

ASPHER Report: COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

Week of August 29th, 2022

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This is ASPHER's weekly surveillance report. We hope it is complementary to other resources such as ECDC and Our World in Data, where the reader can go for more detailed information. Please give us your feedback: is the presentation helpful to you and your colleagues? What other information would you like to see in it?

Key messages

- The [WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19](#) highlights that the global number of weekly cases and deaths declined compared to the previous week. Compared to other world regions, the European region saw some of the greatest declines in cases and deaths.
- The [ECDC country overview report](#) highlights that the overall case notification rate continues to decline rapidly. The wave driven largely by BA.5 that was previously observed to be moving from west to east appears to have passed its peak in all countries, with only one country (Croatia) reporting a sharp increase in its case notification rates among people aged 65 years. Five countries reported increases in hospital or ICU admissions or occupancy rates, but the overall pressure on ICU capacity is low.

Selected recent COVID-19 publications

Worobey, M., Levy, J. I., Malpica Serrano, L., Crits-Christoph, A., Pekar, J. E., Goldstein, S. A., Rasmussen, A. L., Kraemer, M. U. G., Newman, C., Koopmans, M. P. G., Suchard, M. A., Wertheim, J. O., Lemey, P., Robertson, D. L., Garry, R. F., Holmes, E. C., Rambaut, A., & Andersen, K. G. (2022). The huanan seafood wholesale market in wuhan was the early epicenter of the covid-19 pandemic. *Science*, 377(6609), 951–959. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abp8715>

- The precise events surrounding virus spillover will always be clouded, but all of the circumstantial evidence so far points to more than one zoonotic event occurring in Huanan market in Wuhan, China, likely during November–December 2019.

Fell, D. B., Dimanlig-Cruz, S., Regan, A. K., Håberg, S. E., Gravel, C. A., Oakley, L., Alton, G. D., Török, E., Dhinsa, T., Shah, P. S., Wilson, K., Sprague, A. E., El-Chaâr, D., Walker, M. C., Barrett, J., Okun, N., Buchan, S. A., Kwong, J. C., Wilson, S. E., ... Dougan, S. D. (2022). Risk of preterm birth, small for gestational age at birth, and stillbirth after covid-19 vaccination during pregnancy: population based retrospective cohort study. *Bmj*, E071416, 071416. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2022-071416>

- Vaccination against covid-19 during pregnancy is not associated with a higher risk of preterm birth, small for gestational age at birth, or stillbirth

Notarte, K. I., Catahay, J. A., Velasco, J. V., Pastrana, A., Ver, A. T., Pangilinan, F. C., Peligro, P. J., Casimiro, M., Guerrero, J. J., Gellaco, M. M. L., Lippi, G., Henry, B. M., & Fernández-de-las-Peñas, C. (2022). Impact of covid-19 vaccination on the risk of developing long-covid and on existing long-covid symptoms: a systematic review. *Eclinicalmedicine*, 53, 101624–101624. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2022.101624>

- Low level of evidence suggests that vaccination before SARS-CoV-2 infection could reduce the risk of subsequent long-COVID.

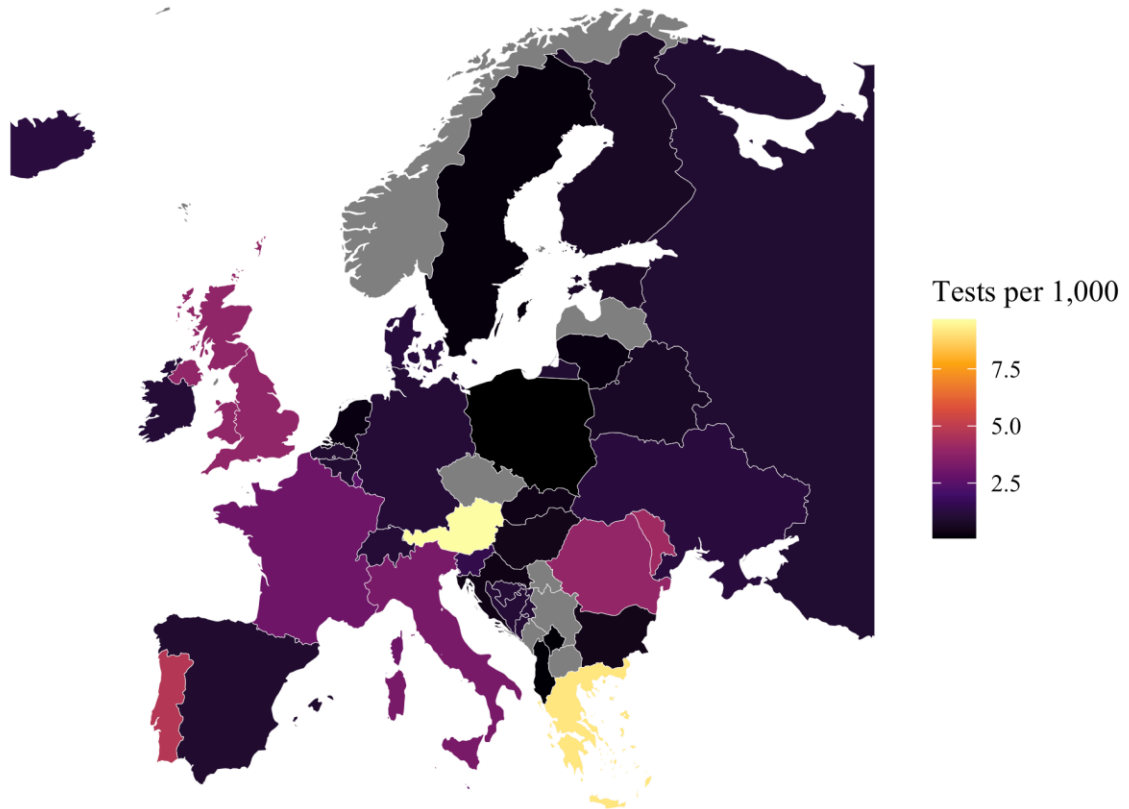
ASPHER is concerned about talk of the ‘end of the pandemic’. *Pandemic* is not defined by politicians, or by journalists. The *pandemic* is defined by the World Health Organisation, under strict decision-making process and not as mere opinion. A pandemic is “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”. We are still in the midst of the pandemic.

