



HIGHLIGHTS

- In the last 24 hours: A total of 207 molecular SARS-CoV-2 tests were performed in past 24 hours: 3.4% tested positive. **24 COVID-19 patients recovered**, one COVID-19 fatality and 7 new cases were reported. **The cumulative number of registered COVID-19 cases in the country is 1231 of which 210 of the COVID-19 cases among health professionals (17.1%).** COVID-19 cases are registered in 24 cities. However, **71% of the cases are reported from three cities Skopje, Kumanovo and Prilep** (411, 340, 117 cases, respectively).
- **64% of the deaths are in Kumanovo, Struga and Skopje (14, 12 and 9 deaths, respectively).** 21% of the confirmed COVID-19 cases and about 71% of the deaths are in people above 60 years old. 76.4% of death cases had comorbidities. 50 and 51 cases are registered among children ages 0-9 and 10-19, respectively.
- All official documents for the **Solidarity trial** have been approved by Malméd, the national regulatory authority, to allow to proceed with drugs procurement. The trial will compare four treatment options against local standard of care, to assess their relative effectiveness against COVID-19.
- The Commission for Infectious Diseases submitted to Government a proposal for changes in the duration of the curfew and criteria for the use of protective equipment. Outdoors use of masks by the public is not recommended, only indoor use by employee in various businesses. The government is considering this proposal.
- WHO condoles death of staff in Myanmar, condemns targeting of health workers involved in COVID19 response - 21 April 2020
<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/detail/21-04-2020-who-condoles-death-of-staff-in-myanmar-condemns-targeting-of-health-workers-involved-in-covid19-response>
- WHO and Global Citizen's "One World, Together at Home" concert in collaboration with Lady Gaga has been a great success and show of global friendship and solidarity. It has also raised US\$55 million for WHO's [Solidarity Response Fund](#), which will be used to support countries to prevent, detect, and respond to the pandemic.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

total (new) cases in the last 24 hours

North Macedonia

1231 confirmed (7)

55 deaths

224 recovered

Globally

2 397 216 confirmed (83 006)

162 956 deaths (5109)

European Region

1 187 184 confirmed (38 143)

106 342 deaths (2756)

Regions of the Americas

893 119 confirmed (34 869)

42 686 deaths (2071)

Western Pacific Region

134 506 confirmed (2068)

5685 deaths (37)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

134 470 confirmed (5037)

6185 deaths (137)

South-East Asia Region

31 670 confirmed (2094)

1341 deaths (66)

African Region

15 555 confirmed (795)

704 deaths (42)

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

Very high in all North Macedonia

SURVEILLANCE

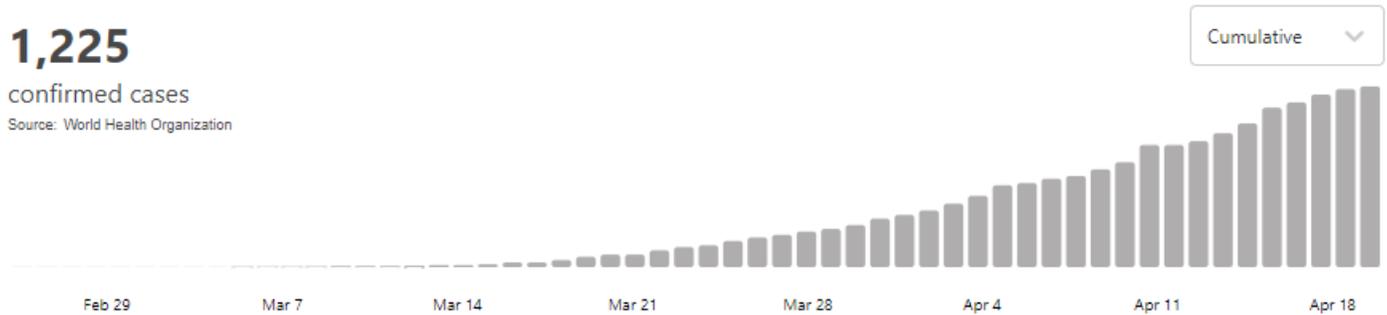
Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (n=1225) and deaths (n=54) by 21 April 2020 20:00

