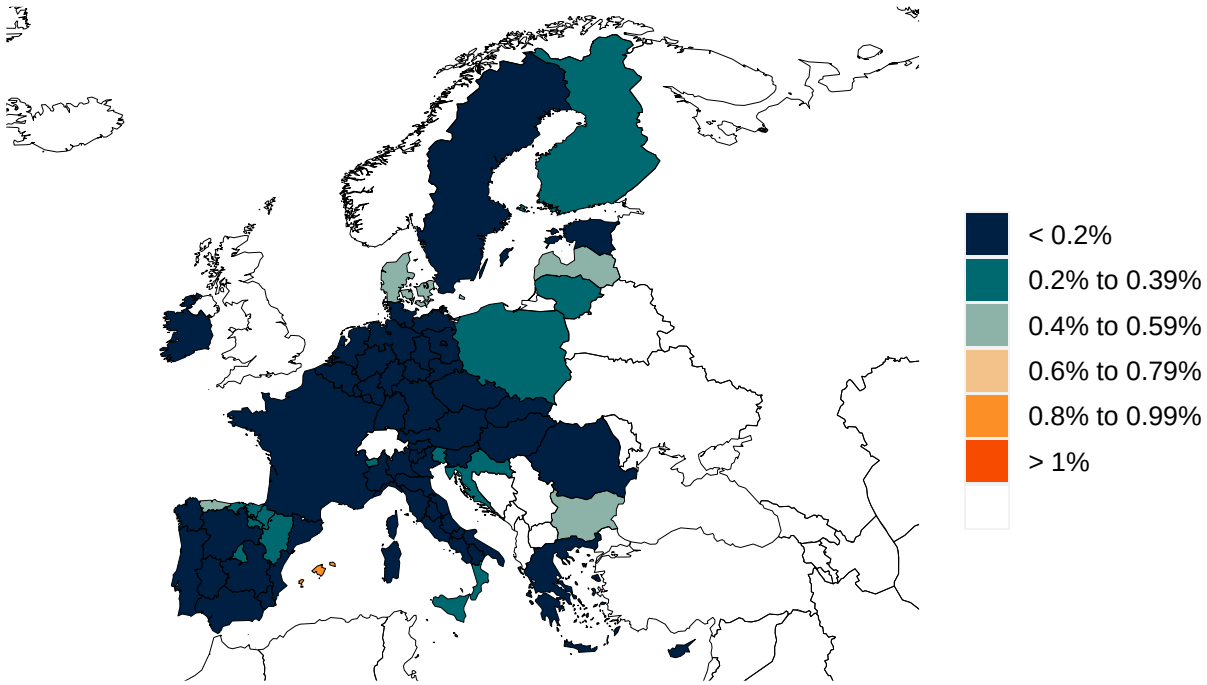


Figure 10.1: Infection-fatality rate on May 2, 2022. This is estimated as the ratio of COVID-19 deaths to estimated daily COVID-19 infections.



Critical drivers

Table 2: Current mandate implementation

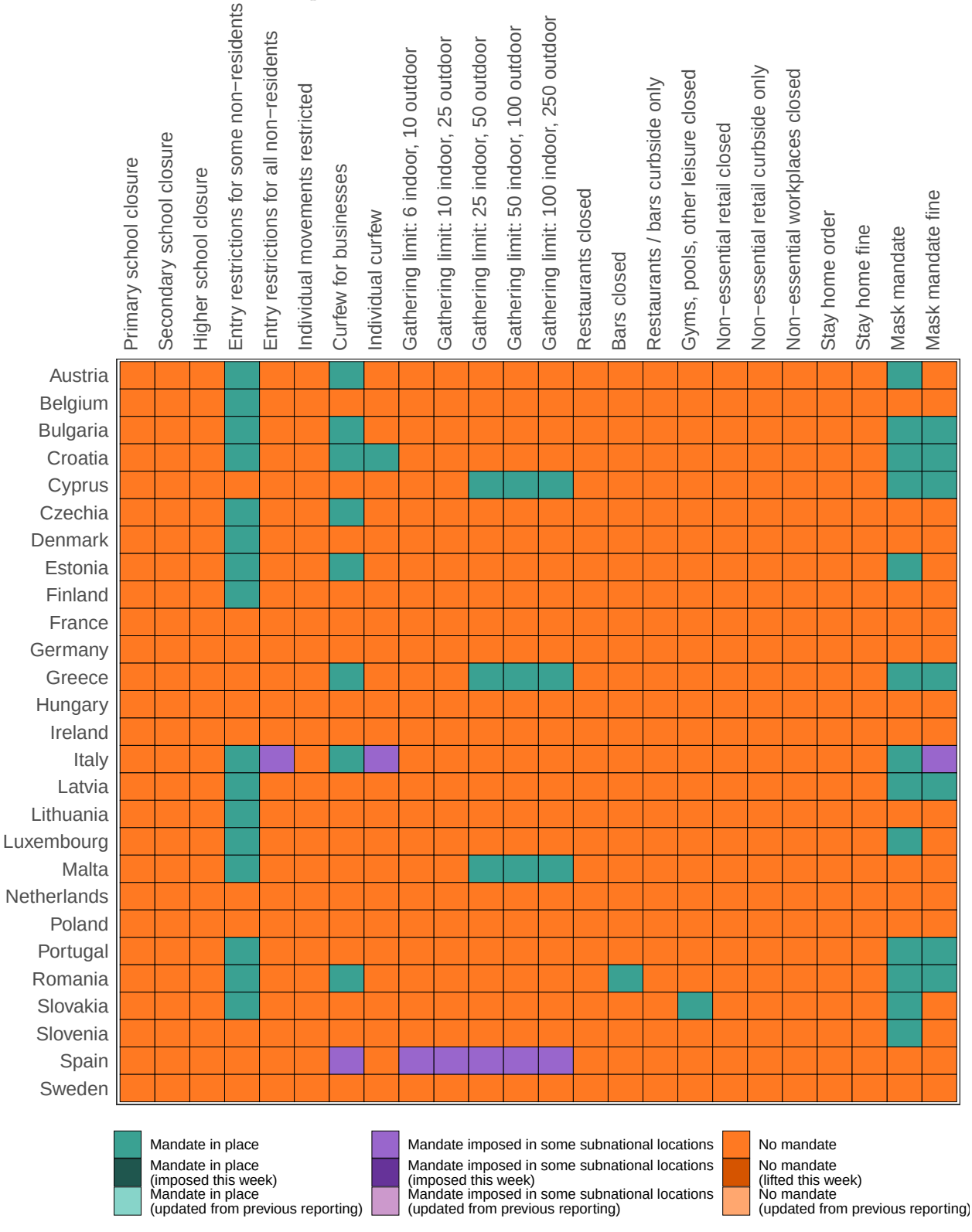


Figure 11.1: Trend in mobility as measured through smartphone app use, compared to January 2020 baseline

