

Belgium finds first new Covid-19 variant case in Europe

November 26 2021



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Belgium said Friday it has detected the first announced case in Europe of the new COVID-19 variant, in an unvaccinated person returning from abroad.

"We have a case that is now confirmed of this variant," B.1.1.529, first detected in southern Africa, Belgian Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke told a media conference.

The infected person tested positive on November 22 and had not had COVID-19 before, he added, without giving further details.

A leading Belgian virologist, Marc Van Ranst, tweeted that the person had returned from Egypt on November 11.

Vandebroucke said: "It must be repeated that this is a suspect variant—we don't know if it is a very dangerous [variant](#)."

He noted, however, that "as a precaution" Europe was stopping flights from southern Africa.

"So, total precaution but don't panic," he said, adding that Belgium's COVID-19 risk assessment group was analysing the situation.

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