

ASPHER Report

COVID-19 Situation Reporting across Europe

Week of March 9th 2021

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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?

ASPHER is concerned that many countries are reducing social restrictions at a time when the incidence of COVID-19 is still very high, much higher than during the first wave, and with the Reproduction number over 1 in many countries. The relaxations are inconsistent between countries and will make international control of spread more difficult.

ASPHER recognises that there were pronounced January peaks of infection in many European countries including UK, Ireland and Portugal. This is a sad reflection of relaxations of COVID-19 social restrictions during the Christmas holidays.

ASPHER is concerned that governments maintain vigilance in social restrictions to reduce the spread of the virus as we move towards upcoming Easter celebrations.

ASPHER expresses its solidarity and support for colleagues in the Czech Republic, and calls on neighbouring countries to provide mutual aid to the Czech health services when possible.

More generally ASPHER is concerned about the recognition of an increasing number of new variants of the SARS-COV2 virus. We believe there should be increasing international collaboration and capacity in the surveillance of the variants of the virus, surveillance of the outcomes of vaccination, resistance to infection and timespan of immunity. There needs to be coordinated global capacity towards anticipating new variants, and adapting vaccinations to meet anticipated changes of the virus. (see also: <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/01/28/we-need-an-equitable-and-coordinated-global-approach-to-covid-19-vaccination/>)

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid spread of the virus in almost all countries has resulted in considerable disruption of public health at a global level. The pandemic has curbed over two million lives up to the moment (2,600,839) and the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has surpassed 0.1 billion with the highest number in the Americas (52,036,069) followed by Europe (40,026,265), South-East Asia Region (13,759,594), Eastern Mediterranean (6,720,130), Africa (2,909,543), and Western Pacific (1,680,442) according to WHO statistics (1).

As per WHO weekly epidemiological report, the European region is contributing 42% of cumulative COVID-19 confirmed cases worldwide. Overall, Europe has seen a rising trend in the number of new cases and decline in new deaths at 4% and 6% respectively in comparison to the previous week (2). According to IHME COVID-19 projections, 12% of the European population have been infected with coronavirus. After a period of decline in incidence of new cases (in January), the numbers have started to increase again in Europe and the cause can be attributed to transmission of new variant (B.1.1.7), decreased usage of facemasks also increased mobility. The projection estimates that from early April through to July 1st the trend in increase of daily new cases will probably begin to decrease. The IHME also forecasts, through vaccination more than 100,000 lives could be spared (3).

The following table shows the incidence of daily new coronavirus confirmed cases and estimated R across European countries, reported on 05/03/2021

WHO Europe Region	7-day rolling average of daily new COVID-19 confirmed cases/million people	Curret effective reproduction number estimate (Estimated R)
Czech Republic	1150.20	1.14
Estonia	1003.04	1.22
San Marino	947.11	N/A
Montenegro	874.57	1.07
Malta	611.17	1.23
Serbia	538.25	1.22
Hungary	493.40	1.37
Israel	423.92	0.97
Slovakia	422.90	1.05
Sweden	391.15	1.09
Slovenia	377.19	0.99
Cyprus	341.85	1.41
Moldova	341.63	1.18
Latvia	335.60	0.98
Andorra	325.41	N/A
France	322.26	1.04
Italy	317.10	1.19
Poland	308.40	1.25
Albania	301.42	0.94
North Macedonia	298.14	1.30
Luxembourg	270.66	1.00
Bulgaria	262.30	1.27

