

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

North Macedonia Flash Update – 48

Data as reported by national authorities by 23:00 CET, 19 May 2020

During the last 24 hours

- **Tests performed:** 533 SARS-CoV-2 tests and 4.1% tested positive. Of those, 203 tests are part of the targeted screening among employees in kindergartens – no cases are registered.
- **New cases:** 22 new cases were reported
- **Recovered:** 50 COVID-19 patients
- **Fatalities:** 2 new COVID-19 deaths

Cumulative registered COVID-19 as of 19 May – 1839 (Incidence=88.9/100.000) – [See Daily Curve](#)

- **Total number of health workers infected:** **252 (13.7%)** of which 234 (93%) have recovered.
- **Tests performed:** 22 255 SARS-CoV-2 tests.
- **Patients recovered:** **1353 COVID-19 patients recovered** so far.
- **Fatalities:** **106 COVID-19 fatalities (CFR 5.8%)** are registered.
- **Geographic spread and deaths:** COVID-19 cases are registered in 31 cities – first case is registered in Sveti Nikole. Majority of all cases 83% are from five cities Skopje (636), Kumanovo (416), Prilep (202), Tetovo (150) and Veles (125). **78% of all deaths are registered in Kumanovo, Skopje, Struga, Tetovo and Prilep.**
- **Gender distribution:** More women are infected with coronavirus than men (954 and 885 respectively). However, almost **68% of all deaths are men.**
- **Comorbidity:** 74.5% of death cases
- **Age distribution:** >60-year: 21.6% of all confirmed COVID-19 cases; >60-year: 65% of all deaths; 0-9-year: 65 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 10-19-year: 84 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The **73rd session of the World Health Assembly** closed yesterday. The Member States adopted the resolution, which calls for an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the international response. WHO Director General ended his **closing remarks with a message of strength and solidarity:** *“For everything COVID-19 has taken from us, it has also given us something: A reminder of what really matters; And the opportunity to forge a common future. Dark and difficult days may lie ahead, but guided by science, together we will overcome. Let hope be the antidote to fear. Let solidarity be the antidote to division. Let our shared humanity be the antidote to our shared threat. Now, more than ever.”*

[New] Countries around the world have put in place a range of public health and social measures to suppress or stop community spread of COVID-19. [WHO has published a document to provide an overview of public health and social measures](#), and to propose strategies to limit any possible harm resulting from these interventions.

A new WHO report on the health behaviors of 11–15-year-olds in Europe reveals [more adolescents have been reporting mental health concerns](#). The results were based on data between 2014 and 2018 and provide a baseline against which future studies can measure the impact of COVID-19 on young people’s lives.

[SUBJECT IN FOCUS- HERE: Research and Development in the European Region update: Solidarity Trial and Official Data Application for COVID-19 Surveillance.](#)

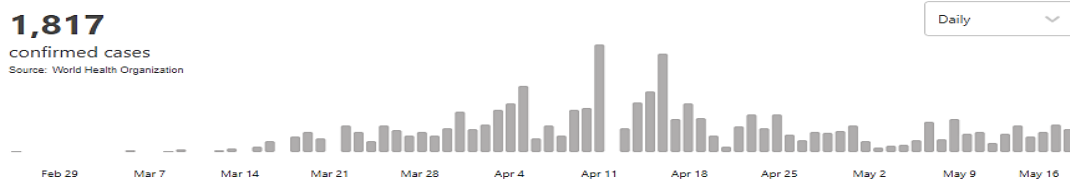
SURVEILLANCE – NORTH MACEDONIA

Figure 1. North Macedonia – Daily confirmed and deaths COVID-19 cases (n=1817) and deaths (n=104) by 19 May 2020