We are concerned with the rapid dismantling of non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19 across Europe. In a [recent opinion paper](#), we advocate for European governments’ continued recommendation for the use of face masks in high traffic public areas like public transport. The reality remains that the future evolution of the pandemic is highly uncertain. Primary health care and social care provision across Europe are not yet restored to pre-pandemic levels due to the burden of ever new variants of the virus. Occupational health services are non-existent in many parts of Europe and therefore unable to address mass sickness absence or support workers in key industries suffering burnout. We urge governments to invest in additional measures to support primary care, social care, and occupational health. Protection of our key service workers is a central concern. We will not come out of the pandemic until we seriously address the problem globally. We need global solidarity, commitment to [international preparedness](#) and [increased global production of vaccines](#).

ASPHER supports the [VACCINE-plus approach](#) to pandemic control; or what we have called ‘[COVID-DO IT ALL](#)’. We recognize the importance of following [non-pharmacological interventions](#) as well as achieving a high level of vaccine uptake. Vaccine hesitancy still needs to be understood and addressed especially in Eastern parts of Europe. We need to protect frontline services, protect children, and protect vulnerable people. Current political moves in Europe are adding to the likelihood of increased transmission, creating more pressures on services, more likelihood of additional sickness absence, economic damage, and social disruption. The mindset of the ‘pandemic is over’ will have the dangerous impact of prolonging it.

















































Latest COVID-19 test rates in the countries of the WHO-Europe region ([Source: Our World in Data](#)).
















New COVID-19 tests per 1,000 population



Rolling average of latest COVID-19 test, case, and hospitalization rates in the countries of the WHO-Europe region (Source: Our World in Data).

