

# Rage Across Europe As COVID Lockdowns and Curbs Trigger Riots

By [Joe Barnes](#), [Lucy Fisher](#), [Justin Stares](#), and [Jorg Luyken](#) | [The Telegraph](#)

Europe on Sunday night faced an increasingly [violent backlash against new Covid restrictions](#) imposed to deal with a record number of new cases on the Continent.

Riot police were forced to use water cannon and tear gas as peaceful demonstrations turned violent in Brussels when tens of thousands of protesters marched through the streets [against the measures](#).

They smashed the glass at the entrance to a European Commission building after young men in hoods attacked police vans with baseball bats.

It followed the second night of disorder in the Netherlands on Saturday over the introduction of new coronavirus restrictions, where police opened fire on the crowds, wounding at least four people.

Demonstrations also took place in [Austria](#), Italy, Croatia, Denmark, and Switzerland over the weekend amid clampdowns on civil liberties by European governments to curb a steep increase in the number of infections that are putting healthcare systems under strain.

On Sunday, Austria's interior minister warned of increasing "radicalization" among the population, days after it was announced that three anti-lockdown protesters had been arrested for setting a police car on fire in an attempt to burn an officer.

Europe is experiencing a worrying surge in the number of coronavirus cases. On Sunday, France reported 19,749 new infections, a 58 percent jump from a week ago. Gabriel Attal, a government spokesman, told reporters that the “fifth wave is starting at lightning speed”.

[The unrest increased debates in Germany](#) and other European countries about the possible introduction of compulsory immunizations, with low vaccination rates prompting fears a new wave of infections could once again cripple the Continent.

As Europe endured fresh violence, in Britain, Sajid Javid insisted that no such measures were necessary, saying he hoped that people can “[look forward to Christmas together](#)”.

The Health Secretary [played down the likelihood](#) of tougher curbs being introduced in England despite cases surging on the Continent.

Mr. Javid said the “one big difference” between Britain and parts of Europe where coronavirus is soaring is the UK’s vaccine booster program.

“It’s the most successful of Europe,” he told BBC One’s Andrew Marr Show on Sunday, adding it is “absolutely key for us to keep this virus at bay”.

The UK has completed 15 million booster doses, with 25 percent of over-12s covered.

He also highlighted that the UK “made a tough decision back at the start of the summer” [to open up](#), while “other countries didn’t follow our course”.

Despite Mr. Javid’s upbeat tone, he warned that the public must “remain cautious, not complacent in any way”, describing the virus as “very unpredictable”.

He also stressed that [taking up the flu vaccine](#) was “just as important this winter” as receiving a Covid booster shot, in

order to prevent the NHS from being overwhelmed.

A government source echoed his sentiments on Sunday night, telling The Telegraph: “The current data shows no sign of a need to change course. Whilst we always remain vigilant, Plan A is working. But the most important way to minimize risk against the virus is to come forward for a booster jab when called.”

The Health Secretary vowed earlier in the day that Britain will not consider making vaccines mandatory for the general population.

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