



COVID-19 in North Macedonia - Update 57

In **North Macedonia**, from **Feb 26** to **9 June 2020, 22:00pm CEST**, there have been **3,239 confirmed cases** of COVID-19 with **157 deaths**.

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NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 EPI SITUATION

Over the last 5 days – Data as of 9 June 2020 20:00

- **Total tests performed (% positive)** : 987 (8.8%), 702 (18.1%) 854 (12.9%), 1085 (11.4%) and 1272 (14.2%), on Tuesday, Monday, Sunday, Saturday and Friday, respectively.
- **Targeted screening tests (number positive)** : 326 (9) – nine cases in kindergartens in Skopje, Shtip and Kochani
- **New cases: 629 since Friday** (87, 127, 111, 124 and 180 new cases registered on each day, respectively)
- **Recovered**: 39 COVID-19 patients
- **Fatalities**: 10 new COVID-19 deaths

Cumulative registered COVID-19 as of 8 June – **3239** (Incidence=155.9/100.000) – [see daily curve](#)

- **Cases among health workers: 329 (10.2% of all cases)** of which 249 (76%) have recovered and one death case is registered.
- **Tests performed**: 38 014 SARS-CoV-2 tests. Daily testing capacity is approx. 1200 tests.
- **Patients recovered**: 1658 COVID-19 patients.
- **Fatalities: 157** COVID-19 fatalities (CFR 4.8%) are registered.
- **Gender distribution**: More women are infected with coronavirus than men (1666 and 1573 respectively). However, almost **68% of all deaths are men**.
- **Comorbidity**: 76% of death cases
- **Age distribution: Median age at infection: 43.4 years**; largest number of cases is in >60-year: 20.2%; >60-year: 66% of all deaths; but the highest age specific incidence of 187.4 / 100,000 is registered in the age group of 50-59 years (630 patients); 0-9-year: 173 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 10-19-year: 177 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

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Figure 1. North Macedonia – Daily confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths (n=3155) and deaths (n=156) by 8 June 2020

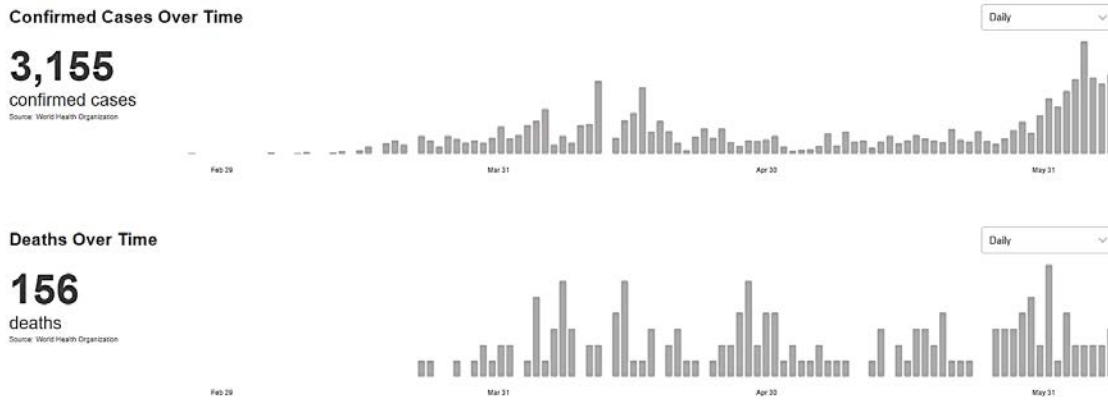
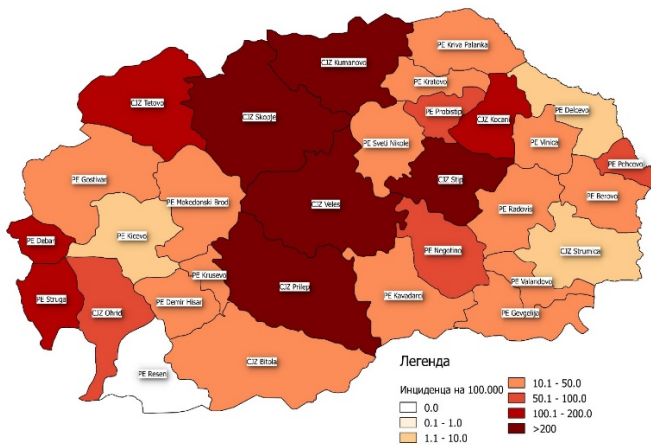


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, per city, as of 9 June 2020