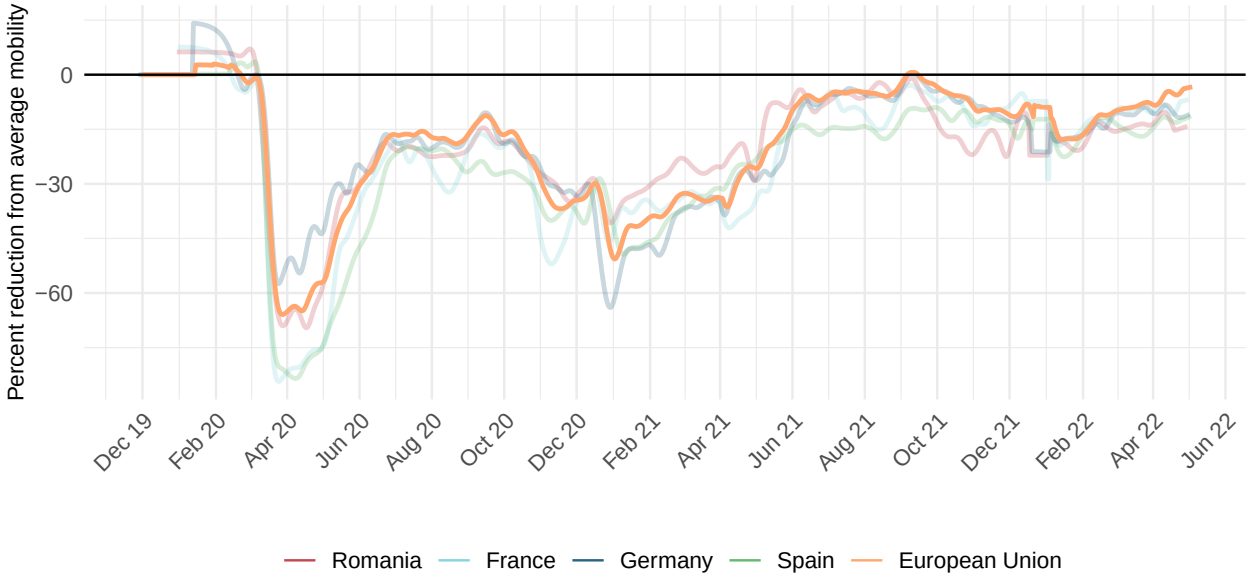


Figure 12.1: Mobility level as measured through smartphone app use, compared to January 2020 baseline (percent) on May 2, 2022

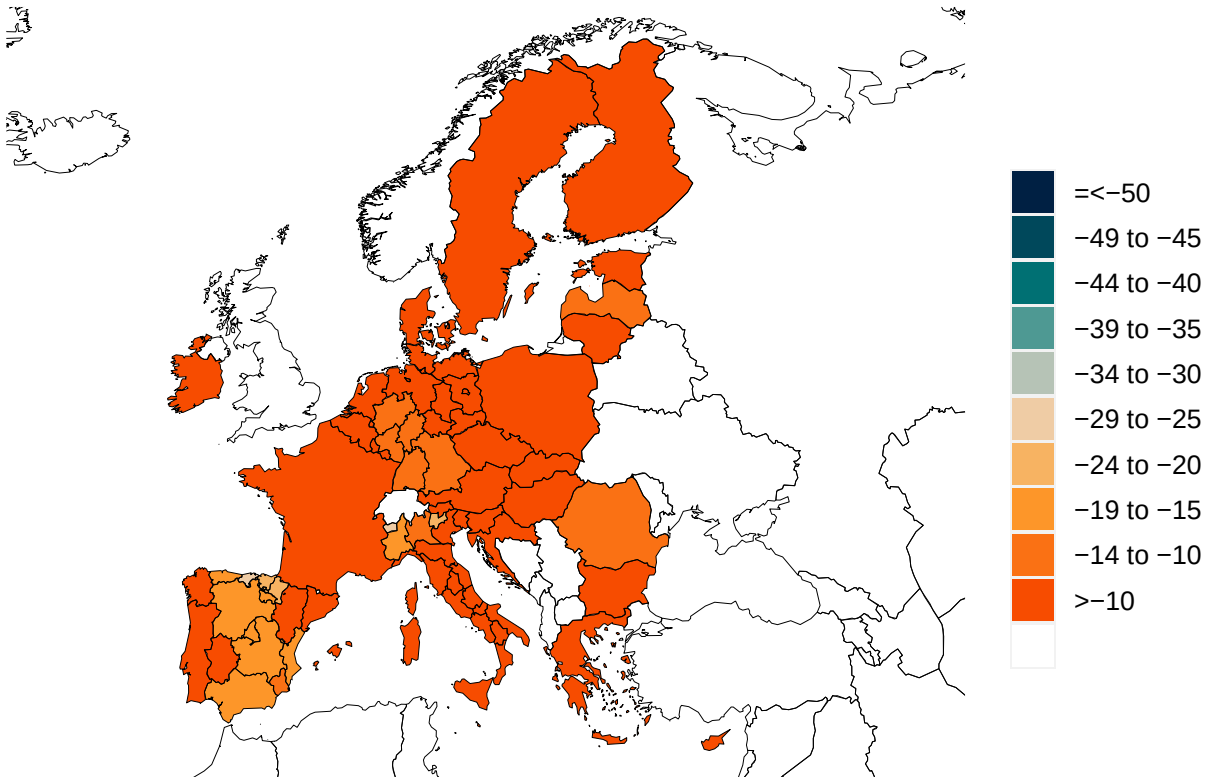


Figure 13.1: Trend in the proportion of the population reporting always wearing a mask when leaving home

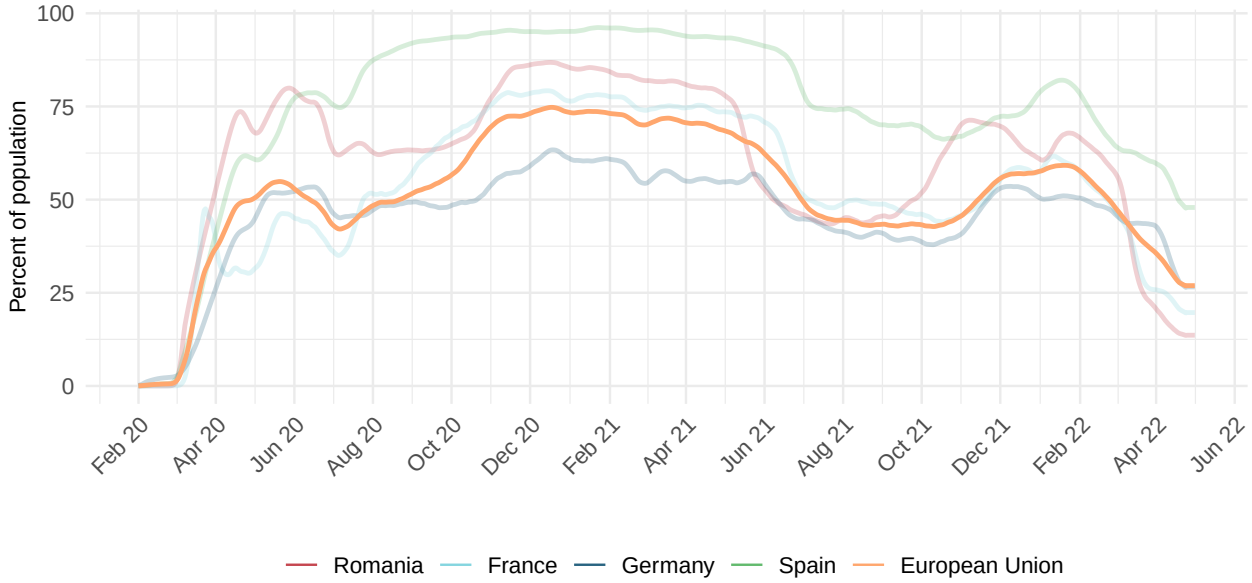


Figure 14.1: Proportion of the population reporting always wearing a mask when leaving home on May 2, 2022