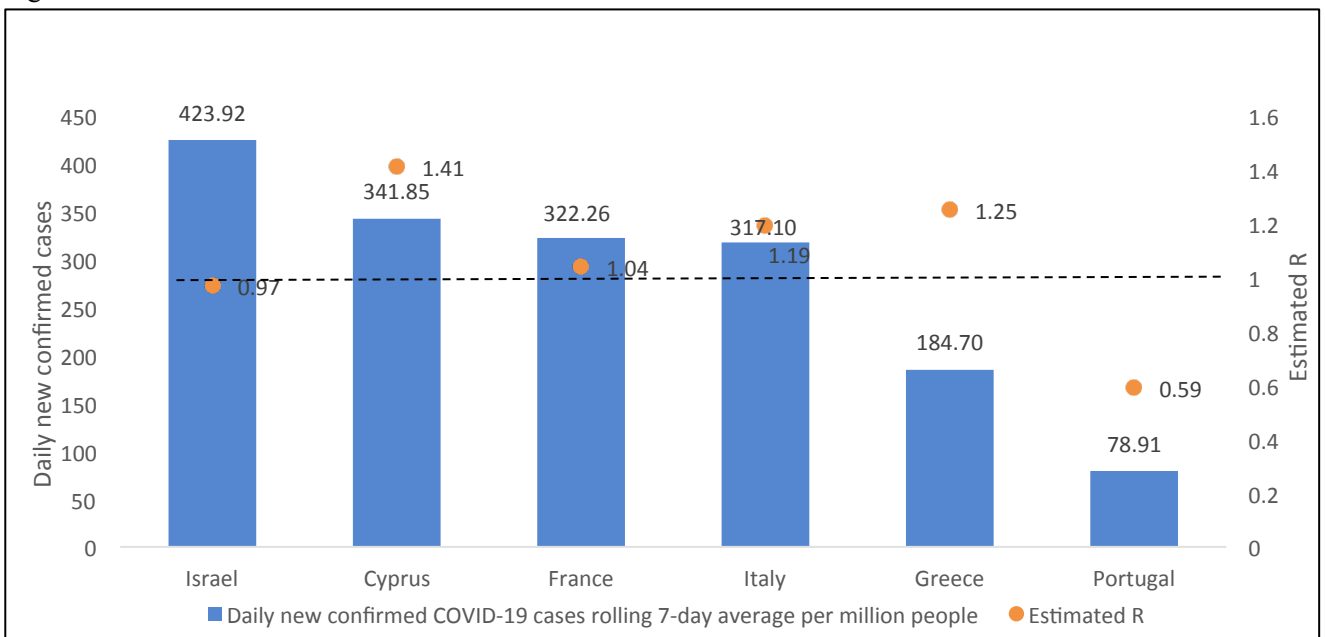
Netherlands	261.79	1.06
Austria	245.13	1.13
Monaco	243.90	0.87
Lithuania	243.75	1.03
Belgium	201.61	1.03
Bosnia and Herzegovina	197.42	1.36
Romania	187.13	1.16
Greece	184.70	1.25
Ukraine	169.62	1.20
Belarus	130.06	0.94
Turkey	124.48	1.14
Switzerland	121.45	0.98
Croatia	117.10	1.16
Finland	115.95	1.15
Ireland	113.35	0.85
Armenia	107.94	1.30
Germany	97.84	1.03
Norway	95.37	1.29
United Kingdom	93.59	0.77
Denmark	91.77	1.08
Portugal	78.91	0.59
Georgia	76.10	0.85
Russia	75.49	0.91
Kazakhstan	42.29	0.95
Azerbaijan	28.50	1.28
Kyrgyzstan	6.77	0.79
Iceland	4.19	0.82
Uzbekistan	1.18	0.94
Tajikistan	0.00	N/A
Turkmenistan	N/A	N/A
Spain	N/A	N/A

Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-> daily new confirmed cases
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-> estimated R

Mediterranean:

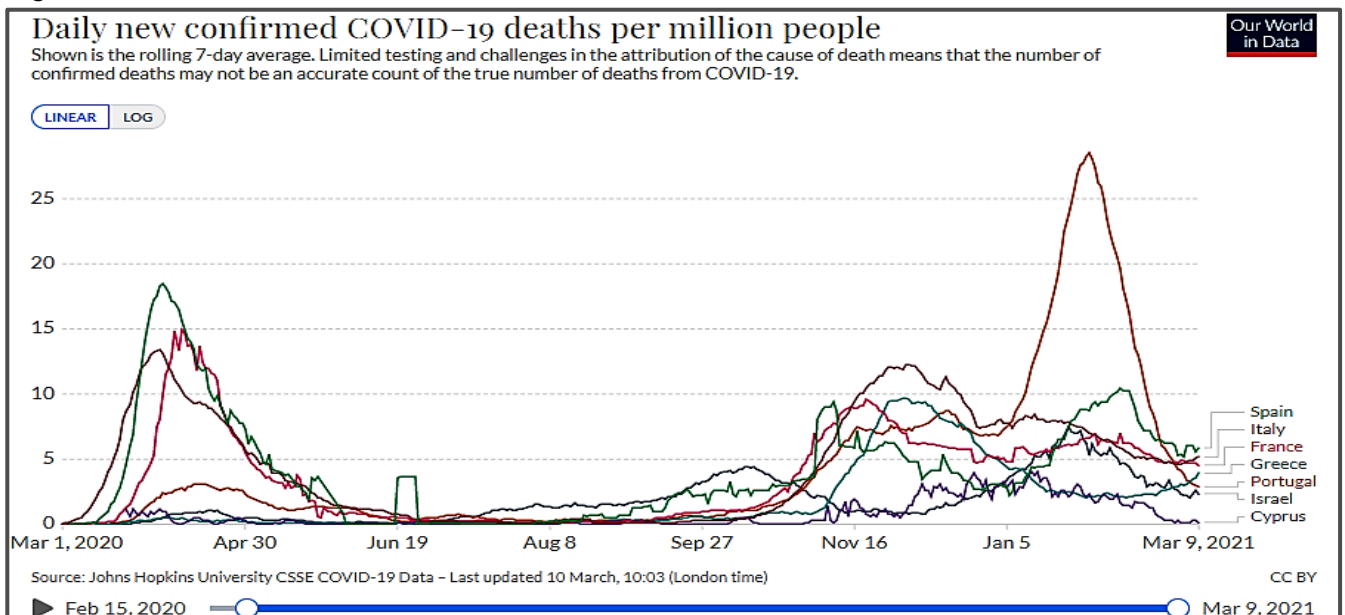
In Mediterranean countries the 7-day rolling average of daily new COVID-19 confirmed cases per million people, is highest in Israel (423.92) and lowest in Portugal (78.59). The current effective reproduction number estimate is above 1 in all regions except Portugal (0.59) and close to 1 in Israel (0.97) (Figure 1). Overall, Portugal has seen a declining trend in incidence in the past 14 days (141 cases/100,000 population) as well as mortality. Although, the prevalence of the British variant is 50% in North and Center regions of Portugal and the incidence is increasing (nearly 66%) in Lisbon, Vale do Tejo (4). Spain leads the rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people at 6.10 followed by Italy (4.83), France (4.71), Portugal (3.40), Israel (2.26), Cyprus (0.16) (Figure 2) (5).

Figure 1



Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-daily-new-confirmed-cases>
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-estimated-r>

