



**Fédération Européenne  
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## **AEMH & FEMS SPRING REPORT AUSTRIA MAY 2022**

### **Appointment of new Minister of Health**

Shortly before accomplishing his first year in office, Wolfgang Mückstein (Green Party) resigned as Health Minister on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. While Mückstein stated that he resigned for personal reasons and he plans to go back to work in his practice as a general practitioner in Vienna, reasons for his withdrawal are said to rather be the announcement of the lifting of nearly all COVID-19 measures by the end of March 2022, which Mückstein deemed to be way too soon. Due to his resignation, Johannes Rauch (Green Party) was appointed as new Minister of Health on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Before taking on the office of Minister of Health, Mr Rauch was a member of the government of Vorarlberg (a province in the west of Austria).

### **Elections to the Executive Committee of the Austrian Medical Chamber**

This spring, elections took place in each of the 9 regional medical chambers. The elected Presidents and Vice-presidents in the regional medical chambers are eligible for election to the Executive committee of the Austrian Medical Chamber. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 the Executive committee of the Austrian Medical Chamber will be elected by the General Assembly.

### **Establishment of protection zones around Hospitals**

In the course of last year, Anti-COVID demonstrations in front of Austrian hospitals and health institutions have increased. Attendees of these demonstrations protested against COVID-19 measures well as against the COVID-19 vaccination, also targeting health care personnel. As hospital entrances had been blocked by demonstrations and health care personnel had been attacked by protesters, the Austrian Security Police Act was amended in order to offer sufficient protection by the police to critical health infrastructure and health care personnel.

Security authorities are now enabled to create protection zones of about 150 meters around critical health infrastructures, should the need arise to offer special protection to these sites in an individual situation. The amendment will make it possible for police to remove anyone posing a threat to safe operations of the health care institution and break up gatherings that block access to sites. This amendment of the Austrian Security Police Act will be in effect until the end of 2022.

### **Community Nurses – Pilot Projects started in April 2022 in Austria**

In April 2022, about 95 community nursing projects employing more than 230 community nurses started in Austria. The community nurses shall play a central part in local health care, tasked with the development of the care system on the community level, i.e. in villages and towns. The pilot project aims at improving the health of the Austrian population, especially of members of risk groups, the elderly and chronically ill persons. The project furthermore shall enhance the possibilities to care for the elderly in their own homes rather than having to be taken care of in an elderly care centre by supporting the elderly themselves and their relatives. The Community Nursing Projects are supported by the European Union with 52,4 million € and will run for three years.

## COVID-19 in Austria<sup>1</sup>

Status: 25.04.2022

Tests performed so far: 181.825.734

Cases confirmed overall: 4.156.334

Current active cases: 77.132

In hospital: 1.381

Intensive care unit: 118

Persons recovered: 4.059.732

Confirmed deaths: 19.470

Vaccinations<sup>2</sup>: 76,4% of the overall population with at least one dose,  
68,32% of the population have a valid vaccination certificate  
(i.e.3 vaccines or 2 vaccines plus recovered from an infection)

### Overview of current measures

As from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the testing system in Austria was changed, with the effect that every person in Austria may now only take 5 tests (PCR or Antigen) per month free of charge. Before April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, an unlimited number of tests per month was permitted. Testing of persons with symptoms remains free of charge, nevertheless.

As from April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Austrian government has removed most of the coronavirus restrictions including mandatory masks in many indoor places. The obligation to wear an FFP2 mask now only applies in enclosed spaces of hospitals, elderly and nursing homes, public transport (including stops and stations), taxis, and customer areas of vital trade, such as supermarkets and administrative buildings. The mask mandate has been dropped in enclosed places like gyms, restaurants, bars, and cultural establishments, however masks are still recommended. The City of Vienna has dropped 2G rules for gastronomy and night clubs – the only places where it was still required to show proof of vaccination or recovery.

**A 3G rule** (proof that a person has either been vaccinated against COVID-19, recently recovered from the disease or has a negative test) is only needed for visitors, employees and service providers in hospitals and care homes.

**Green passport:** The period of validity of vaccination certificates for the third dose (booster shot) has been extended to 365 days.

**Isolation after a positive test:** After the fifth day of isolation and at least 48 hours without symptoms, quarantine for mild or asymptomatic cases can be ended. However, there is a “traffic restriction” for another five days, with a mask mandate and entry prohibitions to gastronomy venues, health and care homes, and events during this period. In order to obtain an early lifting of the restrictions, a free PCR test can be carried out.

If the test is negative or with a CT value (short for Cycle Threshold the gold standard for detecting COVID-19) above 30, the isolation can be lifted. If the value is below 30, one must remain in isolation.

*Dr. S/CM, April 25th, 2022*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Covid19 Dashboard Ages, all data from 25.04.2022

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://orf.at/corona/daten/impfung>, all data from 25.04.2022