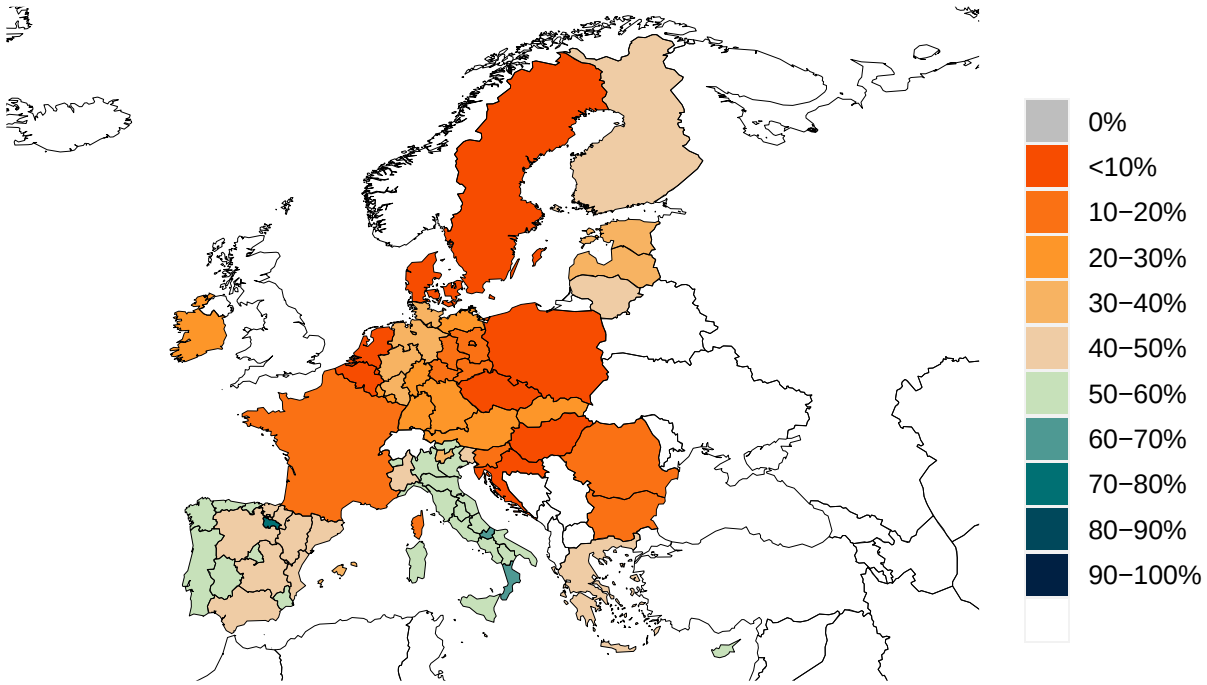


Figure 15.1: Trend in COVID-19 diagnostic tests per 100,000 people

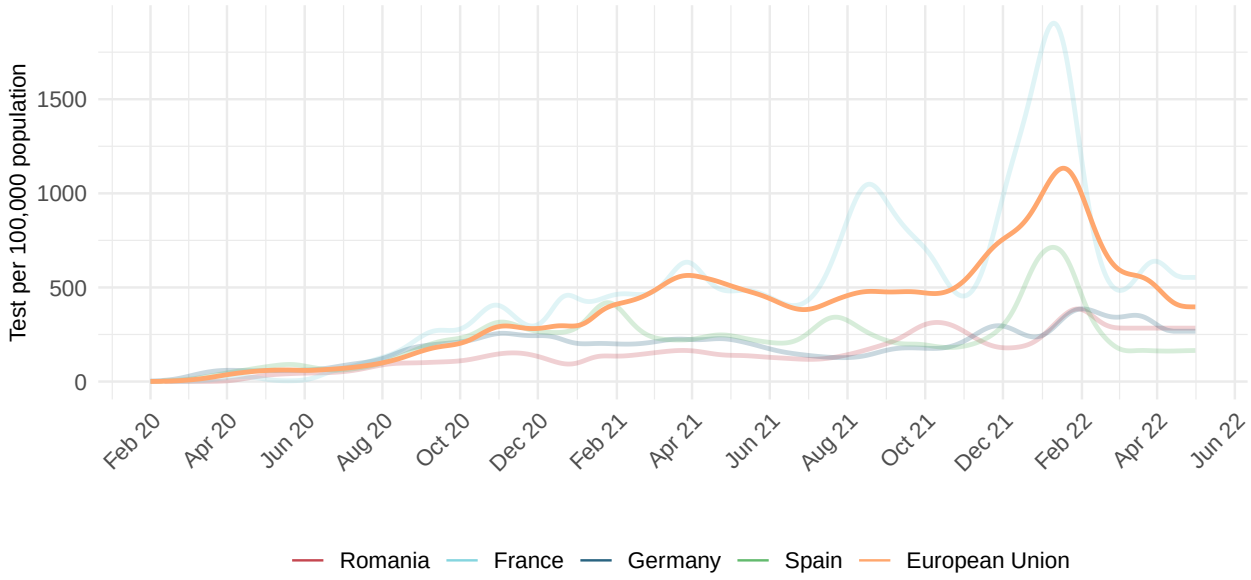


Figure 16.1: COVID-19 diagnostic tests per 100,000 people on May 2, 2022

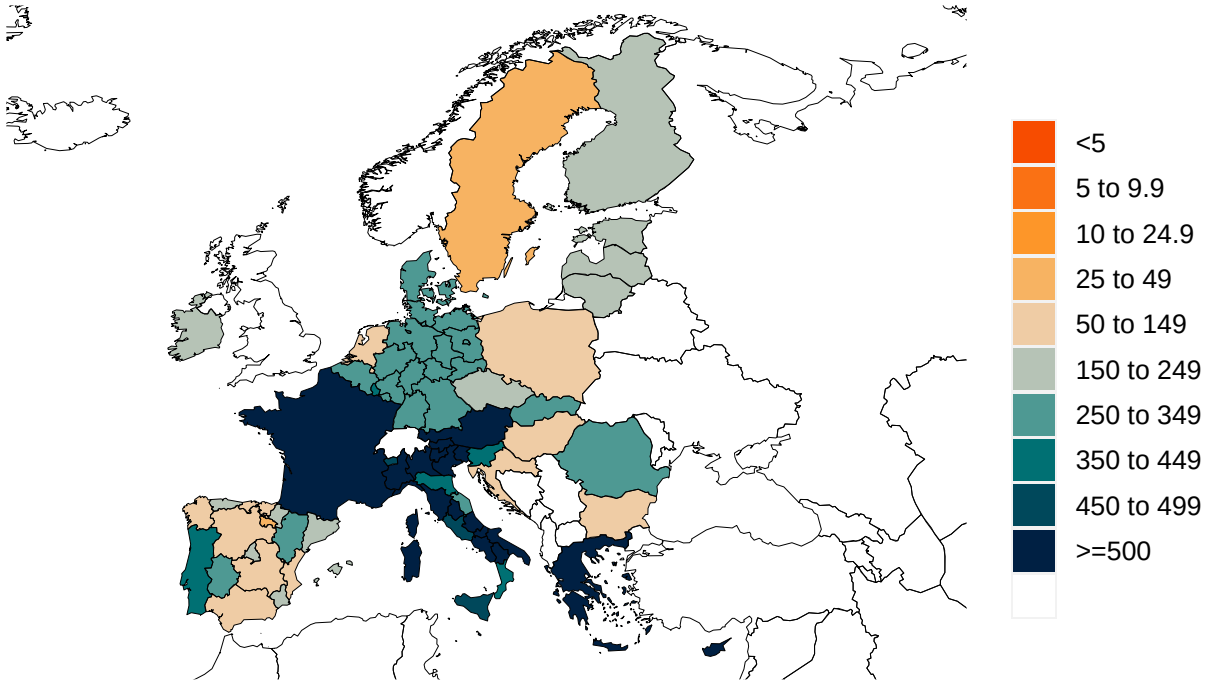


Table 3: Estimates of vaccine effectiveness for specific vaccines used in the model at preventing severe disease and infection. We use data from clinical trials directly, where available, and make estimates otherwise. More information can be found on our website.