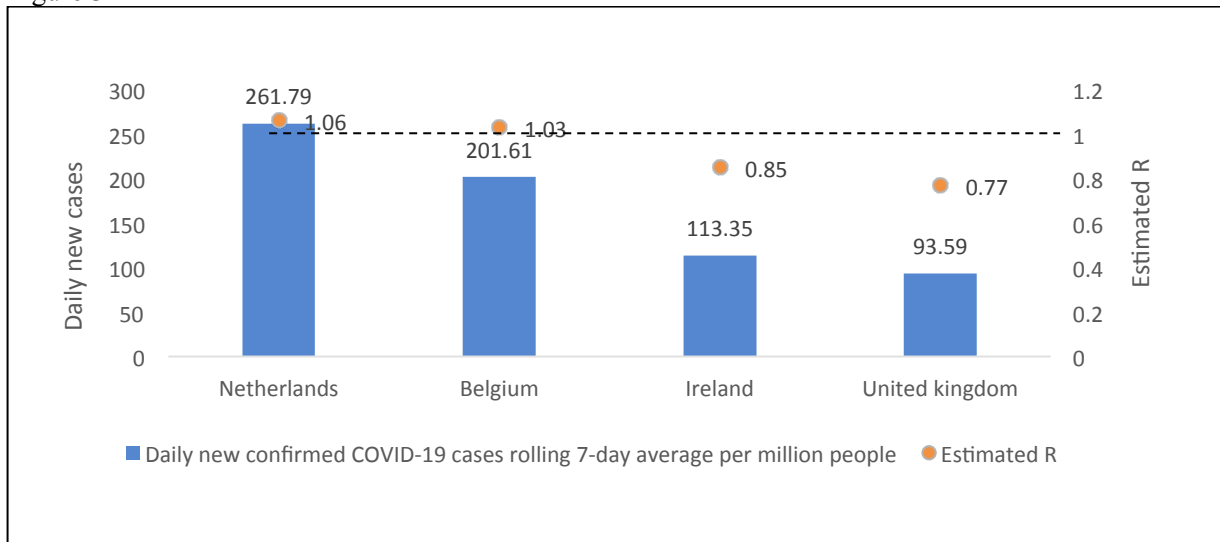
Figure 2



Northwestern Europe:

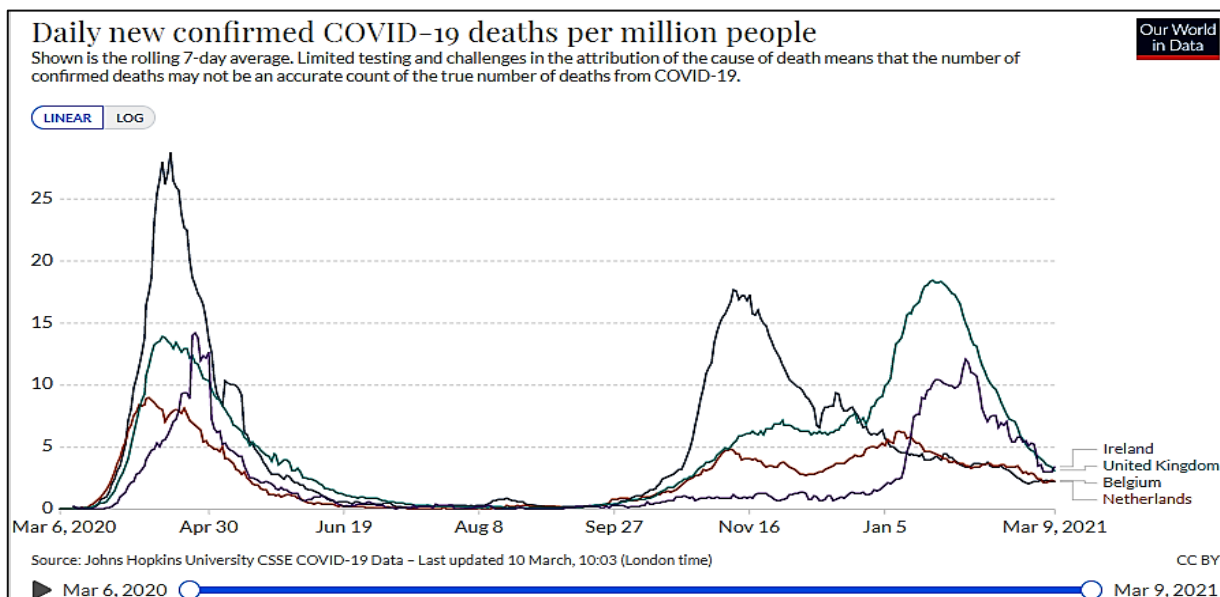
Among Northwestern European countries, Netherlands and Belgium have reported high rolling 7-day average number of daily new confirmed coronavirus cases per one million people above 200, also the current effective reproduction number estimate is > 1 whereas the number of daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths is 2.20, and 2.23 per million people respectively. Although the rolling 7-day average of daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases is below 200 in Ireland (113.35) and UK (93.59), the number of new deaths is high at 3.04, 3.89 respectively compared with the other two subregions (Figures 3&4) (5).