Confirmed Cases Over Time

1,225

confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization



Deaths Over Time

54

deaths

Source: World Health Organization

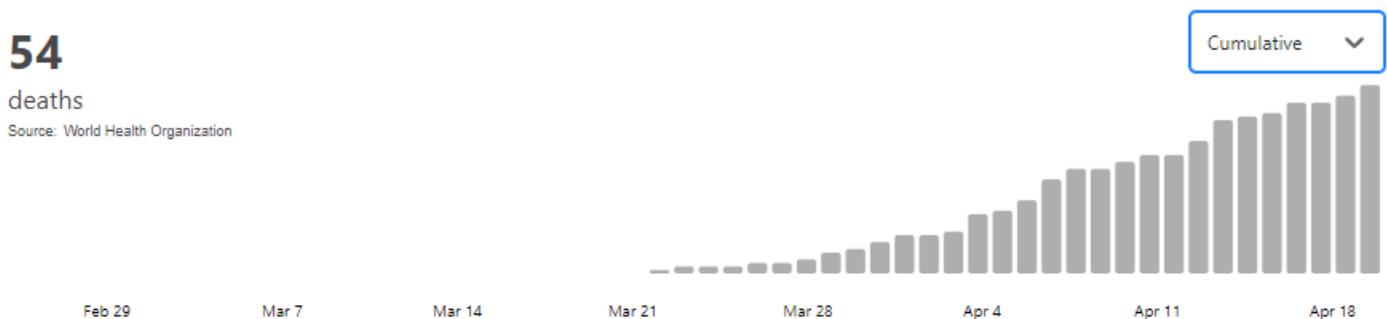
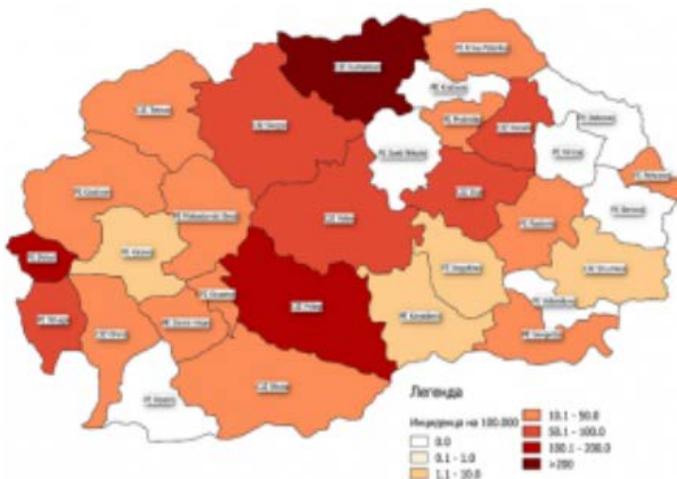