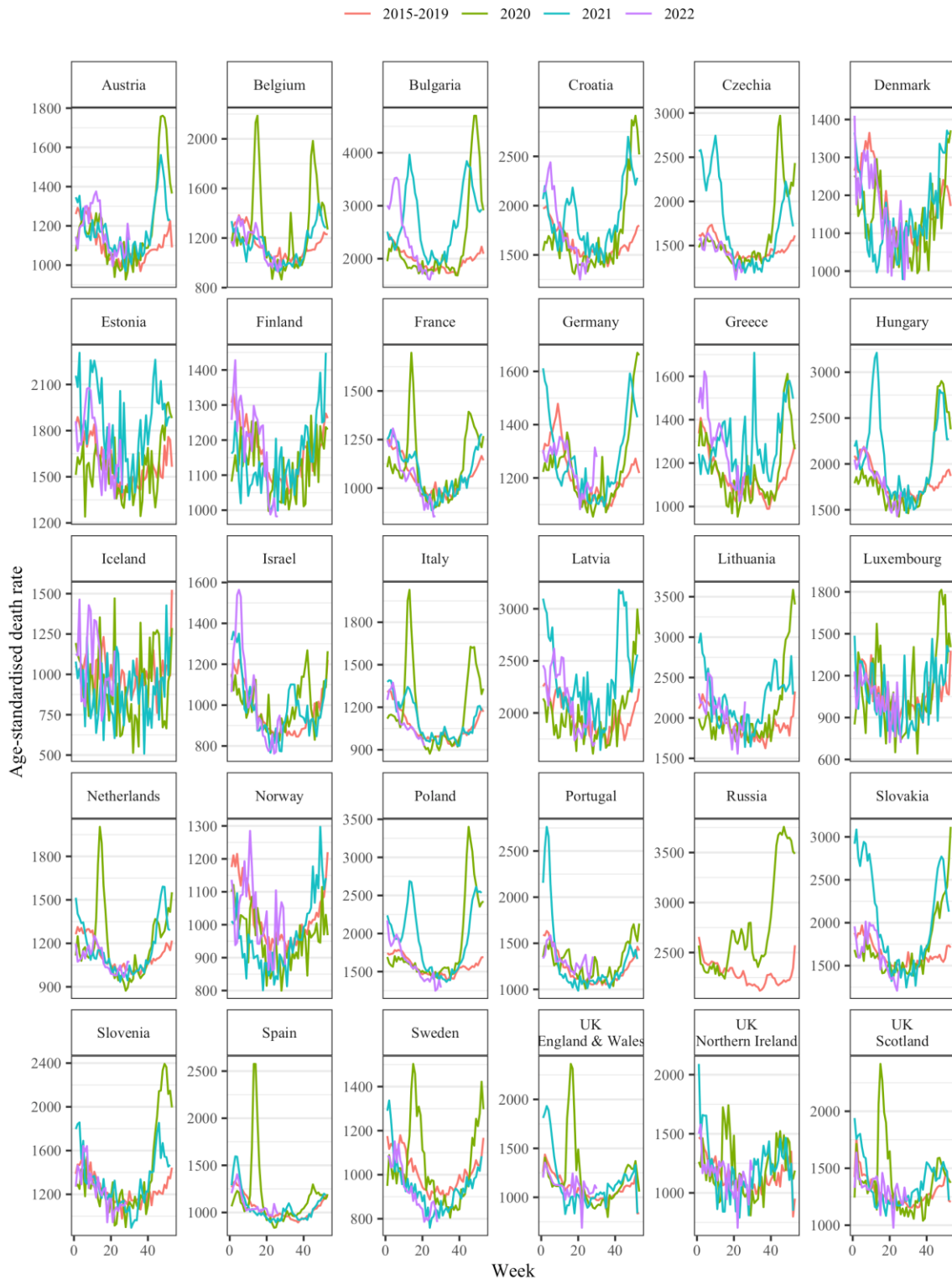
WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million people	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Greece	9.12		694.80		143.37	
Slovenia	1.50		664.54		49.31	
Serbia	0.92		544.75			
Austria	9.66		535.14			
Georgia	0.93		478.79			
Germany	1.06		389.16		44.56	
Moldova	4.17		368.26			
Italy	3.26		361.00		42.22	
Cyprus	75.00		343.43		52.45	
Lithuania	0.27		319.02			
Russia	0.96		292.14		172.81	
France	2.99		259.53		44.62	
Switzerland	1.05		252.37		12.31	
Turkey	1.59		242.28			
Portugal	4.74		239.40			
Hungary	0.45		216.90			
Finland	0.72		212.66			
Croatia	0.38		182.75		145.43	
Luxembourg	2.55		173.62		1.57	

WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Iceland	1.24		173.20		24.40	
Belarus	0.74		166.60			
Romania	3.92		155.24			
Denmark	1.23		153.15		62.18	
Czechia	0.35		148.75		62.51	
Belgium	0.98		131.58		38.58	
Estonia	0.75		115.58		72.18	
Bulgaria	0.45		113.54			
Albania	0.13		111.60			
Armenia	0.53		108.72			
North Macedonia	0.38		106.63			
Andorra	1.15		93.99			
Israel	2.82		92.89		23.36	
Kosovo	0.12		91.54			
Poland	0.09		83.84			
Sweden	0.23		74.79			
United Kingdom	3.85		68.13		89.07	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.07		64.16			
Netherlands	0.28		63.12		22.51	
Azerbaijan	0.23		56.84			