Confirmed Cases Over Time

1,817

confirmed cases
Source: World Health Organization



Deaths Over Time

104

deaths
Source: World Health Organization

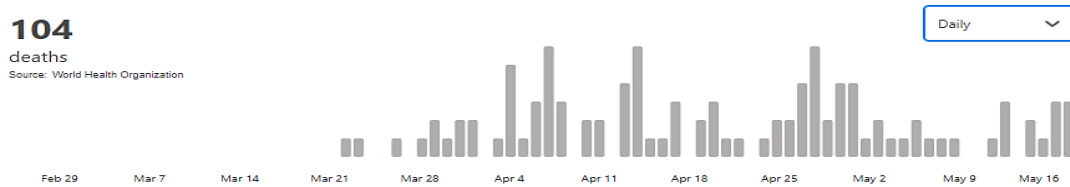
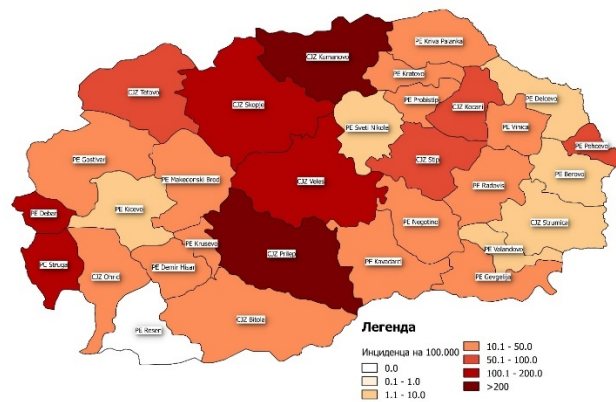


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 19 May 2020



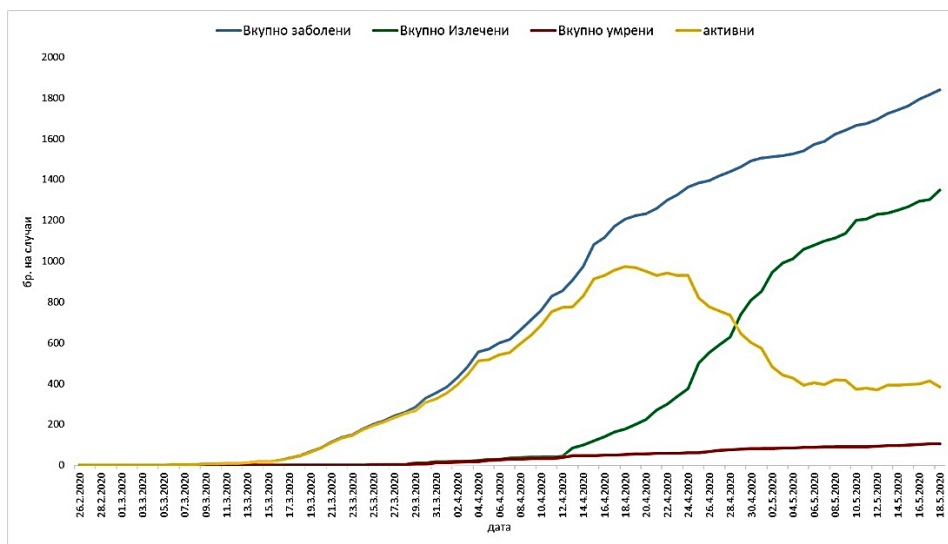
The highest cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (291.5/100,000 people), followed by Pilep (211.9/100,000 people), Veles (188.7/100,000 people), Debar (183.8/100,000 people), Struga (104.6/100,000 people) and Skopje (103.0/100,000 people). Four other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Tetovo, Shtip, Kochani and Pehchevo).

Age of patients vary from 0-94 years (average age – 46 years old). However, the highest risk group is between 50-59 years old.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 18 May 2020 which includes the cases reported on 19 May 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the www.iph.mk

Figure 3. North Macedonia – COVID-19 statistics as of 19 May (n=1839)

Total number of cases Recovered Deaths Active cases



GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS (BY WHO REGION) and TOTAL (NEW CASES IN LAST 24 HOURS)