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 21 April 2020



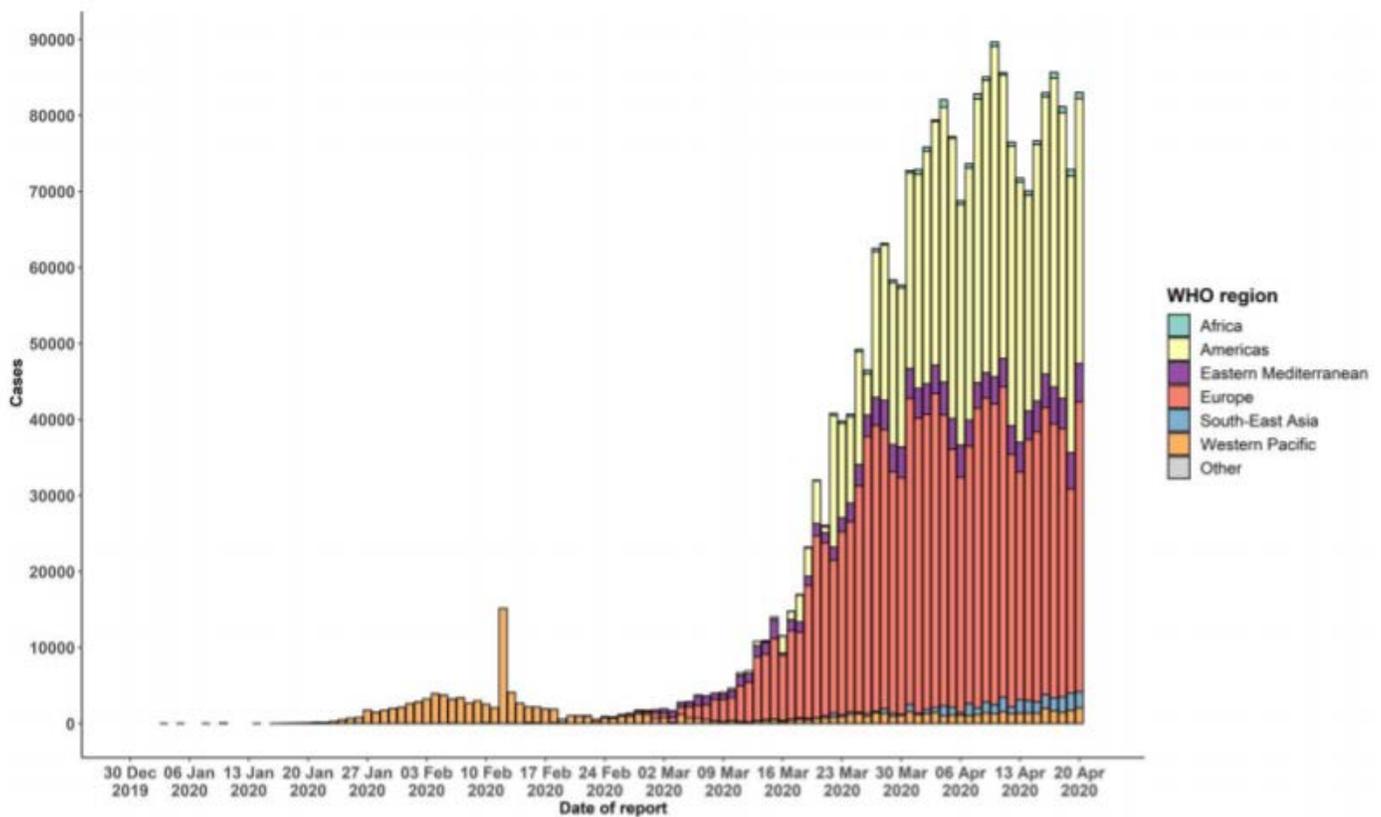
The highest cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (238.3/100,000 people), followed by Debar (183.8/100,000 people) and Prilep (122.7/100,000 people). Five other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Veles, Struga, Skopje, Shtip and Kochani).

Age of patients vary from 0-91 years (median age – 45 years old). However, the highest risk group is between 50-59 years old.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 20 April 2020 which includes the cases reported on 21 April 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the www.iph.mk

GLOBAL COVID19 SITUATION

Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 21 April 2020



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), EUROPE

Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 21 April 2020 10:00 CET, cases reported in the WHO European Region, represent **49.5% of the global burden** to date. Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load (751 273), with **Spain and Italy concluding top-3. In addition, four more countries from the European Region are in the top-10 (Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Turkey).**

In Europe, five countries reported 100 000 cases or more, with Spain has more than 200 000 cases as of to date (200 210 cases); and Italy 181 228 cases, and Germany 143 457 cases, United Kingdom 124 747, and France 113 513 cases). Ten countries reported 10 000 cases or more, listed in descending order (Turkey, the Russian Federation, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Israel).

Cumulatively, 65% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (162 956 deaths) have been reported in the European Region (106 374 deaths), with Italy, Spain, France and the United Kingdom each reporting more than 10000 deaths, and together accounting for 77% of all deaths in Europe (24114, 20852, 20233, 16509 deaths respectively). Another six countries in the Region reported 1000 deaths or more (Belgium 5828 deaths, Germany 4598 deaths, Netherlands 3751 deaths, Turkey 2140 deaths, Sweden 1580 deaths, and Switzerland 1141 deaths)

COVID-19 SITUATION IN EUROPE: ONLINE PRESS BRIEFING ON THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2020, AT 11:00 (CEST)

WHO/Europe will hold its weekly virtual press briefing with Dr Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, and technical experts. The briefing will present:

- a short situation update on COVID-19 in the WHO European Region
- COVID-19 and nursing homes

The virtual press conference will be broadcast live on the WHO/Europe Facebook account

<https://www.facebook.com/WHOEurope>

You can join the briefing via Zoom meeting and ask your question online (see connection details below).

CONNECTION DETAILS: Join Zoom Meeting: <https://who.zoom.us/j/92730279432>

Meeting ID: 927 3027 9432; Password: 007784

WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

In line with the strategic Government's approach in fighting COVID19 whereby efforts are put on increasing testing, maintaining quality COVID19 care and essential care and protecting health care workers, WHO works closely with the government and national and global health partners to enable the response.