Figure 3



Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-daily-new-confirmed-cases>
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-estimated-R>

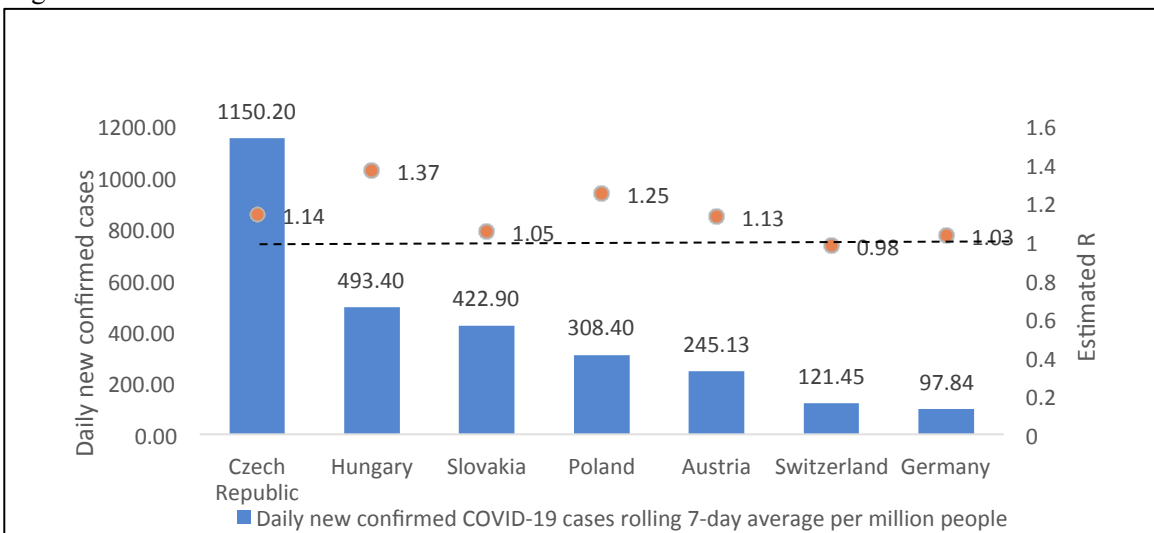
Figure 4



Central Europe:

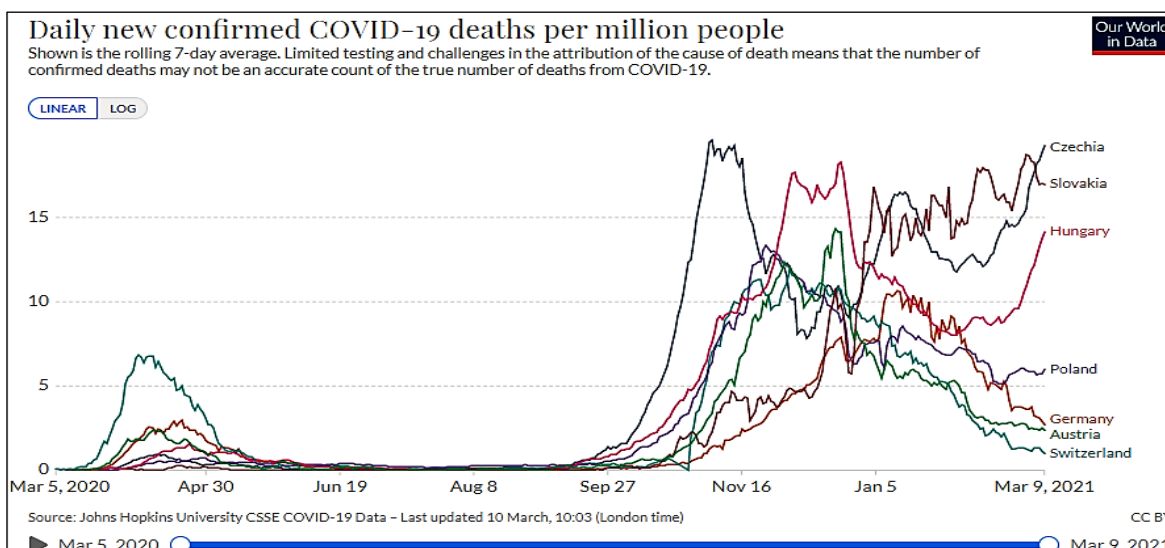
As on 9th March, the number of people with newly diagnosed COVID-19 disease in the Czech Republic is 15,196 and currently 8,618 people are hospitalized, 1,853 are in severe condition (6). Czechia has reported a high number of 7-day rolling average of daily new confirmed coronavirus deaths at 18.29 and the case fatality ratio is 1.66% (7). Hospitals in the Czech Republic are overcrowded, many of them have reached the limit of their capacities, especially in intensive care units, staff workload is extremely high, and there is a hospital staff shortage across the country. Some of the hospitals have been announcing the special state of emergency, when it is no longer possible to guarantee the standard scope and quality of provided health care (A. Petravoka personal communication). Next to Czechia, the daily new confirmed deaths per one million people are high in Slovakia (16.98), Hungary (14.17), Poland (6.01), Germany (2.74), Austria (2.41) and Switzerland (0.99) (5). In response, to handle the third wave the government of Hungary has announced extended lockdown until 22nd March with schools will remain closed until 7th April (8). In all regions of Central Europe, the current effective reproduction number estimate is above 1 except Switzerland which is close to 1 (0.98) (Figure 5).