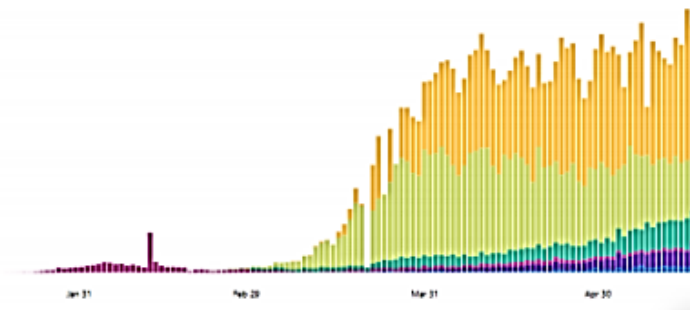
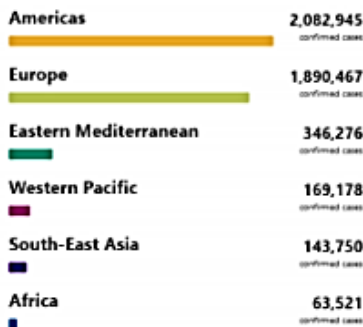
GLOBALLY	4 731 458 cases (112 637)	316 169 deaths (4 322)
Africa	63 521 cases (2 358)	1 796 deaths (48)
Americas	2 082 945 cases (65134)	124 668 deaths (3059)
Eastern Mediterranean	356 749 cases (18 189)	10 149 deaths (170)
Europe	1 909 592 cases (19125)	167 998 deaths (825)
South-East Asia	148 761 cases (7168)	4 780 deaths (198)
Western Pacific	169 178 cases (663)	6 765 deaths (22)

Global Trends:



- Globally, there have been **4,696,849 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 315,131 deaths**, reported to WHO from 215 countries around the world.
- The most affected WHO regions remain EURO and PAHO. EURO accounts for 42% of cases and 54.7% of deaths globally while the USA alone accounts for 31.4% of cases and 28% of deaths.
- The 10 countries with the most reported number of cases in past 24 hours: United States of America, Brazil, Russian Federation, India, Peru, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Chile, and Iran

WHO Regions



COVID-19 situation in the WHO European Region

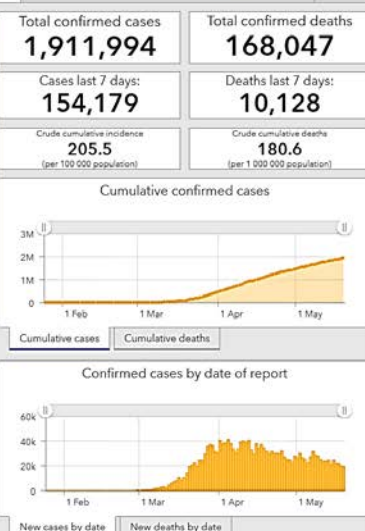
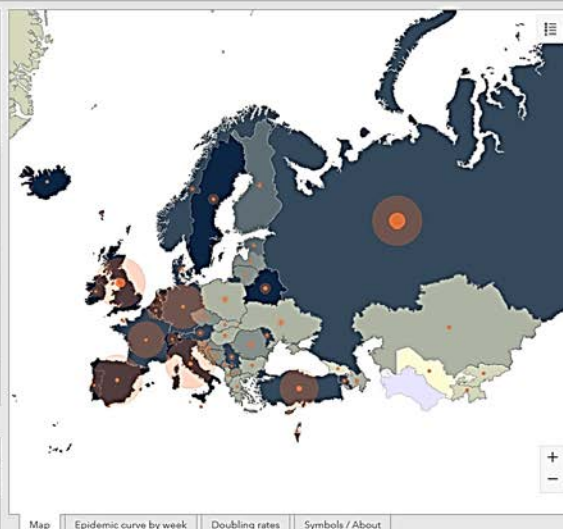
data as of: 19 May 2020, 10:00 (CET)

More information
WHO Global Situation Dashboard
WHO/Europe COVID-19 website



54	Countries (14 days)	Total
	(144,571) ● 41%	299,941
	(55,822) ● 15%	246,406
	(22,934) ● 37%	150,593
	(13,083) ● 17%	30,572
	(13,948) ● 55%	225,886
	(11,350) ● 44%	175,210
	(13,595) ● 42%	231,606
	(7,656) ● 4%	30,377
	(11,040) ● 36%	142,903
	(6,179) ● 6%	18,876
	(4,879) ● 11%	18,885
	(5,292) ● 49%	55,559
	(2,591) ● 12%	6,751
	(3,685) ● 21%	29,209

7	Territories	Total
	(100) ● 65%	955
	(10) ● 77%	302
	(14) ● 42%	335



In less than five months, the pandemic has encircled the globe and as the world approaches 5 million COVID-19 cases reported to WHO, 300,000 people have now lost their lives to the virus.