- **WHO is supporting the country in assessing the situation in view of eventual relaxation of restrictive public health measures.** WHO guidance is available on "*Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19*" - [Access the publication](#) . This document provides guiding principles for adapting measures (loosening/ tightening). This will be followed by:
 - Indicators (criteria) for when measures can be adapted
 - Practical advice on how to adapt measures in key settings such as schools, workplaces etc.

WHO emphasizes that there should be gradual alleviation, close monitoring and constant calibration of measures. **As measures are loosened, surveillance should be tightened. Different surveillance approaches (identification, confirmation, isolation, and contact identification and quarantine, event-based surveillance, sentinel ILI/SARI surveillance etc.) should be applied.**

- *Safe Ramadan practices in the context of COVID-19* guidance was released this week and offers public health guidance for social and religious practices and gatherings during the holy month of Ramadan-(24 April-24 May; dates may slightly change) - [Access the publication](#). The guidance also offers advice to strengthen mental and physical well-being so as to live in full the spirit of Ramadan as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Here are the links to the translations available (UN official languages – Arabic Spanish Russian and French)

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331790/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ramadan-2020.1-spa.pdf>

WHO action in COVID-19 outbreak in North Macedonia aims at limiting the virus spread, protecting health and the health workers at the frontline, preserving the health care system capacity and its sustainability to respond and provide essential services to the population.

WHO is the lead UN agency for Health and main technical and health policy advisor to the government on COVID-19 containment and mitigation.

WHO works in coordination closely with other UN agencies as per the UN reform.

Western Balkan including North Macedonia is one of the priority countries for the WHO European Region.

Technical support, guidance and assistance are provided through the WHO Country Office from all levels of the Organization.

There is abundance of technical guidance WHO has developed in all areas of work: we are supporting the country to develop technical plans and implement priority interventions in the framework of a strong nation-wide strategic response.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331767/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ramadan-2020.1-rus.pdf>

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331767/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ramadan-2020.1-ara.pdf>

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331791/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ramadan-2020.1-fre.pdf>

some countries may be translating into more local languages. We'll keep you posted if/when they become available.



- WHO supports the country to raise awareness about maintaining essential health services and importance of immunization in preventing diseases and protecting life at the time of COVID19. Activities are held during the European Immunization Week 2020, from 20-26 April 2020. Click here : [European Immunization Week](#) .
- WHO is supporting North Macedonia for Sero-epidemiological studies investigating the extent of infection in the general population, as determined by seropositivity. A standardized WHO master protocol is available that is being now tailored to country needs in terms of public health, laboratory and clinical systems, capacity, availability of resources and cultural appropriateness. Using this standardized protocol allows for comparability of data across different countries and helps to determine important epidemiological parameters (e.g. the proportion of the population that remains susceptible to infection, proportion of asymptomatic infections etc.) which inform public health action. The protocol can be accessed here: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/population-based-age-stratified-seroepidemiological-investigation-protocol-for-covid-19-virus-infection>
- WHO **donated 5000 COVID tests** to the Virology Lab of the Institute of Public Health on 8 April 2020.
- With WHO/USAID support, the **Epidemiological emergency operations venue at MOH** is now equipped and functional in its temporary premises, refurbished and with IT equipment.
- **WHO held a training meeting on Solidarity trial** to all those involved in the scheme from COVID19 treating hospitals.
- A Ceremony for **launching of the USAID / WHO joint support** to the country to help contain and mitigate the COVID19 virus spread <https://un.mk/ceremony-for-launching-of-the-usaid-who-support-to-the-country-to-help-mitigate-the-spread-of-covid19/> was organized on 7 April 2020. This act of solidarity is directed mainly to support the health staff at the frontline of this fight against the virus: to ensure they have the means and the skills to protect themselves and control the infection all health care settings not only in treatment centers. A large part of the grant will also help the Institute of Public Health to continue its remarkable work in tracing and testing and early identification of the cases.
- WHO also held on Friday 3 April 2020, a **Zoom training session in Macedonian language** open for **all Health Care workers dealing with COVID19** for the proper practices in Infection control and prevention of virus transmission in hospitals and clinical management of severe respiratory cases.
- WHO developed a **risk assessment tool to be used by health care facilities with COVID-19 patients**. The tool is to be completed for all health workers who have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 patient in a health care facility. The tool will help determine the risk of COVID-19 virus infection of all HCWs who have been exposed to a COVID-19 patient and then provides recommendations for appropriate management of these HCWs, according to their infection risk.
- WHO continuing the roll out of the **Partners Platform for the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)**: Onboarding has taken place supporting North Macedonia to link with international support; the Country Preparedness and Response Plan has been uploaded for increasing capacity for 2000 COVID19 cases.
- The country is active on the platform <https://covid-19-response.org>
- SPRP includes health systems continuity, the Platform will have a **9th Pillar** for assessment of priority actions to maintain essential health services.
- COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM) has been formally launched by WHO EURO and the European Observatory for Health systems. North Macedonia is participating.
<https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx>