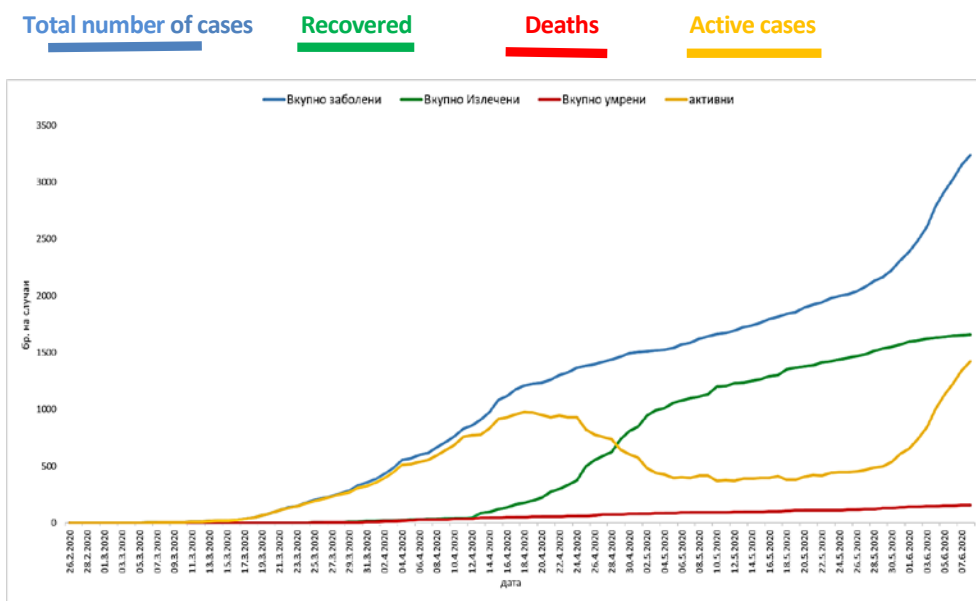


Geographic spread and deaths: COVID-19 cases are registered in 31 cities. The most affected city is Skopje with 1372 cases.

The highest cumulative incidence per 100,000 inhabitants is registered in Shtip with 423.4 patients per 100,000 inhabitants, Kumanovo (398.8 / 100,000), Prilep (228.7 / 100,000), Skopje (222.1 / 100,000), Veles (217.3 / 100,000), Debar (191.0 / 100,000), Struga (156.2 / 100,000), Tetovo (150.7 / 100,000) and Kochani (110.5 / 100,000) while an incident with over 50 patients per 100,000 inhabitants was registered in Probishtip, Negotino, Ohrid and Pehchevo. 83% of all deaths are registered in Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Shtip and Prilep.

All data can be accessed at www.iph.mk

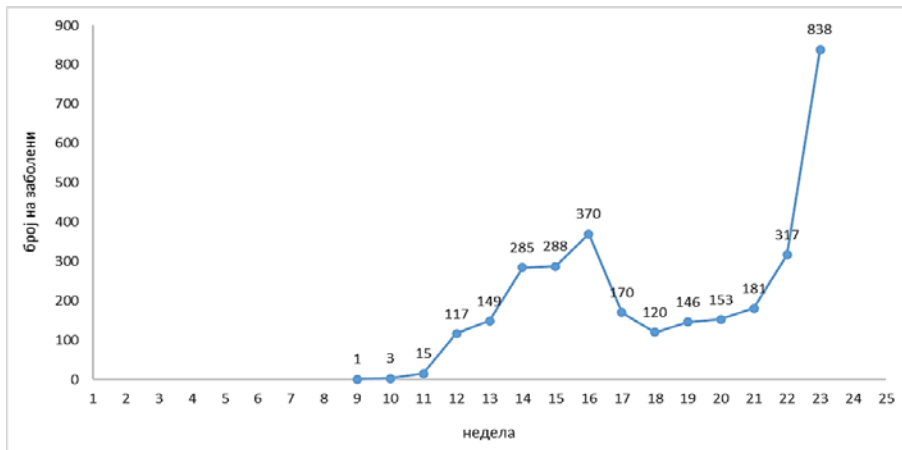
Figure 3. North Macedonia – COVID-19 statistics as of 9 June (n=3239)



- ☹️ % Change of 14-day Cumulative Death Incidence is ▲95 %
- ☹️ % Change of 14-day Cumulative COVID-19 Case Incidence is ▲245%
- ☹️ Effective Reproduction Number - 1.3 (1.1 – 1.5)
Clusters phase

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Figure 4. Distribution of number of COVID-19 patients in North Macedonia by laboratory confirmation week (n=3153)



New cases are registered continually since Week 11 in 2020.