	Effectiveness at preventing											
	Ancestral		Alpha		Beta		Gamma		Delta		Omicron	
Vaccine	Severe disease	Infection	Severe disease	Infection	Severe disease	Infection	Severe disease	Infection	Severe disease	Infection	Severe disease	Infection
AstraZeneca	94%	63%	94%	63%	94%	69%	94%	69%	94%	69%	71%	36%
CanSino	66%	62%	66%	62%	64%	61%	64%	61%	64%	61%	48%	32%
CoronaVac	50%	47%	50%	47%	49%	46%	49%	46%	49%	46%	37%	24%
Covaxin	78%	73%	78%	73%	76%	72%	76%	72%	76%	72%	57%	38%
Johnson & Johnson	86%	72%	86%	72%	76%	64%	76%	64%	76%	64%	57%	33%
Moderna	97%	92%	97%	92%	97%	91%	97%	91%	97%	91%	73%	48%
Novavax	89%	83%	89%	83%	86%	82%	86%	82%	86%	82%	65%	43%
Pfizer/BioNTech	95%	86%	95%	86%	95%	84%	95%	84%	95%	84%	72%	44%
Sinopharm	73%	68%	73%	68%	71%	67%	71%	67%	71%	67%	53%	35%
Sputnik-V	92%	86%	92%	86%	89%	85%	89%	85%	89%	85%	67%	44%
Other vaccines	75%	70%	75%	70%	73%	69%	73%	69%	73%	69%	55%	36%
Other vaccines (mRNA)	91%	86%	91%	86%	88%	85%	88%	85%	88%	85%	67%	45%

Percent of the population having received at least one dose (17.1) and fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 (17.2) by May 2, 2022

Figure 17.1: Percent of the population having received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

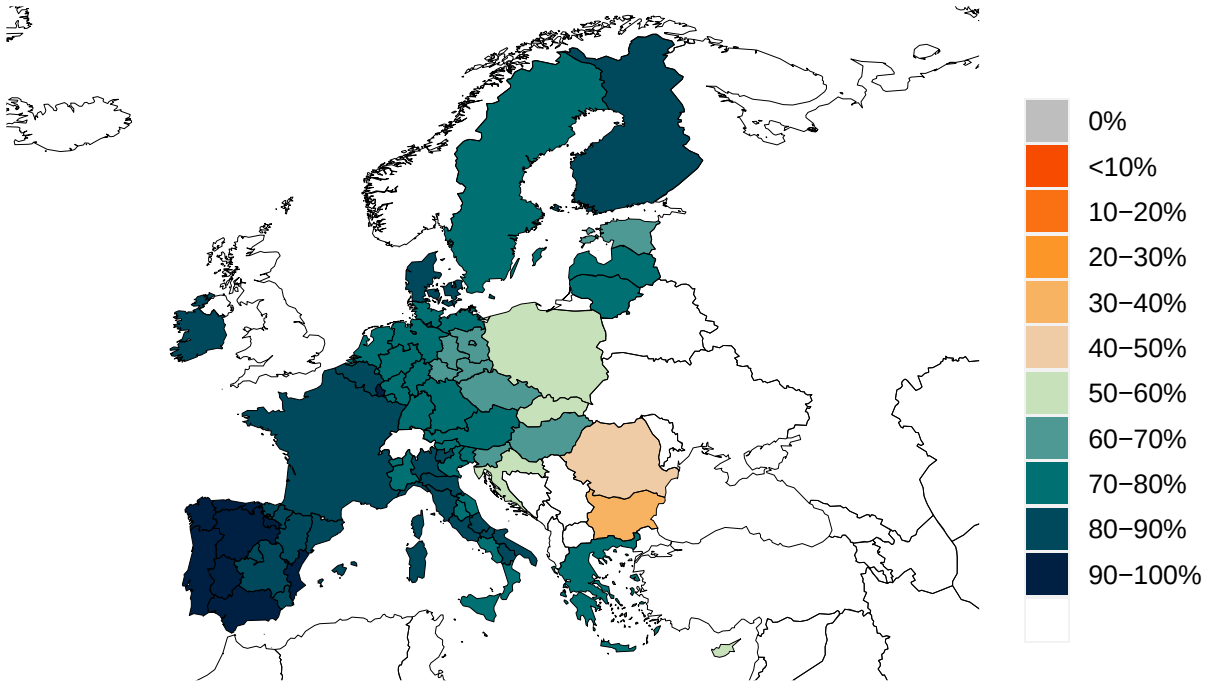


Figure 17.2: Percent of the population fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2

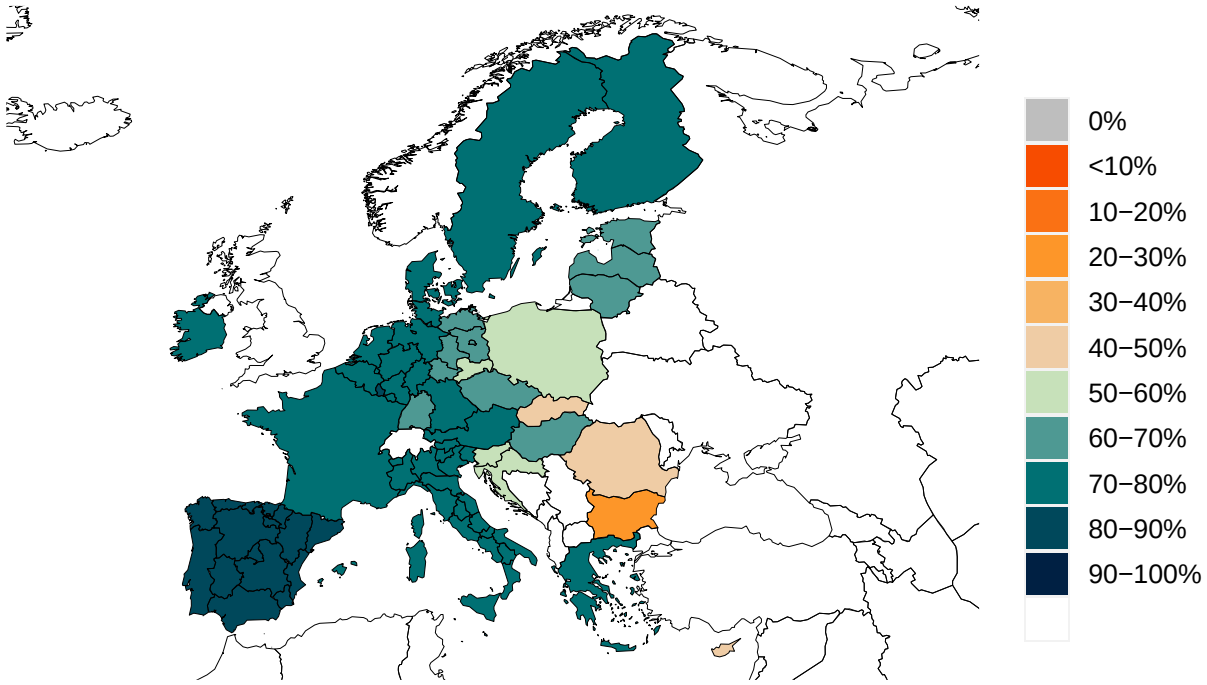


Figure 18.1: Trend in the estimated proportion of the population that is 12 years and older that has been vaccinated or would definitely receive the COVID-19 vaccine if available. Note that vaccine acceptance is calculated using survey data from the 18+ population.

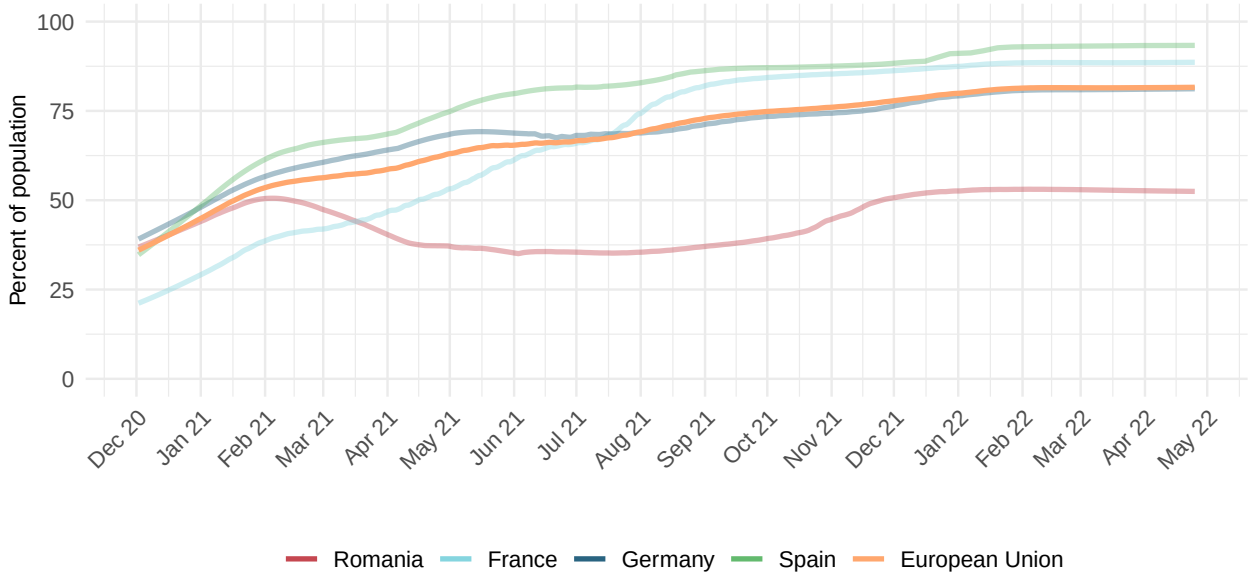


Figure 19.1: Estimated proportion of the population that is 12 years and older that has been vaccinated or would definitely receive the COVID-19 vaccine if available. Note that vaccine acceptance is calculated using survey data from the 18+ population.