EURO accounts for 41% of cases and 53% of deaths globally while the USA alone accounts for 31% of cases and 28% of deaths. The epicenter in Europe remains in the Russian Federation.

- As the European Region nears the 2 million case mark, **the overall situation in the Region continues to remain stable with a decreasing trend in new deaths reported.**
- In the **western and central parts of the Region**, most countries report a decreasing number of new cases and continue to ease public health measures.
- In the **eastern part of the Region**, cases continue to fluctuate, with several countries reporting an increase in the number of new cases in the past two weeks.
- Globally, the **Russian Federation and the United Kingdom remain the two most affected countries after the USA** as they approach 300,000 and 250,000 cases, respectively.
- In Europe, the 5 countries with the most reported number of COVID-19 cases in past 2 weeks are the Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Turkey, Belarus, and Italy.

Socio/Economic/Political Update as of 18 May 2020

- The IOAC released an Interim report on the WHO's response to COVID-19 from January – April 2020. The report found that considering the novel nature of this virus and persistent unknown factors, that WHO has demonstrated leadership and has made important progress in its COVID-19 response. It reiterates that global health is a shared responsibility and Member States must play their part. IOAC also recommend updating the International Health Regulations.
- United States President Donald Trump sent a letter to the WHO stating that to US funding would be withdrawn from the organization if urgent reforms were not made in the upcoming 30 days.
- As of 15 May, there were 117 potential vaccine candidates: 8 in early clinical trials and 109 in the pre-clinical phase. The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization will review the available evidence on the progress of candidate vaccines against COVID-19.

SUBJECT IN FOCUS: Research and Development in the European Region update

Solidarity Trial:

- **With the addition of Georgia, 11 countries in the Region have now received full approval to carry out their trials. In addition, a support call for onboarding is being organized next week for Tajikistan.**
 - **WHO EURO is organizing demonstration sessions for data entry for recently approved countries and shipment of medicines.**
- **15 countries are at final stage of approvals (ethical committees, NRAs, MOHs are being obtained) while 5 countries have registered their trials in the EU CTR (Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway and Spain).**
- **Norway and Spain are the first countries in the world which have enrolled in the Solidarity Trial.**

Official Data Applications for COVID-19 Surveillance:

- **22 countries in the Region have implemented official data applications for surveillance purposes including: Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, France, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and UK.**
- **3 countries are developing official applications including: Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.**

[New] WHAT IS NEW?

DG's Closing remarks at 73rd session of the World Health Assembly - 19 MAY 2020 can be accessed in full [Here](#) .Dr. Tedros' key messages focused on:

- The DG offered his deep thanks to the many Member States who have expressed their support and solidarity at this Assembly, and throughout the pandemic.
- The DG also thanked Member States for adopting the resolution, which calls for an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the international response.
- The DG reiterated that the WHO remains fully committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement and that the international response evaluation will be initiated at the earliest appropriate moment.
- The WHO will continue to provide guidance and support to all Member States throughout the pandemic and after.
- The Independent Oversight Advisory Committee was thanked for their continuous work to review WHO's work in health emergencies, and in particular for their report on the COVID-19 response published on 18 May, that covers from the start of the pandemic until April (available [Here](#)).
- The DG ends his speech with a message of strength and solidarity: "For everything COVID-19 has taken from us, it has also given us something: A reminder of what really matters; And the opportunity to forge a common future. Dark and difficult days may lie ahead, but guided by science, together we will overcome. Let hope be the antidote to fear. Let solidarity be the antidote to division. Let our shared humanity be the antidote to our shared threat. Now, more than ever."

