



## The News

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*by Sarah Heath*

In new rules coming into force next week, adults who are not vaccinated against Covid-19 will have to pay €44 for a PCR test and €22 for an antigen test. Tests being done through French laboratories will now be charged for as of October the 15<sup>th</sup> for those wanting a test without a proper medical reason. However, those who have been vaccinated will continue to benefit from free testing.

Pupils in schools will no longer be obliged by law to wear a face mask in the classroom in 21 French départements as of Monday, including the Haute-Garonne, the Gironde, the Nord and the Bas Rhin. These areas have achieved Covid incidence rates of 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants or lower for a period of at least five days. But mandatory mask-wearing remains in force in 33 départements.

There is a further setback for opponents of the health pass. The European Court of Human Rights has declared that 18,000 applications against the measure imposed by the government are "inadmissible".

Midwives are out on strike today for the third time in a month. They are taking to the streets of Paris to protest against a shortage of staff and their working conditions. In September, the government announced a €100 bonus for midwives working in hospitals and a salary increase of €100 per month but this is not enough according to unions.

There has been an easing of tensions between France and Australia after the submarine crisis and the French ambassador will soon return to Canberra although no official date has been put forward by Jean Yves le Drian. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has also asked that the terms of the relationship between the two countries are redefined.

And finally, the Nobel Prize for Literature will be unveiled at any moment in Stockholm. The French writer Annie Ernaux and Japanese Haruki Murakami are among the favorites to win the coveted prize.