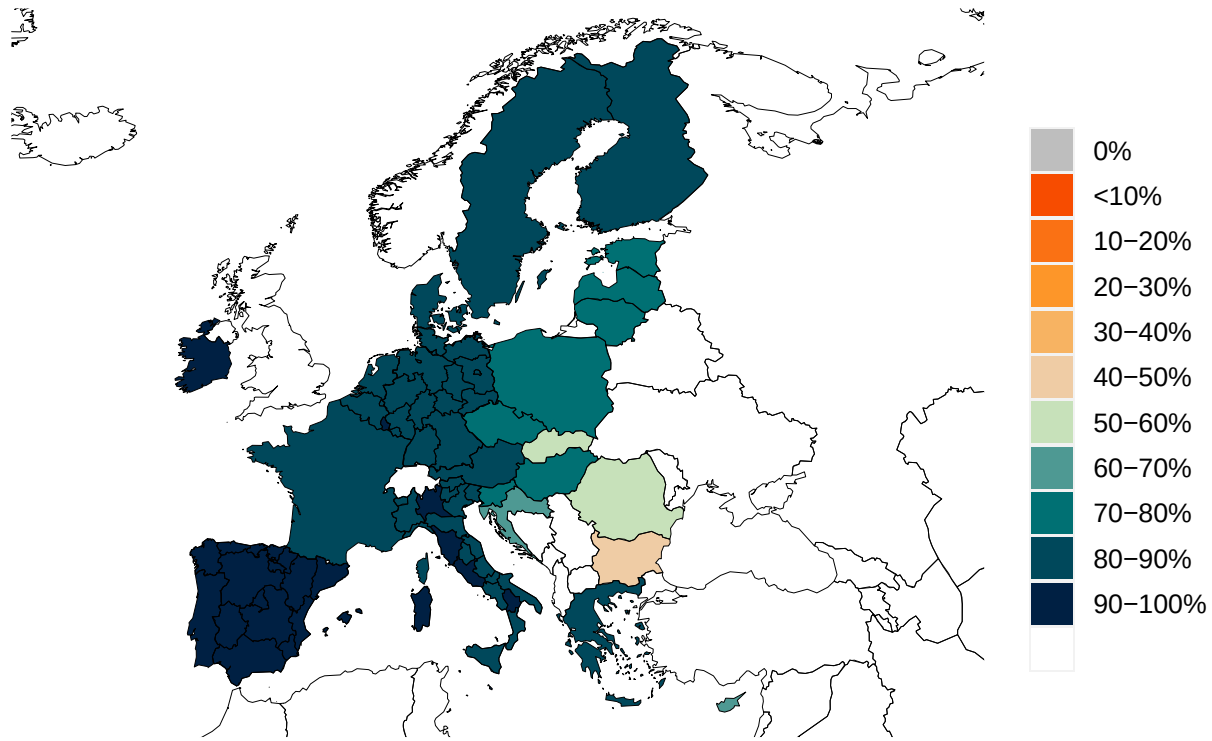


Figure 20.1: Estimated proportion of the total population that is not vaccinated but willing to be vaccinated as of April 25, 2022

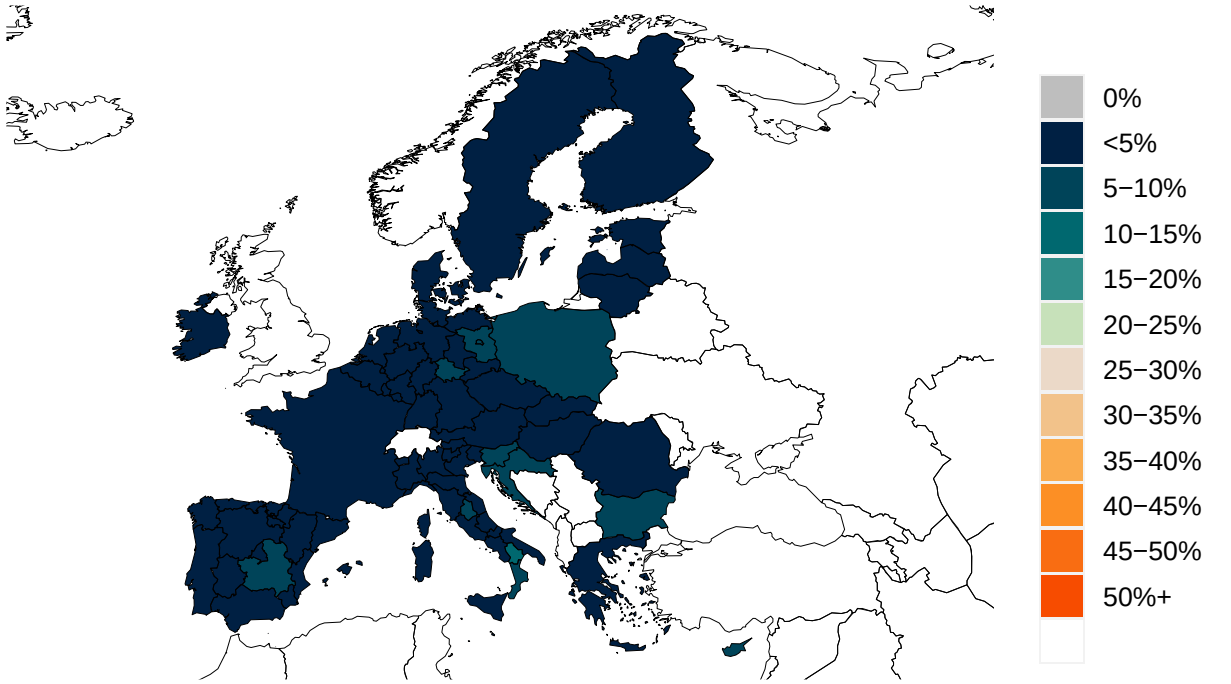


Figure 21.1: Percent of people who receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and those who are fully vaccinated