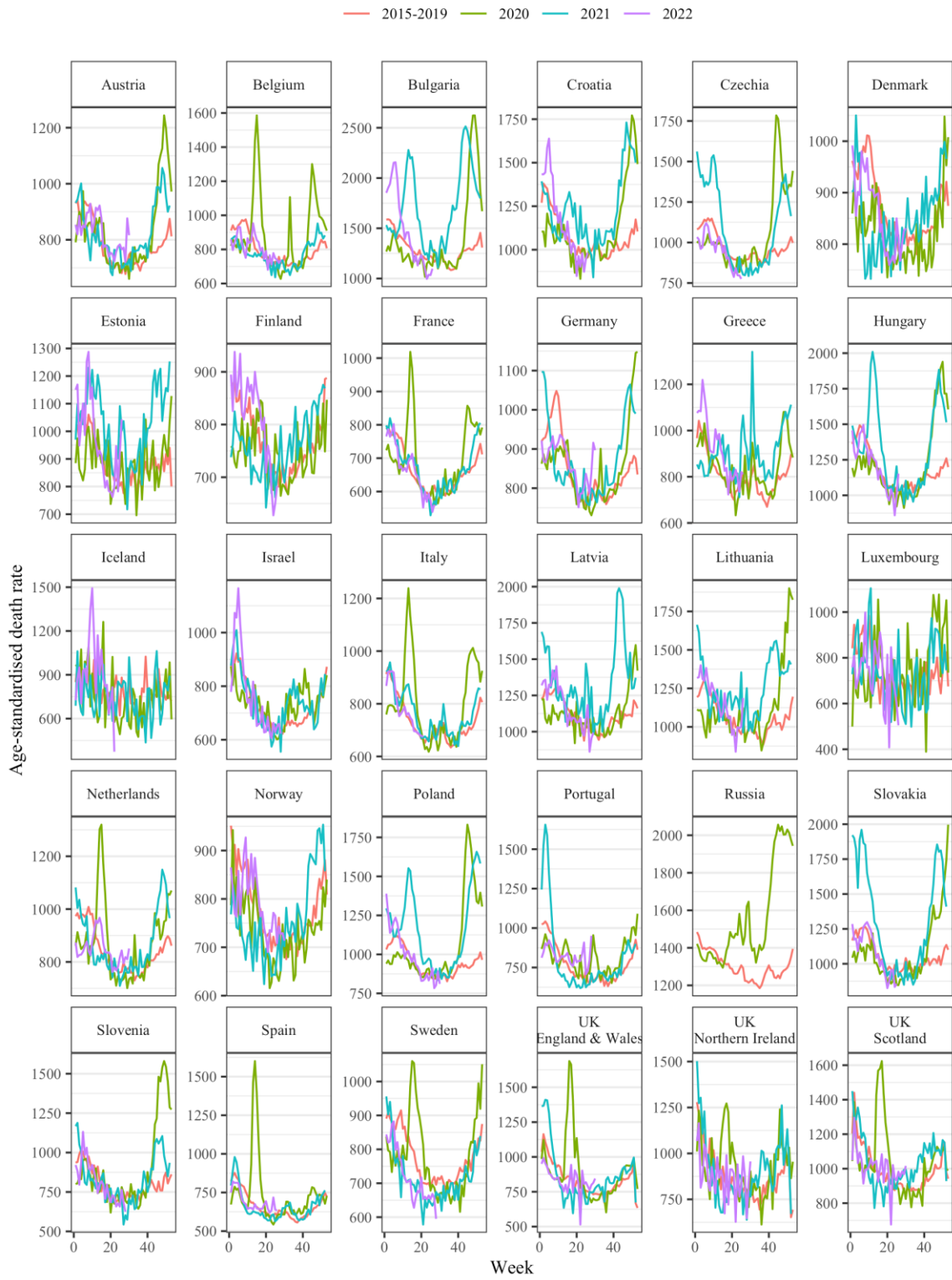
WHO Europe region	Daily new tests/thousand people	30-day trend in tests	Daily newly confirmed COVID-19 cases/million people	30-day trend in cases	Weekly hospital admissions/million	30-day trend in weekly hospital admissions
Spain	0.92		56.39		50.81	
Ireland	1.04		50.48		60.32	
Ukraine	1.21		44.81			
Malta	2.73		42.31		17.44	
Slovakia	0.39		38.89			
Kazakhstan	2.08		29.51			

The age-standardised all-cause death rates in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and the 2015-2019 average by week and sex in selected countries of the WHO-Europe (Source: Human Mortality Database).

Age-standardised death rate (men)