Public Health and Social measures

- An [Overview of Public Health and Social Measures in the context of COVID-19](#) was recently published (available [Here](#)). The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of public health and social measures, and to propose strategies to limit any possible harm resulting from these interventions. The document is intended to inform national and local health authorities and other decision-makers at all levels.
- The Annex guidance document on [Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#) is now available in [RUSSIAN](#).

Clinical Management

- The [Case Report Form for suspected cases of Multisystem inflammatory syndrome \(MIS\) in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19](#) has been published and is available [Here](#).
- A [COVID-19 Lab Biosafety Webinar](#) will kick-off on **20 May at 11:00 CEST**. This webinar is based on the revised "WHO interim Laboratory biosafety guidance related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19)" and organized by the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. *Click here to [Register](#) for the Webinar.*
- **Update:** The revised [WHO interim Laboratory biosafety guidance related to coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) is now available online. Significant inclusion in the revised guidance is on "Point of care (POC) or near-POC assay".

Risk Communication

- [WHO EURO and UNICEF Europe/central Asia have launched a new chatbot, HealthBuddy, answering your questions on COVID-19](#). There is a lot of misinformation and myths about the new coronavirus (COVID-19 virus) circulating on the Internet and in social media. Misinformation is one of the biggest challenges in fighting COVID-19. This is why it's important get your information and advice from trusted sources. More information is available [Here](#) and access the HealthBuddy [Here](#).

COVID-19 and Heat Health

- A webinar will take place on **26 May 2020 at 11:00 – 12:30 CEST** on [Preparing for hot weather during the COVID-19 outbreak](#). The webinar is open to anybody who would like to participate, so please include it in your calendars and share it with your professional networks. Register for the webinar [Here](#). After registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

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>

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.

Infection control and prevention in health care settings

- **WHO organized the Laboratory Workshop kick-off on 18 May 2020 – a weekly online meeting to discuss open questions and concerns around COVID-19 virus testing. The workshop is intended for health professionals working in a laboratory involved in COVID-19 virus testing/diagnostic. This week topic was Saliva as sample for testing and North Macedonia is participating as well.**
- WHO organized a **Virtual training on Core Components of IPC programmes and Hospital Readiness COVID-19 tools** on 6 May 2020 for hospital-based health workers and those caring for COVID19 patients
- As part of the USAID grant to WHO preparatory activities for undertaking of rapid infection prevention and control assessment (IPC assessment) with accent to COVID – 19 for EMS, primary, secondary and tertiary care facilities including long term care for the elderly, palliative care, home-based patronage services, nursing homes and outpatient clinics have been initiated. The assessment will be undertaken in collaboration with the Macedonian Association for Control of Intra - hospital Infection <https://www.mzkihi.mk/index-en>. The assessment will be undertaken by using the WHO IPC assessment tools listed below which **have been translated in Macedonian language**:
 - WHO Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Framework: Health care facility level <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/tools/core-components/IPCAF-facility.PDF?ua=1>
 - Hospital readiness checklist for COVID-19 http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/430210/Hospital-Readiness-Checklist.pdf?ua=1
 - National IPC assessment tool, Supporting core components for infection prevention and control programmes <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/tools/core-components/en/>
- **Support to the World Hand Hygiene Day "Save Lives: Clean your Hands Campaign"** on 5 May. The slogan of the campaign is "**Nurses and Midwives, clean care is in your hands**". The objective is not only to promote good hand hygiene and infection prevention and control practices (COVID-19), but also to recognize the key role of nurses and midwives in preventing avoidable infections. WHO MKD translated 2-pager about Hand Hygiene & COVID-19 to be distributed to relevant facilities and through social media channels. The WHO campaign materials have been shared with the Ministry of Health. WHO encourages engaging of Minister of Health and health authorities to participate.
- **WHO donated PPE equipment** to two specialized university clinics in Skopje.
- 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 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 Webinar series on IPC & COVID 19** was promoted shared with relevant national professionals:
 - **21 April:** A model hospital for IPC and management of COVID-19 patients [Didier Pittet, University of Geneva Hospitals, Geneva, Switzerland]
 - **28 April:** The SARS-CoV-2 virus modes of transmission and related IPC measures [John Conly, University of Calgary and Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Canada]
 - **5 May:** Celebrating nurses and midwives for clean care at the age of COVID-19 [Benedetta Allegranzi, IPC Hub, WHO HQ Didier Pittet, University of Geneva Hospitals, Geneva, Switzerland]
 - **12 May:** Corona virus infections among health care workers: what we know about COVID-19 and what we have learned from other outbreaks [April Baller, WHO Health Emergencies, Geneva, Switzerland Seto Wing Hong, University of Hong Kong Shenzhen Hospital, Hong Kong, China]