Figure 5



Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-daily-new-confirmed-cases>
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-estimated-R>

Figure 6



South-East Europe:

In all regions of South-East Europe, the current effective reproduction number estimate is >1 ; highest in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1.36) and lowest in Montenegro (1.07) (Figure 7). As on 10th March, in Montenegro the incidence rate is 12,969.58 per 100,000 population and the rolling 7-day average of daily new COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths per million people are peaking among other regions (874.57 and 15.69 respectively) (Figure 7&8) (5).

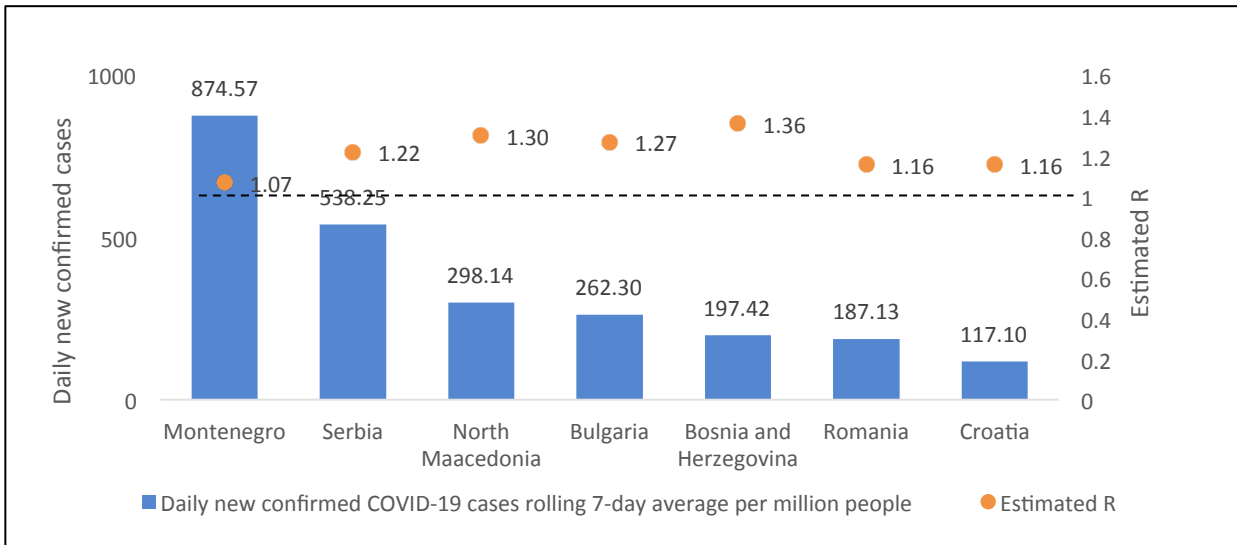
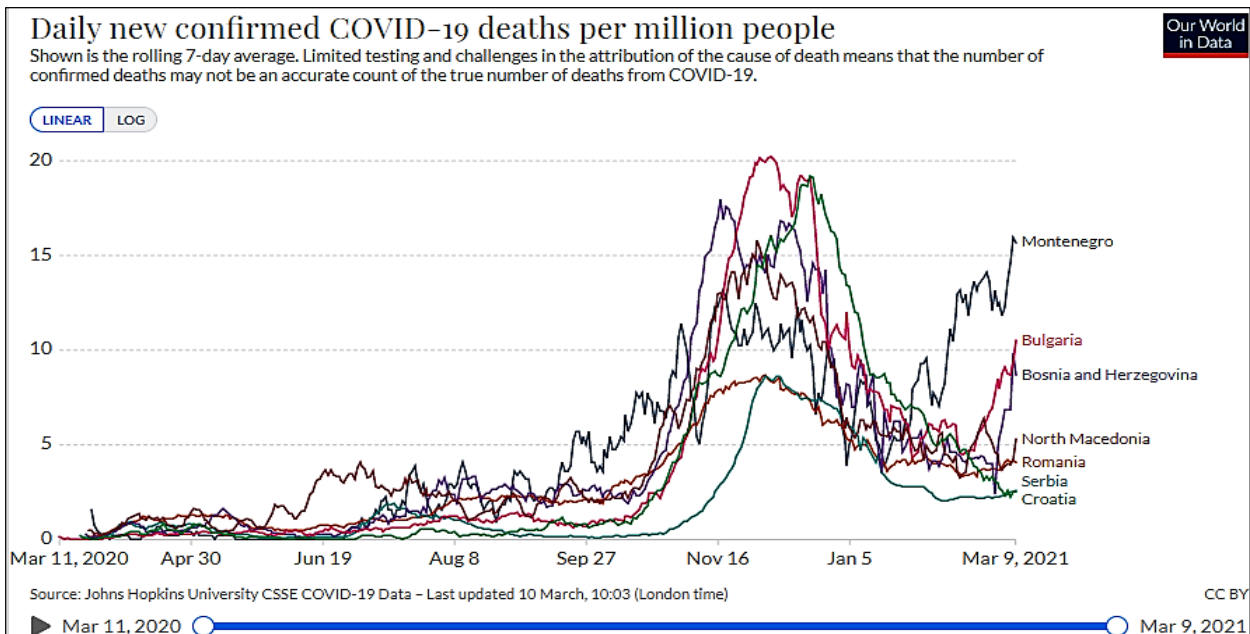