WHO continues to be actively engaged in:

- In risk communication targeted messages and developed many messages and infographics in national languages for display at MOH media channels and other. [WHO Facebook/Twitter](#) ; [MoH Facebook/Twitter](#); [WHO Europe website for COVID-19](#)
- Providing technical advice and support to many national and international partners for stepping up everyone's engagement in halting the virus spread and its impact on North Macedonia.
- Ensuring lab and testing tools are available for COVID19 related testing kits and PPE.
- Assisting the MOH in gaps and needs assessment and bridging those gaps for better health system coping and response.
- Establishing bilateral partnerships, resource mobilization, and joint plans to address gaps and needs of the MOH.
- Sustaining professional and technical knowledge of all health care workers in the country through the online WHO training course for COVID-19 for health care and infection control and protection (IPC) is now available in Macedonian Language on the WHO learning platform for Health workers. <https://openwho.org/>
- Generating Robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective, by North Macedonia joining the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international therapeutic study that will allow also receiving free of charge medicines for COVID19 and latest evidence-based indications for changing treatment protocols when needed to reduce mortality, length of stay under mechanical respiration and reducing complications.
- Tracking the epidemiological spread of the virus, supports early warning system and keep communities and frontline responders informed with the latest technical guidance.
- Contributing to the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and supporting the newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19. [1UN MK@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/1UNMK)

NORTH MACEDONIA STRATEGIC RESPONSE AND ACTION

North Macedonia mobilized an all-of-government action to fight this new coronavirus, including scaling up emergency response mechanisms in all sectors. Actions and readjustments of measures are continuous and monitoring of the situation is ongoing on daily basis. The country is in declared national emergency Announced by the President of the Republic on 18 March 2020 for one month.

On the health front, the country is working hard now to ensure its COVID19 hospitalization surge capacity with the necessary personnel are in place with the influx of additional cases in recent days.

The Ministry of Health increased public health measures, such as rapid identification, diagnosis and management of the cases, identification and follow up of the contacts, infection prevention and control in health care settings, implementation of health measures for travelers, awareness-raising in the population and risk communication and counter misinformation as well as minimizing social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships.

- The Commission for Infectious Diseases to submit to the Government a proposal for changes in the duration of the curfew and the use of protective equipment by citizens:
 - The curfew to begin at 19:00 during the working week, instead of 16:00;
 - Extension of the hours for movement of older people, from 08:00 to 12:00, instead of 10:00 to 12:00;
 - Extension of the hours for movement of young people, from 13:00 to 16:00;
 - The curfew hours over the weekend to be shortened and to last from Saturday at 13:00 to Monday at 05:00;
 - The ban of gatherings and groups of people and other restrictive measures regarding physical distancing on public spaces and parks to remain the same.