Risk perception and behavioral change

WHO initiated in partnership with National Institute of Public Health **COVID-19 behavioral survey** to gain an understanding of issues such as: trust in health authorities, recommendations and information; risk perceptions; acceptance of recommended behaviours; knowledge; barriers/drivers to recommended behaviours; misperceptions; and stigma. The results will be available to the policy makers to assess and modify risk communication strategies on aspects related to COVID19. The results will also inform post-pandemic actions, e.g. addressing possible family, mental health, or other adverse events as a result of the crisis. The final results are expected around mid-May 2020.

The survey is available here in Macedonian language:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdee7yN3qmmTNMSH0zHIO2F5ks-UE46QUrukSHdtqxSCF8rA/viewform>

And in Albanian:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdoo6OBWeowgiNg_Wdc3GrXuH5WmXoOVVsFBzrPbBoOOaoCCQ/viewform

Identification, virus testing and contact tracing

- **WHO organized on 8 May 2020 Virtual laboratory training for scaling up national laboratory capacities addressed to Macedonian professionals.** The national laboratories in North Macedonia engaged in COVID-19 testing to take part in it. The objective of the conference is to:
 - Update on tests available for COVID-19 testing
 - Verification and validation processes
 - Recommendations to ensure procurement during scaling up national laboratory capacities for COVID-19
 - Recommendations and discussion on training possibilities for scaling up
- WHO **donated 5000 COVID tests** to the Virology Lab of the Institute of Public Health on 8 April 2020.
- With WHO/USAID support, the health **emergency operations venue at MOH** is now equipped and functional in its temporary premises, refurbished and with IT equipment.
- WHO is supporting North Macedonia as part of the **Unity Study 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: [HERE](#)

Risk Communication

- WHO held on 8 May a **Meeting online with all EUROPE Ministers** attended by North Macedonia– about COVID-19 response, **transition experience** and lessons learned. The Ministerial Roundtable included health ministers from countries that have eased restrictions to share their experiences and discuss lessons learned and the challenges that lie ahead.
- MOH and WHO launched on 5 May a media campaign for **Hand Hygiene and Nursing see below**.
- **Western Balkan ministerial WHO briefing on exit strategies** was held on 5 May 2020.
- Translation of **WHO guideline on Safe Ramadan** practices in the context of the COVID-19: in Macedonian, Albanian, Pashto, Dari, Turkish and Roma languages.
- **European immunization week**: WHO supported 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 MKD supported translation and adaptation of the following materials for social media:
 - EIW Poster adaptation
 - Video Adaptation - How do vaccine work?
 - Video Adaptation - Why should I get vaccinated

Health Professionals

COVID -19 courses for health professionals: The following WHO on-line COVID – 19 courses for Health Professionals are currently live:

- **Clinical Care Training for Respiratory Infections (SARI) in Macedonian language;** <https://openwho.org/courses/severe-acute-respiratory-infection-MK>
- **How to put on and remove PPE in Macedonian language;** <https://openwho.org/courses/IPC-PPE-MK>. The course is currently being finalized in Albanian and will be available soon.
- **ePROTECT Respiratory Infections in Macedonian and Albanian languages (initiated);** <https://openwho.org/courses/eprotect-acute-respiratory-infections>

Case management

- WHO organized a **Clinical management briefing on 7 May 2020** for clinicians and 36 participants from all COVID-19 designated clinics and hospitals attended.
- **Solidarity Trial**: Generating Robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective, by North Macedonia joining the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial. This will allow also receiving WHO donation of medicines **Ramdesivir** for COVID19 severe patients. **WHO held a training meeting on Solidarity trial** to all those involved in the scheme from COVID19 treating hospitals.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation of the COVID19 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.**
- 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>
- 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 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/>
- 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 and later renewed for another month.
- On the health front, the country is working hard on 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.