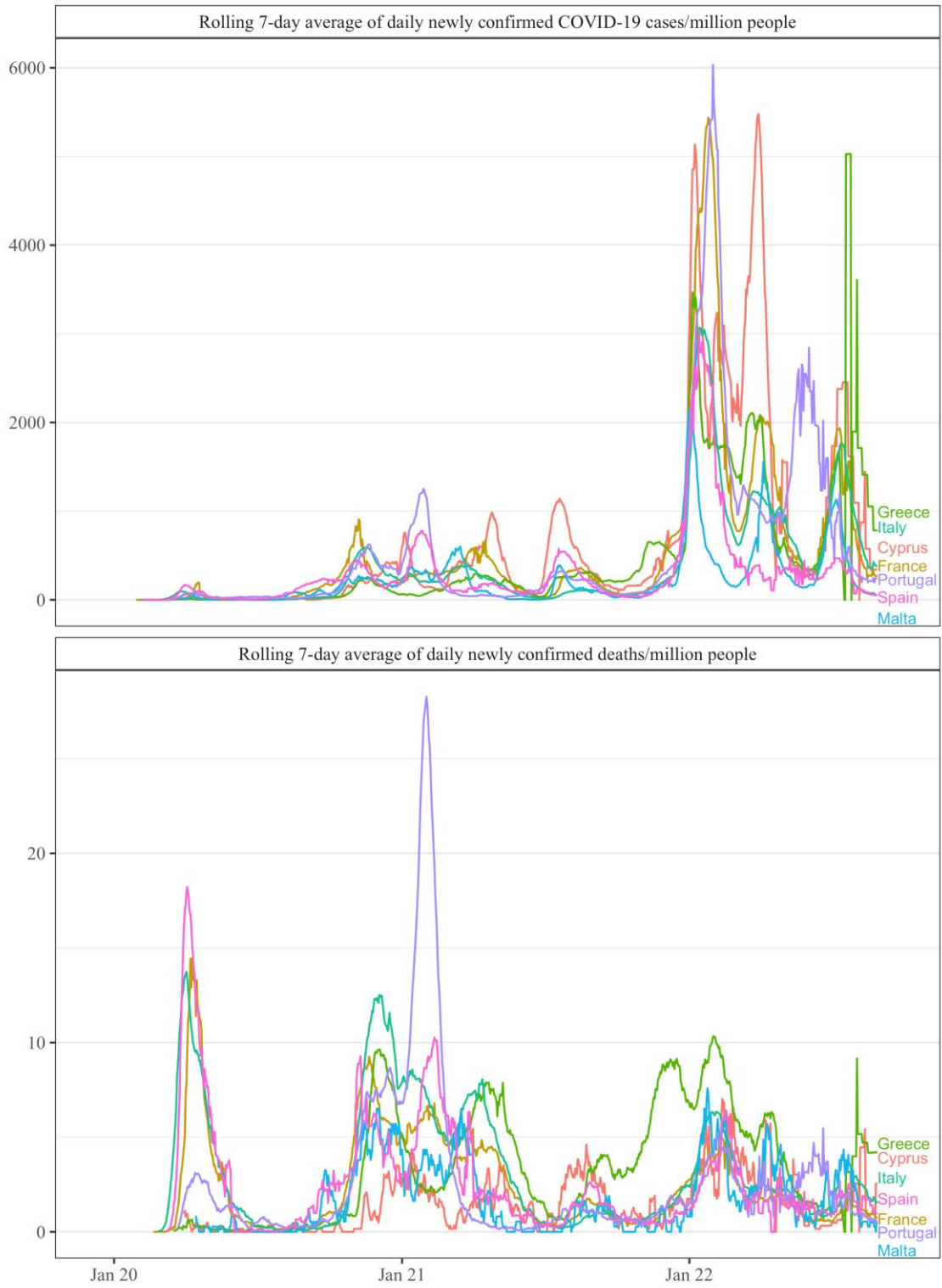


Age-standardised death rate (women)