- Citizens to wear face protective equipment in closed and open spaces. Protective equipment will be mandatory in all closed public spaces such as markets, grocery stores, banks, posts, waiting rooms and health facilities and all other facilities that have many people inside.
 - Regarding open spaces, protective equipment must be used at places where the 2 meters distance is not feasible and in farmer's markets.
 - Exceptions for wearing protective equipment are 1) people wearing protective equipment at the workplace which is required by the workplaces such as in plants, factories, production etc., 2) if the person is staying in the yard of a residential family house, 3) rides a bicycle or is physically active outdoors, but keeps the required 2 meters distance and does not do so in a group according to the existing restrictions, 4) when driving a passenger motor vehicle with persons with whom are living together in a household, 5) when moving in public spaces and open areas and maintains the minimum 2 meters distance from the other people.
- The epidemiological analyses in the prison facility Shutka are completed – about 50 people are tested and they are all negative. All the test in the Specialized hospital for geriatric and palliative care “13 Noemvri” in Gjorce Petrov are negative as well.
 - The laboratory at the MASA is operational and it has capacity of 100 tests per day.
 - Minister of Health highlighted during a press-conference that the increase of new cases is linear, and the health system and capacities are not burdened yet.
 - The Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) issued a statement on the rights of journalists and the state of the media during the coronavirus pandemic, and regrets that in the last press conference organized in Kumanovo by mayor Maksim Dimitrievski was organized indoors in the presence of several interlocutors, journalists and media workers, who did not observe physical distancing. Journalists were directly exposed to health risk and several of them are now in isolation.
 - Ventilators are an important part of the care response to severe COVID19 and MOH is working on their procurement announcing the cost of 750,000 EUROS for 31 respirators to be delivered within one month, from Japan and Germany. The company "DTU Sonics Anastasia DOOEL" is the winner of the tender and should deliver 6 respirators within 10 days. Earlier procurement of 14 respirators is delayed and still awaited by end of the month. This is in addition to EU assistance promise to deliver 12 respirators and 5,000 protective masks, which are intended for the Clinic for Infectious Diseases and the hospital "September 8".
 - 117 people caught breaking the curfew in the past 24 hours – 89 were detained and appropriate measures will be taken for the rest.

UN, DONATIONS AND PARTNER COORDINATION- COVID-19

To provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach in identifying and repurposing the available bilateral assistance to the COVID-19 response, all public administration bodies receiving bilateral donor assistance will report promptly to the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) the amount of funds available for each project. The SEA will then submit a formal request to the bilateral donors for the reuse of funds in accordance with the identified priority needs for COVID19.

- A **Chinese donation** consisting of 5 016 COVID-19 tests, 5 000 protective suits, 30 000 medical masks, 20 000 pairs of gloves, 10 000 pieces of shoe protection in the amount of 400 000 dollars arrived in Skopje on 19 April 2020 and 30 000 eur financial support to MoH
- **Bulgaria donated** 100 protective suits and masks to the Ministry of Defense as a sign of solidarity in the fight against coronavirus and additionally this week is expected to arrive:
 - 500 suits for multiple use and 500 protective glasses and face shields
 - 2.000 masks, 200 glasses and 200 protection suits for the Delcevo and Strumica hospitals

1. US

- 1,1 million dollars for soft measures to be implemented by WHO and UNICEF including capacity building for addressing the pandemic. Also the US delivered packages for the most vulnerable groups via Red Cross – 2,350 packages of hygiene products for families of social risks for protection from the spreading of the coronavirus. Of these, 1,000 packages will be donated to families in Suto Orizari, Skopje, 500 in Trizla, Prilep, 500 in Bajro, Bitola, 250 in Keramidnica, Gostivar and 100 in Crnik, Delcevo.
- 600.000 dollars through WHO – preparation of laboratory systems for large-scale testing of COVID-19; enhance case-finding and event-based surveillance for COVID-19, prevent and control infections in health-care facilities; help implement emergency plans to screen people arriving at countries' various points of entry, such as airports and land-border crossings; strengthen clinical care while minimizing the risk of onwards transmission to others and further support communication mechanisms to provide the public with reliable, verifiable information to keep everyone informed about how to protect themselves and each other
- 30,000 dollars from the Embassy contingencies for supply of equipment for the Public Health Institute.
- U.S. companies like Coca Cola, Microsoft and other are also offering assistance to North Macedonia in the COVID-19 crisis management, as announced by Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Balkans, Matthew Palmer.
- **Netherlands** – ongoing supply of two PCRs and 4.000 tests for the Public Health Institute and Veterinary Institute
- **Czech Republic** donation of 1 million masks arrived Skopje by a military plane from Prague.
- **Japan** - consultations are **ongoing for 4 projects applications submitted on 2019** from 4 different health institutions as a request for supply of equipment in total amount of 223.486 EUR, to be financed through GGP grants.
- **Slovenia** donation of protection equipment in the amount of 110.000 EUR via the EU Civil Protection mechanism distributed to the Kumanovo Hospital including 100,000 surgical masks and 100,000 protective masks.
- **Norway** has donated medical supplies to North Macedonia (worth 200 000 Euro) which will be shipped from the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). North Macedonia is currently using a field hospital donated by Norway, allowing it to double the capacity at the Infectious Disease Clinic and the delivery of 20 respirators is expected.
- **Switzerland** supported the temporary prefabricated modular units for emergency hospital and donated non-medical equipment amounting to a total of 245,000 Euro
- Sixteen applications have been picked out of more than 500 sent for the **CREATON public** call to tackle COVID-19 challenges, issued by the Fund for Innovations and Technology Development. The public call was supported by the Embassy of Switzerland to North Macedonia, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, and the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies – MASIT. Nearly 158 applications were shortlisted. Of those that made the cut, there are solutions involving medicine, digital tools as support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to weather the crisis, education digital tools, culture and leisure tools. The total budget is 10 million denars and each proposal can receive up to EUR 10,000 in local currency. The call is the first in a series of the Fund's initiatives to tackle with the COVID-19 consequences.
- The **Hungarian government** donated 100,000 protective masks and 5,000 protective suits to the general hospital 8th September
- **Turkey** delivered a donation to North Macedonia to deal with the coronavirus on 8 April 2020. The Turkish donation consists of 50,000 protective medical masks, 1,000 protective suits, 1,000 diagnostic tests and other medical supplies.
- **Germany** offered support to the Ministry of Health with an amount of USD 2 million in PPE and provided equipment in amount of 40,000 EUR for the Clinic of infectious deceases, KARIL and Neurosurgery Clinic
- **British Embassy** Donated Equipment to Defence Ministry: The Embassy of the United Kingdom to Macedonia handed over to the Defence Ministry a donation consisting of protective equipment for better handling of the coronavirus situation in the amount of 2.500 pounds
- **EU support**
 - **EUR 4 million** of urgent assistance implemented via UNOPS