Figure 7

Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-daily-new-confirmed-cases>
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-estimated-R>

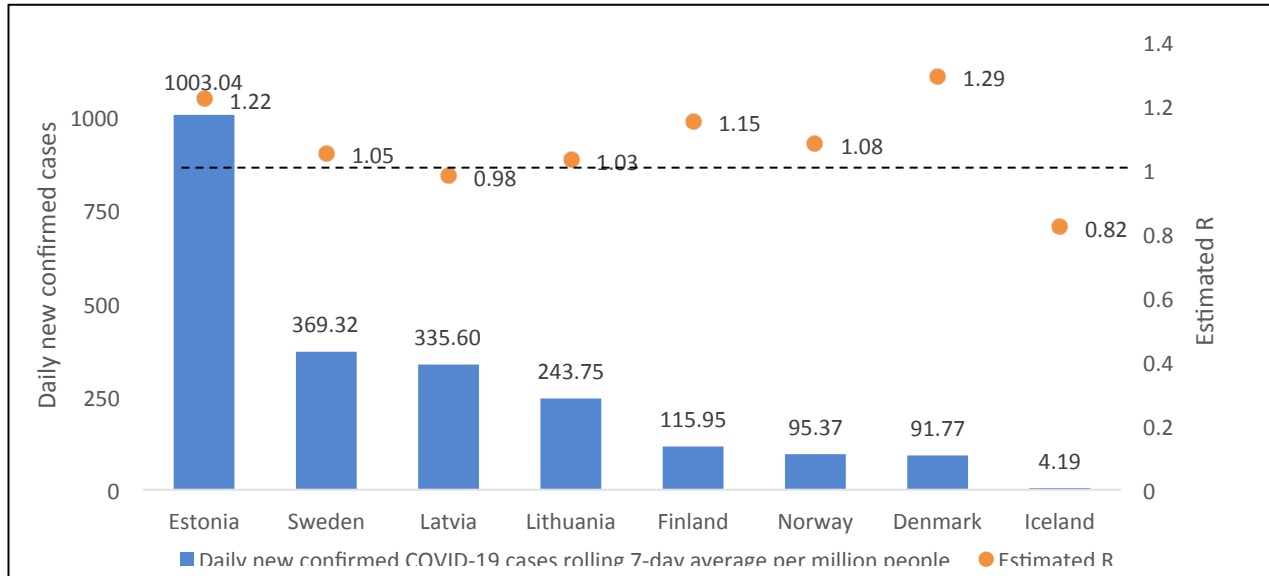
Figure 8



Scandinavian Countries:

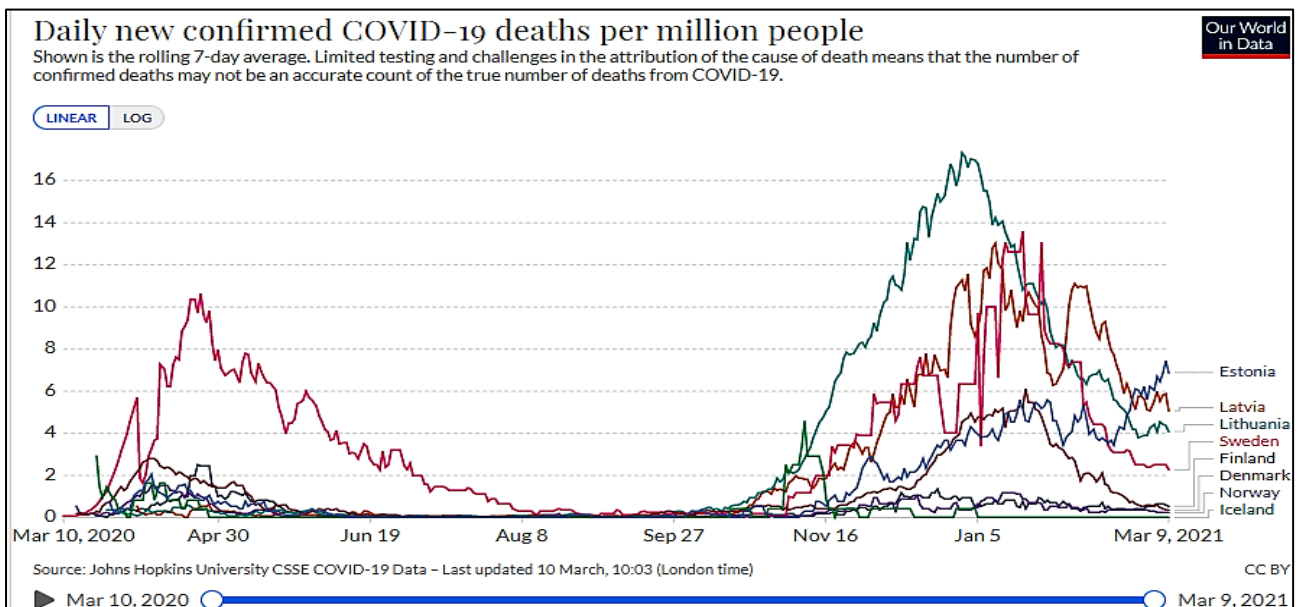
Among Scandinavian countries, the 7-day rolling average of daily new confirmed coronavirus deaths and cases is high in Estonia at 6.89, 1003.04 respectively (Figures 9&10) and the case-fatality ratio is 0.86% (7). Next to Estonia, the rolling 7-day average of daily new coronavirus confirmed deaths are high in Latvia (5.07), Lithuania (4.09), Sweden (2.26), Finland (0.54), Denmark (0.35), Norway (0.24) and null in Iceland (0.00) (5).

Figure 9



Source: 1. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-daily-new-confirmed-cases>
2. <http://epidemicforecasting.org/country-rt-estimates-estimated-R>

Figure 10



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