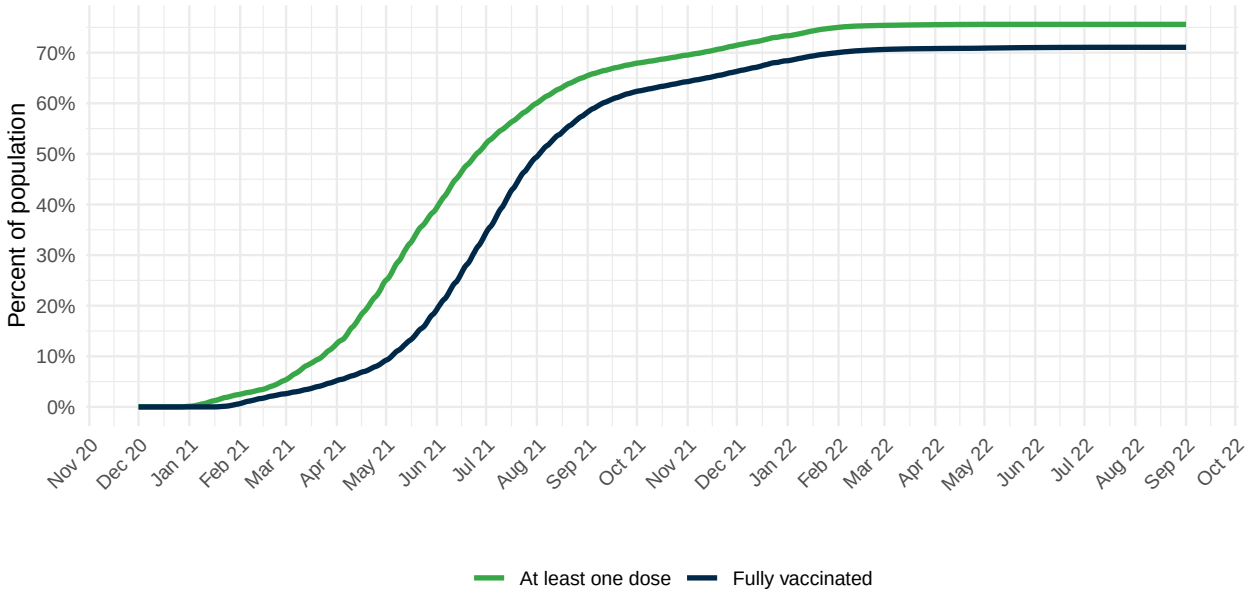
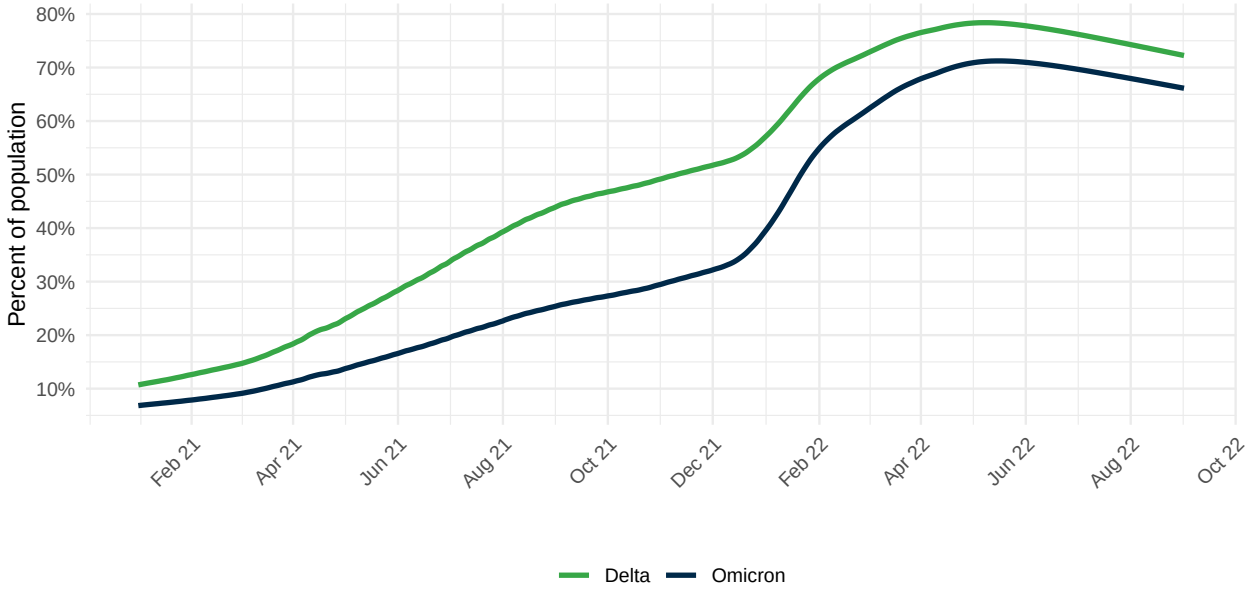


Figure 22.1: Percent of people who are immune to Delta or Omicron. Immunity is based on protection due to prior vaccination and infection(s). Moreover, variant-specific immunity is also based on variant-variant specific protection.



Projections and scenarios

Figure 23.1: Daily COVID-19 infections until September 01, 2022 for three scenarios

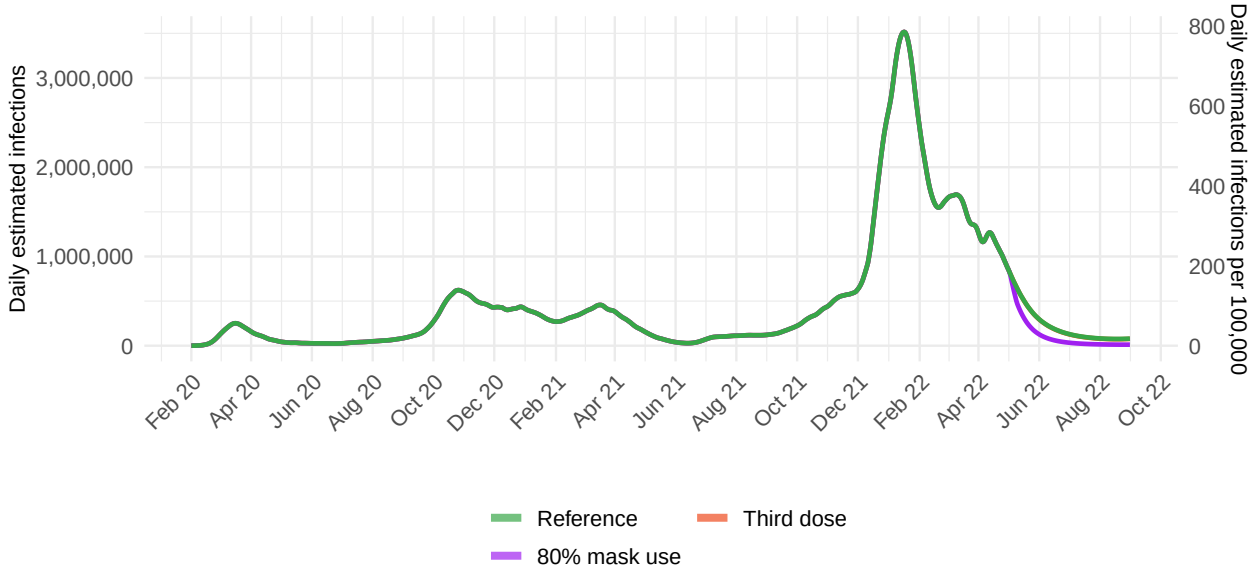


Figure 23.2: Daily COVID-19 reported cases until September 01, 2022 for three scenarios

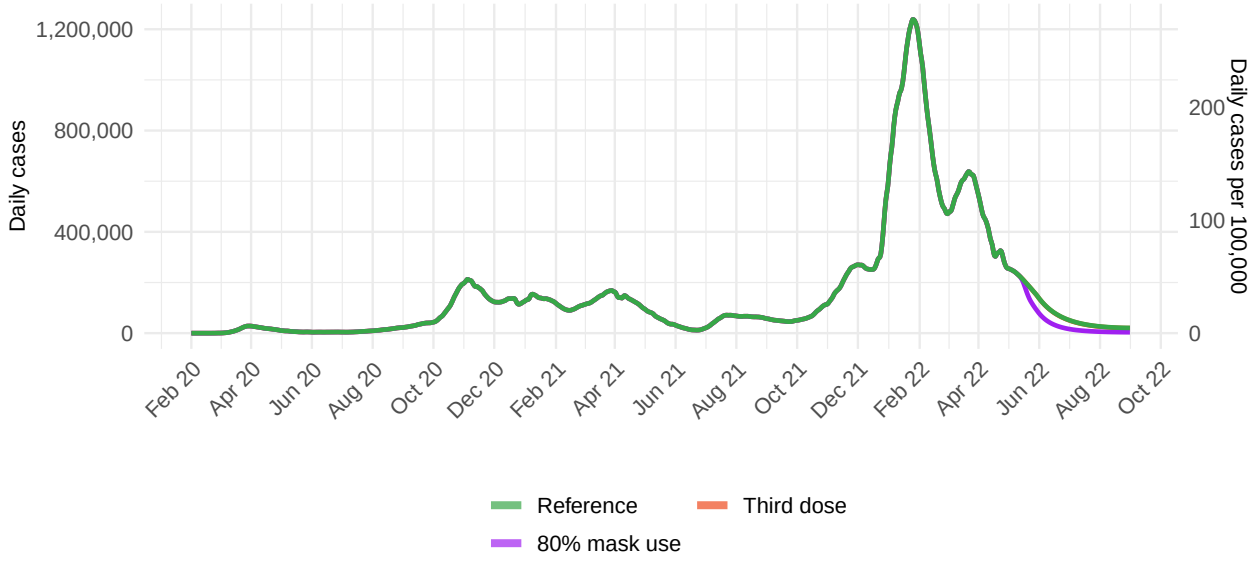


Figure 23.3: Daily COVID-19 hospital census until September 01, 2022 for three scenarios