- **EUR 50 million Performance Award**, it will officially be reallocated for socio-economic recovery. Currently under discussion with DEU in terms of pre-conditions and criteria for the final beneficiaries. Still, the Government has decided to use 40ME to inject support in three areas: 1. part of the funds to be allocated as revolving funds for supporting micro and small enterprises for fast restructuring to enable income generation and saving jobs, esp. in export oriented companies, but also the agricultural and textile sector; 2. to support the informal economy especially persons who will be laid off due to the crisis and provide measures for their subsequent entry in the labor market; 3. to extend the ongoing active labor measures. The proposed projects in all three areas have to ensure sustainable growth and value-added impact. Other 10ME will be divided, 5 ME will be reallocated to EUIF and 5 ME will be programmed from MoH as recovery of this sector after COVID crisis.
 - **EUR 9 million** for direct support of SMEs via grant scheme
 - **EUR 3 million** for sector budget support for Youth and Employment
 - Requested support via **RescEU** for procurement of emergency medical supplies and equipment under EU CPM.
 - North Macedonia has joined the **Joint Procurement Agreement (JPA)** to procure medical countermeasures
 - Preparatory activities for use of **European Solidarity Fund**
2. **WHO** medical support consisting of PPE, tests and laboratory kits for IPH in the amount of 96 023 USD and non-medical support consisting of COVID-19 related videos in Macedonian and Albanian language, development of training courses in MKD language for health workers, design and printing of promotional materials, office and IT equipment of IPH in the amount of 26 378 USD.
 3. **World Bank** - Emergency COVID-19 Project prepared by WB Country Team in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen the health system to detect and treat cases, and mitigate some of the social consequences of the pandemic. Estimated value 100 Million USD, pending approval from Board of Directors.
 4. **IMF** - Emergency financing under the Rapid Financing Instrument. Secured. Budget: 175,2 Million USD
 5. **OSCE** protection equipment for the police in amount of 12.500 dollars, protection equipment for the Clinic of Infective diseases in the amount of 30.000 dollars, terrain vehicle for the Red cross families in Macedonia that are socially and economically hit by the health crisis, announced the **Foundation Open Society – Macedonia** which donated the funds.
 6. **Macedonian Red Cross** supports the elderly and the disabled in shopping and basic needs for hygiene, protection and their livelihood.
 - **The Steiermärkische Sparkasse Group**, through the two local banks Ohridska Banka and Sparkasse Bank Macedonia, jointly donated funds to support various segments of the health system in the total amount of 110,000 Euros. Ohridska Banka expressed their solidarity with the help of 1,500 socially disadvantaged families in cooperation with the Red Cross of the City of Skopje. For the needs of the University Clinic for Infectious and Febrile Diseases in Skopje, they donated 54,000 Euros for the purchase of protective masks and suits, and for the maintenance and repair of existing medical equipment - two mobile X-ray machines and the purchase of a vertical laminar chamber. As part of this donation, the Group has allocated funds to support the two general hospitals in Kumanovo and Ohrid, and provided fuel for 32 vehicles available for emergency medical care
 - Disabled and elderly persons will receive aid during the coronavirus crisis. This activity is accomplished with the **UNDP** and in cooperation with the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**.
 - Government authorized the Minister of Health Venko Filipce to sign the Donation Agreement between the **Information Technology Company Nextsen DOO** as a Donor and the Ministry of Health as a recipient of the donation.
 - **MOH Solidarity fund is established:** Companies, individuals, organizations, institutions, embassies donated 59.3 million denars on the account of the Ministry of Health including donations of medical devices, protective equipment and other materials.

