

GOVERNMENT

Concerns mount as COVID-19 cases climb in Europe, China

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COVID-19 first emerged in Wuhan, China in late 2019. Image credit: Euromonitor

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Europe is bracing for another surge of COVID-19 infections ahead of the cold winter season, threatening the region's economic recovery.

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According to the World Health Organization's [reporting](#), Europe saw a 6 percent increase in new weekly cases during the week of Oct. 25 to Oct. 31. Meanwhile, China which is following a zero-COVID strategy is dealing with outbreaks in 19 of its 31 provinces.

Worrying signs

Nearly 5 million COVID-19 deaths have been reported worldwide. Even with vaccinations underway, 2021 has proven deadlier than 2020 due in large part to the more contagious delta variant.

Weekly deaths worldwide climbed 8 percent, including a 12 percent increase in Europe. The continent has seen infections rise for five straight weeks, approaching December 2020 levels, despite cases declining or stabilizing in all other regions.



COVID-19 vaccinations have stalled, contributing to the latest surge. Image credit: Burberry

Germany and Greece are among the countries reporting their highest daily case counts since the start of the pandemic, while Russia is also seeing deaths climb. Government officials are implementing, or at least considering, stricter restrictions on unvaccinated populations as vaccination rates slow.

Health and government officials are concerned that the latest rise in COVID-19 cases comes ahead of winter, which brings more indoor crowding and seasonal colds.

In China, official case counts remain relatively low, with about 500 total COVID-19 cases reported since mid-October. However, the country's zero-COVID approach has resulted in tightening domestic travel restrictions and lockdowns in several cities, impacting millions of residents.

COVID outbreaks are becoming more frequent despite 76 percent of the Chinese population being vaccinated, according to [CNN](#).

The precarious situation in China may be impacting optimism among the country's affluents, which seems to be waning nearly two years after the start of the global health crisis.

According to [Agility Research & Strategy's](#) "China Outlook for 2022," affluent consumers' outlook has improved significantly since the start of the pandemic but this recovery has slowed in the second half of 2021. Nonetheless, Chinese affluents and millionaires remain willing to spend on luxury goods a promising sign for brands' bottom lines ([see story](#)).

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