IN THE PAST 24 HOURS:

Risk Communication

- Minister of Health highlighted that many of the **new cases are related to gatherings or home celebrations** and urged the citizens to refrain from doing so.

Health Professionals

- Almost 93% of the health professionals infected with SARS-CoV-2 have recovered and **all the health facilities and units are now functional.**

Surveillance

- **908 screening tests** among employees in kindergartens in Bitola, Skopje and Veles are done since 14 May 2020 and only one case is registered.

Essential Health Services

- Over **1000 urgent surgical interventions are completed** in the past period in the three health facilities for surgical interventions in Skopje – the Surgical Clinics, 8 Septemvri Hospital and St. Naum Ohridski Hospital.

Isolation and Quarantine

- **Passengers entering the country will not be subject to additional home isolation** after they complete the mandatory 21 or 14-day state quarantine.

Public Health

- 59 are caught breaking the curfew – 48 of them are detained. 28 violations of the measure for mandatory protective equipment are registered. 96 people have been issued isolation decision and 65 people have signed statement for self-isolation. Non-compliance with the isolation and self-isolation decision is not registered.

Socioeconomic Measures and Impact

- The Council of EU notes in its latest report that **North Macedonia needs to strengthen its economic systems, which have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 crisis.** *“It is important for North Macedonia to increase and intensify efforts for struggle against corruption, and to strengthen the rule of law, especially in this time of pandemic. The main challenges posed by COVID-19 are linked to strengthening the public health sector, preserving employment and improving social protection, enhancing the business environment and providing support to the private sector. The pandemic is putting the health system under stress, revealing persistent under-funding and weak capacities to cope with the crisis. North Macedonia submitted its Economic Reform Programme 2020-2022 in February. The policy guidance set out in the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Dialogue of May 2019 has been ‘partially implemented,’ it is noted, even though economic growth strengthened in 2019, driven by firming domestic demand and supported by expansionary policies. The initial ‘swift and bold’ reactions by the authorities are welcomed ‘to assist those sectors most affected by liquidity shortages, by, inter alia, exempting companies from corporate tax advances, providing SMEs with interest-free loans, subsidizing employer contributions, wage subsidies, allowances for vulnerable families in the informal economy, and establishing a tourism support fund and a solidarity COVID-19 fund,”* reads the report of the Council of EU.
- Credit agencies Fitch and Standard & Poor’s **reaffirmed the credit rating of North Macedonia.** Fitch rated the country with BB+, but now with a negative outlook due to the global pandemic, while Standard and Poor’s with BB- with a stable outlook. Both credit agencies predict a contraction of the economic results in 2020 and recovery i.e. growth in 2021, because of the COVID-19 crisis and the projections of slow down of the global economy. Fitch projected -4.2% for 2020 and 5.1% growth in 2021, while Standard and Poor’s -5% in 2020 and 3.8% in 2021.
- **Public Revenue Office:** 17,813 applications for salary subsidies were processed and approved so far for the measure for subsidies for salaries.
- The Energy Regulatory Committee (ERC) adopted a decision to **increase prices of gasoline** by 1.5 denars starting on Tuesday. ERC informed that prices are increased in accordance with the global trends for increase of prices of raw oil on world markets.

GAPS/NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

➤ Technical needs at the health front:

- Risk assessment for easing the curfews.
- 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:

- Maintaining Essential health and social services
- intensifying risk communication;
- socioeconomic relief for vulnerable groups and employment protection.
- 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.
- Laboratory Kits and reagents; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); Mechanical Ventilators/Respirators

➤ 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 and community compliance with measures
- 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