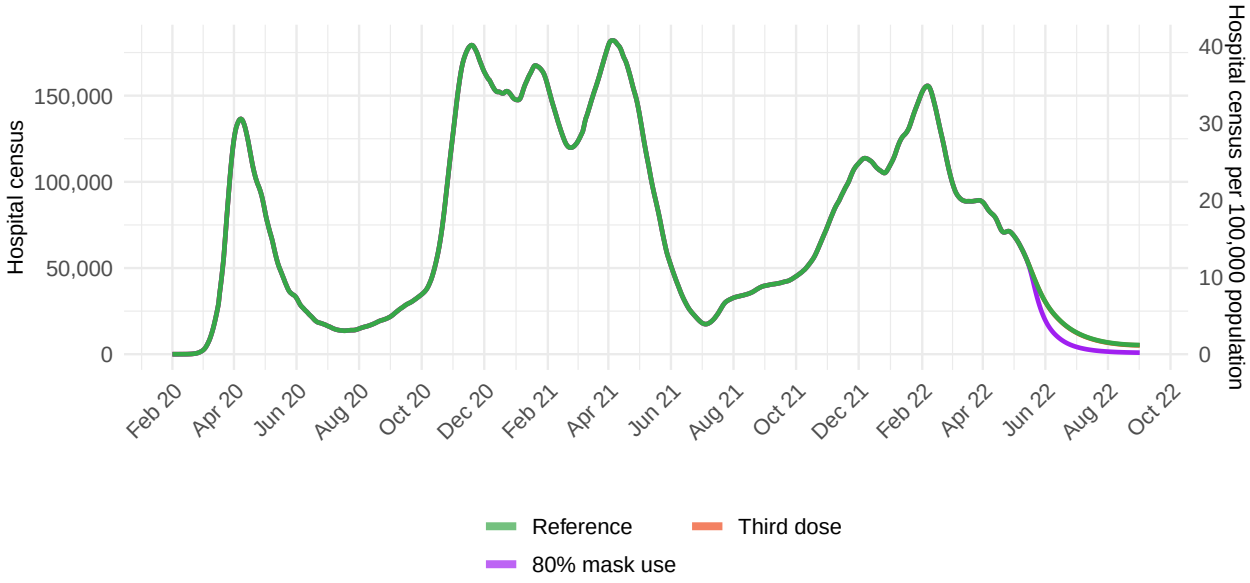


Figure 23.4: Reported daily COVID-19 deaths per 100,000

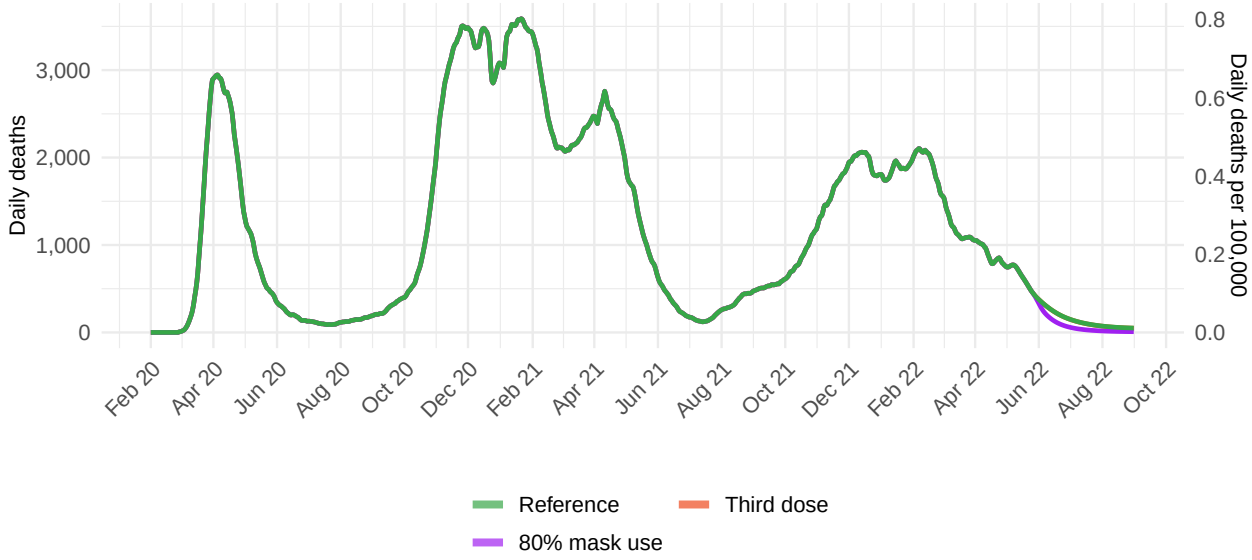


Figure 23.5: Total daily COVID-19 deaths per 100,000

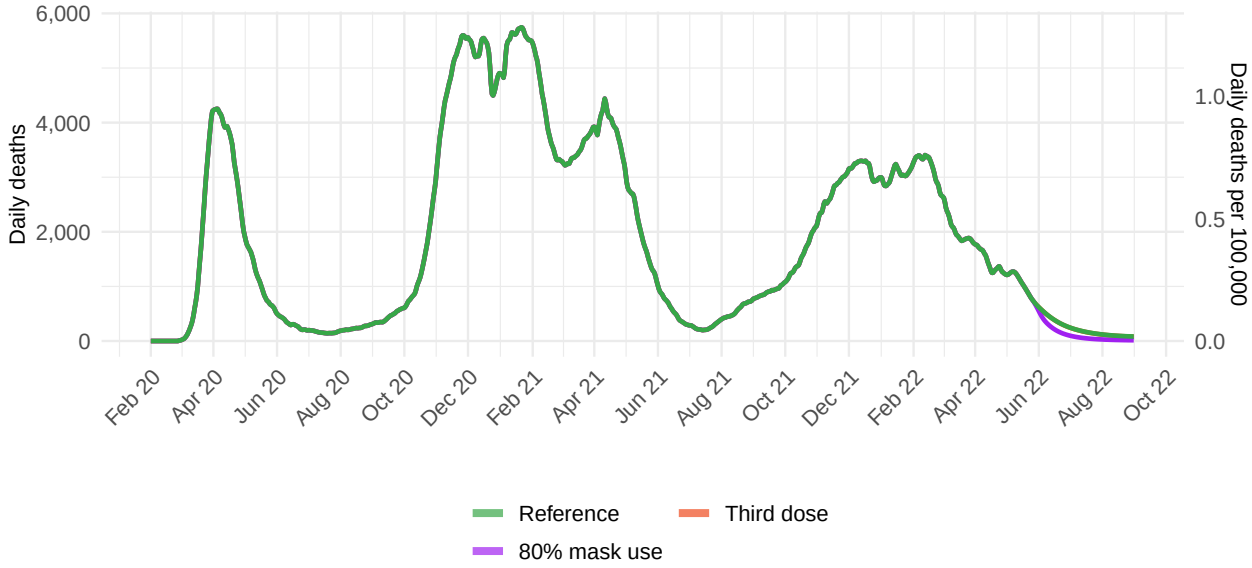


Figure 24.1: Comparison of reference model projections with other COVID modeling groups. For this comparison, we are including projections of daily COVID-19 deaths from other modeling groups when available, last model update in brackets: Delphi from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Delphi) [May 2, 2022], and the SI-KJalpha model from the University of Southern California (SIKJalpha) [May 2, 2022]. Regional values are aggregates from available locations in that region.