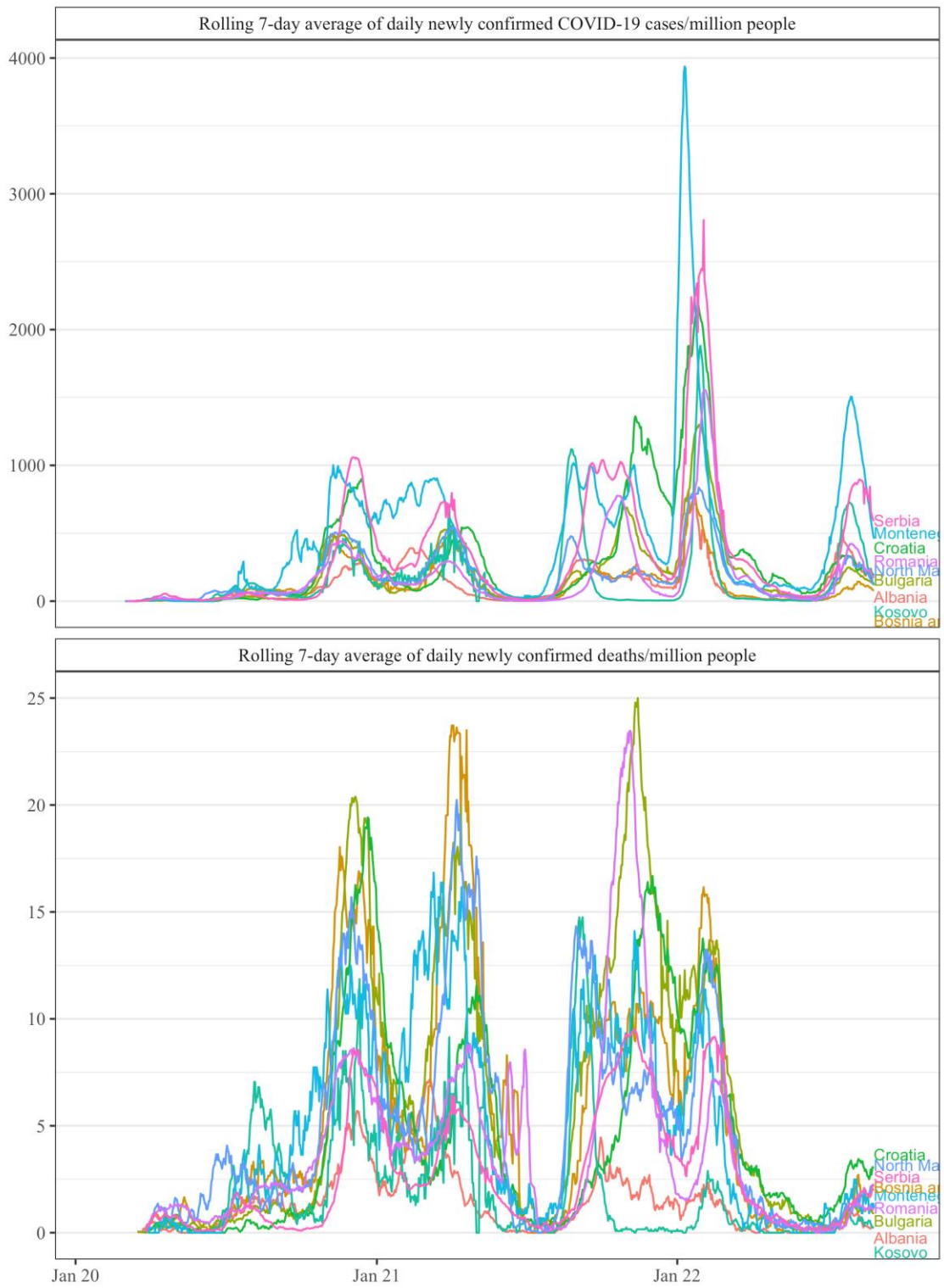


Rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases and daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths in sub-regions of Europe (Source: Our World in Data).

