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Prepare for half a million deaths this winter, says top official

vendredi 5 novembre 2021, par [COLLIS Helen](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 4 novembre 2021).

The European region is now the “epicenter” of the global pandemic and is on a trajectory to see another half a million deaths this winter, the head of the World Health Organization’s Europe region warned Thursday.

Last week, Europe and Central Asia reported nearly 1.8 million new cases of COVID-19, accounting for 59 percent of all cases globally, Hans Kluge said during a press conference. And the region recorded 24,000 deaths, accounting for 48 percent of deaths globally, he said.

Cumulatively, there are now more reported cases — 78 million — in the European region than in South East Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Pacific and Africa combined.

“We are once again at the epicenter,” he said.

Hospitalizations more than doubled in one week in the region.

“If we stay on this trajectory, we could see another half a million COVID-19 deaths in Europe and Central Asia by the 1st of February next year,” Kluge warned.

WHO forecast that health systems in 43 countries in the region will face “high to extreme stress” this winter.

Kluge pointed the finger at low vaccination coverage and the relaxation of social and public health measures for the surge in cases and deaths.

Just 47 percent of eligible citizens in the region have been fully vaccinated, he said, with coverage lowest in the Baltics, Balkans, and Central and Eastern Europe.

He called on countries to boost vaccinations, including third doses for vulnerable and immunocompromised people.

But vaccines work best when coupled with “tried and tested” measures, he added.

“Preventive measures do not deprive people of the freedom ; they ensure it,” he said, adding they were the best way to avoid lockdowns, “which is an absolute last resort.”

Helen Collis

P.-S.

• Politico. November 4, 2021 12:47 pm :

<https://www.politico.eu/article/who-europe-region-epicenter-of-coronavirus-pandemic/>

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