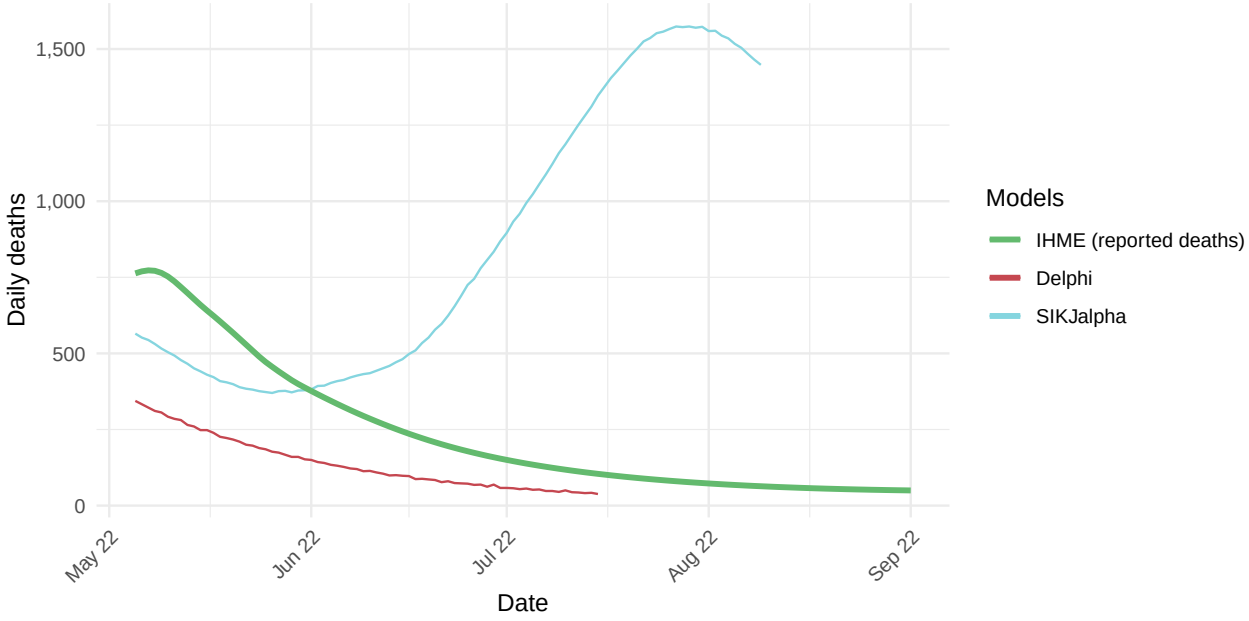


Figure 25.1: The estimated inpatient hospital usage is shown over time. The percent of hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients is color-coded based on observed quantiles of the maximum proportion of beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. Less than 5% is considered *low stress*, 5-9% is considered *moderate stress*, 10-19% is considered *high stress*, and 20% or greater is considered *extreme stress*.

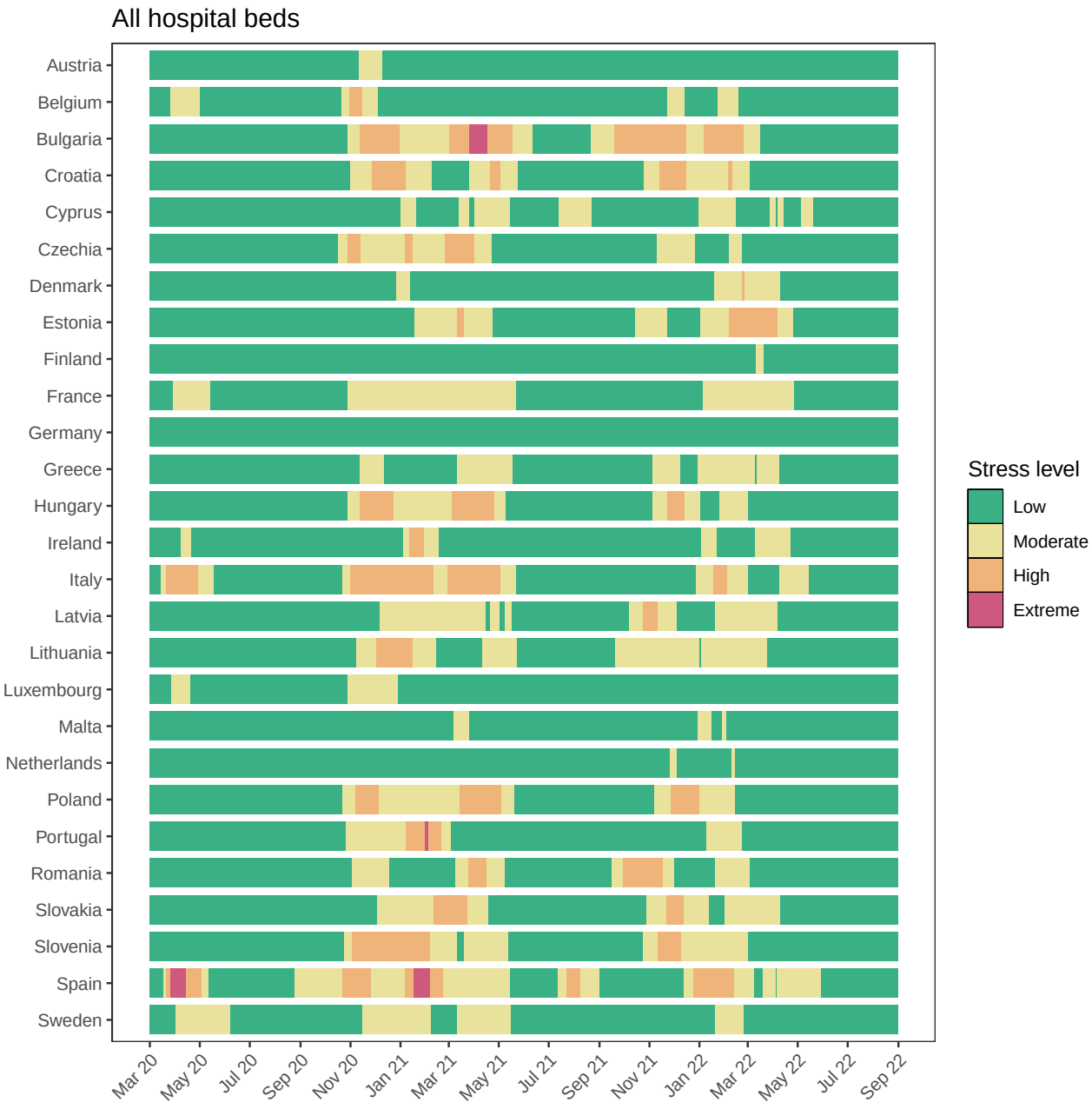


Figure 26.1: The estimated intensive care unit (ICU) usage is shown over time. The percent of ICU beds occupied by COVID-19 patients is color-coded based on observed quantiles of the maximum proportion of ICU beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. Less than 10% is considered *low stress*, 10-29% is considered *moderate stress*, 30-59% is considered *high stress*, and 60% or greater is considered *extreme stress*.

More information

Data sources:

Mask use and vaccine confidence data are from the The Delphi Group at Carnegie Mellon University and University of Maryland COVID-19 Trends and Impact Surveys, in partnership with Facebook. Mask use data are also from Premise, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the YouGov COVID-19 Behaviour Tracker survey.

Genetic sequence and metadata are primarily from the GISAID Initiative. Further details available on the COVID-19 model FAQ page.

A note of thanks:

We wish to warmly acknowledge the support of these and others who have made our COVID-19 estimation efforts possible.

More information:

For all COVID-19 resources at IHME, visit http://www.healthdata.org/covid.

To download our most recent results, visit our Data downloads page.

Questions? Requests? Feedback? Please contact us at https://www.healthdata.org/covid/contact-us.