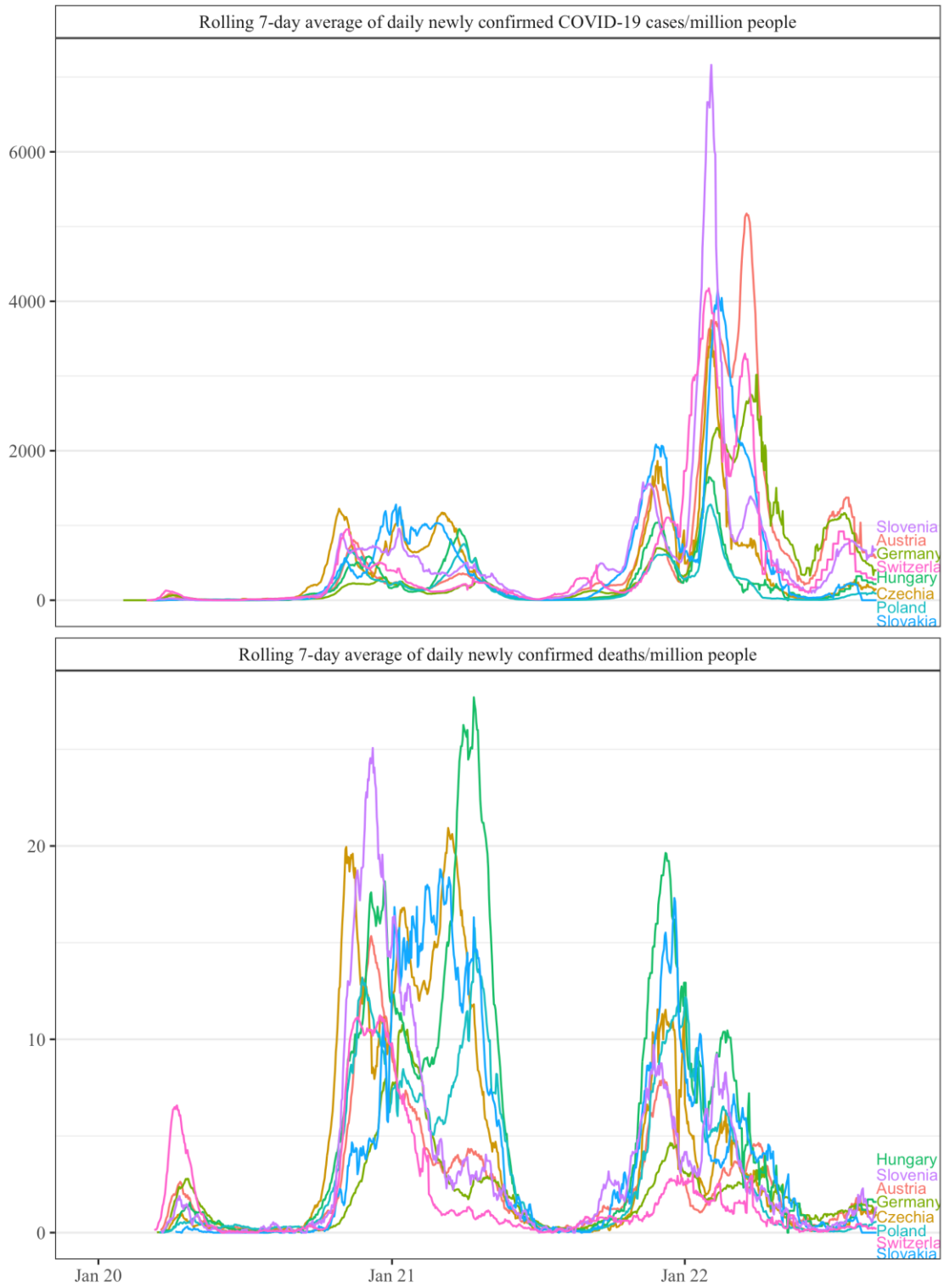
Mediterranean region



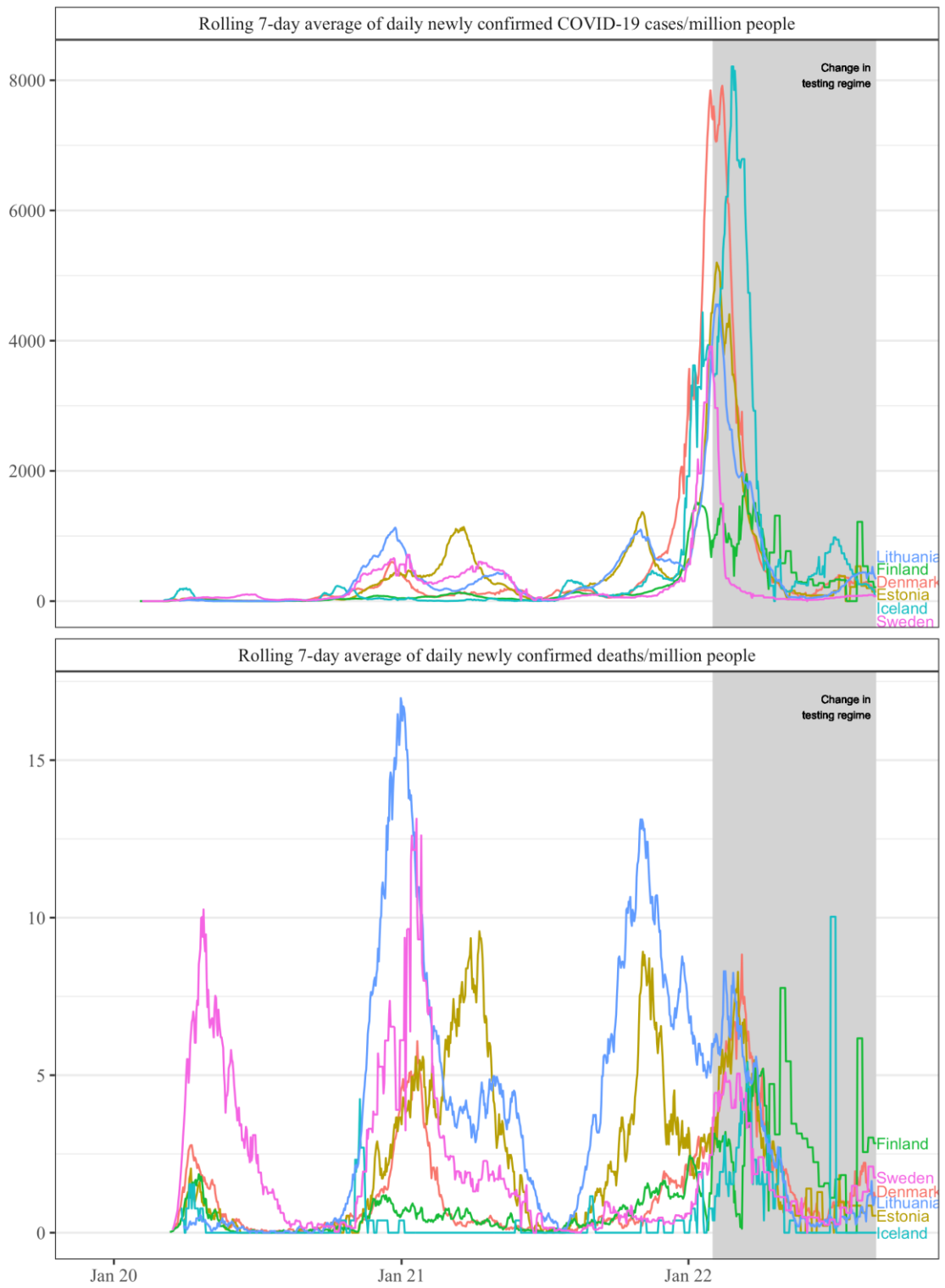
South-East region



