

German Health Minister wants EU to shorten COVID recovered period to three months

Karl Lauterbach cites increased risk of reinfection with the Omicron variant.

German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach has called for the EU to halve the period that people recovering from COVID-19 can travel freely in the bloc to three months, citing the increased risk of reinfection with the new Omicron variant.

On Tuesday, EU member countries adopted a recommendation under which travelers within the EU should be considered recovered up to 180 days after overcoming a coronavirus infection. Germany had, before the talks, shortened that period to three months — and now Lauterbach wants the bloc to row back and follow the line taken by Berlin.

“After three months, a person who already caught the Delta variant can be re-infected with Omicron,” Lauterbach told ZDF public TV on Wednesday night.

“What we have been able to change in Germany we have also tried to change in Europe,” Lauterbach continued.

Studies show that the rapid spread of Omicron, which since being detected in southern Africa in November has gone on to become the dominant strain worldwide, is partly due to its improved ability to sidestep the immunity gained through vaccination or prior infection.

Germany’s daily caseload on Thursday topped 200,000 for the first time in the two-year-old pandemic.

The German health ministry faced a public backlash after the recovered status was shortened on January 15, catching many people unawares. While the vaccinated are not affected, many of the unjabbed who have recovered from COVID found their immunity certificates had become invalid overnight.

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