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Finnish Football Fans Bring Virus Back From Russia

By AFP

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Thousands of Finnish fans traveled to Russia to support their team in the Euro 2020 championships.
Anatoly Maltsev / POOL / AFP

Nearly 100 supporters of Finland's national football team who traveled to Russia for a Euro 2020 defeat against Belgium have caught the coronavirus, authorities said Thursday.

The prime minister joined the THL health authority overseeing the epidemic in calling for Finns who returned home after Monday's 2-0 loss in St. Petersburg to take a test.

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"It is important everybody takes a test," prime minister Sanna Marin told reporters at an EU summit in Brussels.

"Possible cases will thus be identified and the infection will not spread," she added.

Tests carried out at customs posts along the border with Russia have already returned 86 positive cases with more analysis still ongoing.

Crowding caused by around 3,000 Finnish supporters crossing the border led officials to allow 800 people to enter the country without taking a test, local media said.

Russia on Thursday reported more than 20,000 new coronavirus infections and 568 deaths, a peak not seen since January, as it battles a surging outbreak of the Delta variant.

THL urged all those who returned to ensure they have a test within 72 hours, noting the infection rate in St. Petersburg was 20 times higher than that in Finland.

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