
3,000 Protest Coronavirus Restrictions, Vaccines in Romanian Capital

Description

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BY [JOHN BOWDEN](#) via <https://thehill.com/policy/international/europe/542036-3000-protest-coronavirus-restrictions-vaccines-in->The Hill

Thousands of protesters gathered in Romania's capital, Bucharest, on Sunday to protest COVID-19 restrictions and vaccinations, which they fear will become compulsory.

Photos [taken by The Associated Press](#) and others on social media showed large crowds carrying signs and other materials with anti-mask and anti-vaccine slogans, including one reading, "Say no to forced vaccination."

ROMANIA <pic.twitter.com/gfmq9sZDzz>

— Micke Bäckström ? Patriot (@BackstromMicke) [March 7, 2021](#)

The protests reportedly come in the face of a new round of two-week COVID-19 guidelines restricting parts of public life in the country. Romania previously relaxed COVID-19 rules earlier this year but faces a rising wave of new infections that health officials have yet to have much success in reversing.

The COVID-19 vaccine is not mandatory in Romania. It is provided to residents free of charge, and residents who have the vaccine are subject to fewer COVID-19 restrictions than others. Still, opinion polls in the country have recorded a high level of skepticism surrounding the vaccines, according to multiple media reports.

"This vaccine will certainly not be mandatory. Or let's say these vaccines because we are talking about more than one," Romania's representative to the World Health Organization, Alexandru Rafila, [said last year](#).

"Surely this vaccine will not be mandatory for children, adults or anyone else, and obviously the trust in the vaccine should be built not imposed, so I am convinced that this discussion about making it mandatory is not being taken into account, at least if we are talking about these new vaccines," he said.