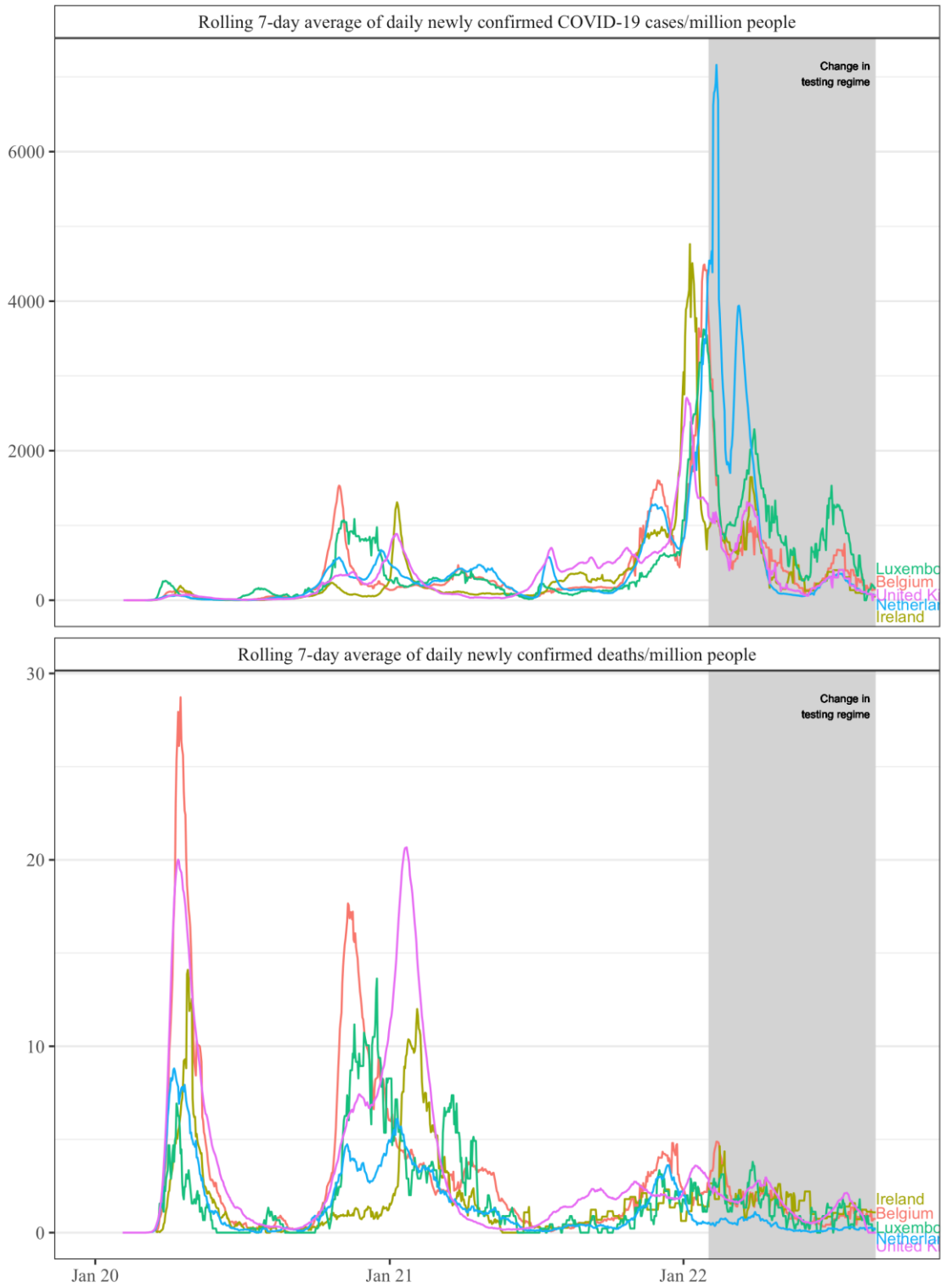
Central Europe



Baltics and Nordic Countries



North-Western Europe



Central Asia