GAPS/NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

The most important priority at this point and in the next 3 months is to ensure that the health system can cope with increasing numbers of cases needing intensive management, protecting the health care workers and ensuring essential social and medical care to the vulnerable.

➤ **Technical needs at the health front:**

- Assess the socioeconomic impact on Health system during the crisis and after the crisis
- Determine the level of immunity to the virus in the population
- Review of the testing algorithms in consideration of the strategy to increase testing.
- Increase use of eHealth and telemedicine to improve and facilitate population preventive interventions
- Strengthen epidemiological capacity
- Enhance planning capacity for transition strategy after lockdown.

➤ **Critical needs:**

- Laboratory Kits and reagents; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); Mechanical Ventilators/Respirators (respirators from operating rooms are not adapted to need of respiratory diseases and cannot be used for the ICU) ;
- intensifying risk communication;
- socioeconomic relief for vulnerable groups and employment protection.
- Maintaining Essential health and social services
- Protecting health care workers whether those working in the COVID-19 designated facilities or elsewhere countrywide because of the community transmission.
- Mental Health Support to health workers and the public especially the vulnerable ones.

➤ **Challenges:**

- Procurement : Access to local or international supplies and mainly respirators for the critical needs identified because of international shortages.
- Shortage in health workforce as the situation progresses
- Ensuring sustainability of the health facilities and health care during and after the crisis.
- Outreach and social support to the vulnerable
- Ensuring continuity of treatment and access to regular health care for all citizens including the vulnerable groups with other diseases and pathologies.
- Fighting Isolation and scaling up community engagement in the regions
- Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation

IMPORTANT CONTACTS NORTH MACEDONIA: Call Center 0800 002 03; “Alo Doctor” 02 15 123

[WHO Culture & Health webinar series 2020](#)

[A puff of smoke: What next for tobacco control?](#)

Monday, 27 April 2020 13.00–14.00 CEST

Live webcast/further information link: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/mediacentre/events/events/2020/04/culture-and-health-webinar-series-2020-a-puff-of-smoke-what-next-for-tobacco-control>

2020 marks 15 years since the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) came into force. The tobacco industry's strategies to circumvent the WHO FCTC continue to evolve. The growth and use of new and emerging products, such as electronic nicotine delivery systems and heated tobacco products, are alarming and need to be addressed.

Can a better understanding of the cultural and social contexts help us to address old and new challenges for controlling tobacco? What actions should be taken to empower governments and their citizens to address these challenges and continue striving for better health and greater equity?

Covering a wide historical landscape ranging from the first smokers at the Portuguese court in Lisbon in the 16th century all the way to the momentous upswing in tobacco use after the collapse of communism, panel members will discuss the cultural and socioeconomic factors that influenced how European governments began to establish systematic tobacco control legislation. They will explore how past experience can help us to better understand the future of tobacco control.

The webinar panel will include:

Virginia Berridge (Professor of History and Health Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine),

Anca Toma Friedlaender (Director of the Smoke Free Partnership) and

Kristina Mauer-Stender (Programme Manager of Tobacco Control at WHO/Europe).

The webinar will also launch a background document on Tobacco consumption in the WHO European Region as part of the series *Cultural Contexts at a Glance*.

The webinar will be live streamed [here](#). Online audiences can interact and ask questions by going to Sli.do and entering the event code #whoch.