The greatest number of cases is registered in Week 23 (n=837).

The greatest number of cases daily is registered on 4 June 2020 (n=180).

- On 4-Jun-20, North Macedonia has ordered a full 80-hour lockdown of the capital, Skopje, and the towns of Tetovo, Kumanovo and Stip. The same tough measures will apply to the rural municipalities of Lipkovo, Bogovinje, Brvenica, Tearce, Zhelino, Jegunovce and Karbinci.
- North Macedonia is seeing an increasing incidence following easing of measures. North Macedonia has seen an increasing trend in new cases since the beginning of June, directly following the shifting of measures. Over the past two weeks there has been a 245% increase in the number of new cases with the highest number of new cases in a single day (180) reported on 06 June. The current effective reproduction number is significantly higher than 1 (~1.3).**
- COVID-19 testing capacity has recently increased to approx. 1200 tests daily, however this also led to an increase in positivity to around (13-14%). Contact tracing is in place but the workforce is overstretched.
- North Macedonia Continues implementing a blended approach, including detection and isolation of all suspected cases, testing them, contact tracing and quarantining; including NPI
- Surge capacities need to be sustained and increased in public health, primary care, hospitals and laboratories.

EUROPE COVID-19 SITUATION AS OF 9 JUNE 2020 IN LAST 7 DAYS; WWW.COVID19.WHO.INT

Over the past 7 days:

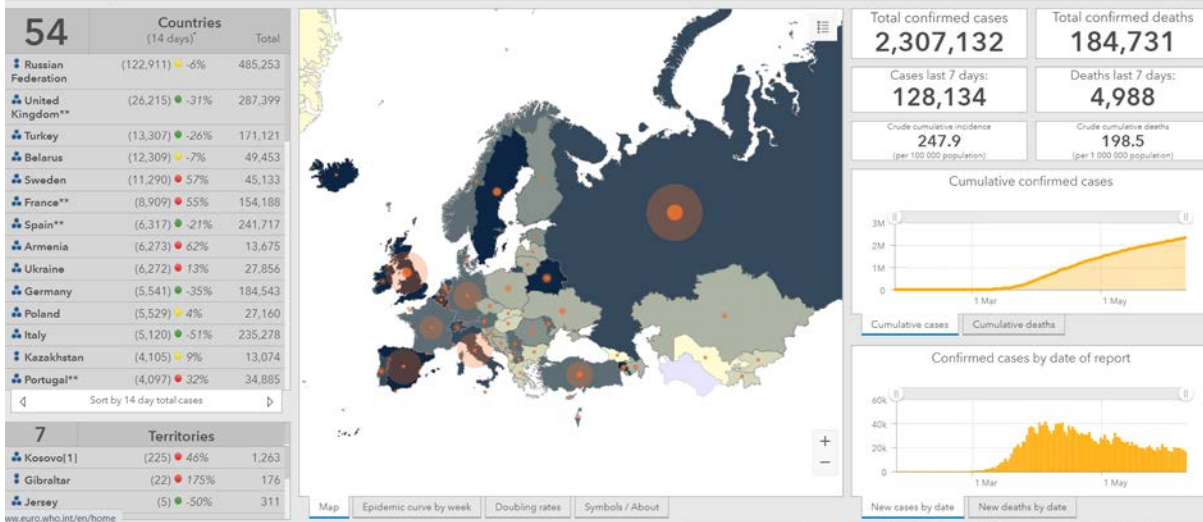
- Over the past 7 days, cumulative cases across the Region **increased 6% to 2,307,132 cases**(from 2,178,998 cases on 2 June) and cumulative deaths increased by **3% to 184,731 deaths** (from 179,743 deaths on 2 June).
- 16 (of 55) countries have shown an increase in the number of new cases greater than 10% in the past two weeks including:**
 - >100%** - **Andorra** (1,171% - low incidence), **Israel** (516%), **North Macedonia** (245%), **Azerbaijan** (113%), **Slovenia** (100%- low incidence)
 - 40-99%** - **Albania** (96%), **Armenia** (62%), **Uzbekistan** (58%), **Sweden** (57%), **France** (55%),
 - >40%** - **Estonia** (40%), **Kyrgyzstan** (36%), **Portugal** (32%), **Moldova** (23%), **Ukraine** (13%), **Bosnia & Herzegovina** (13%).

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COVID-19 situation in the WHO European Region
data as of: 09 June 2020, 10:00 (CET)

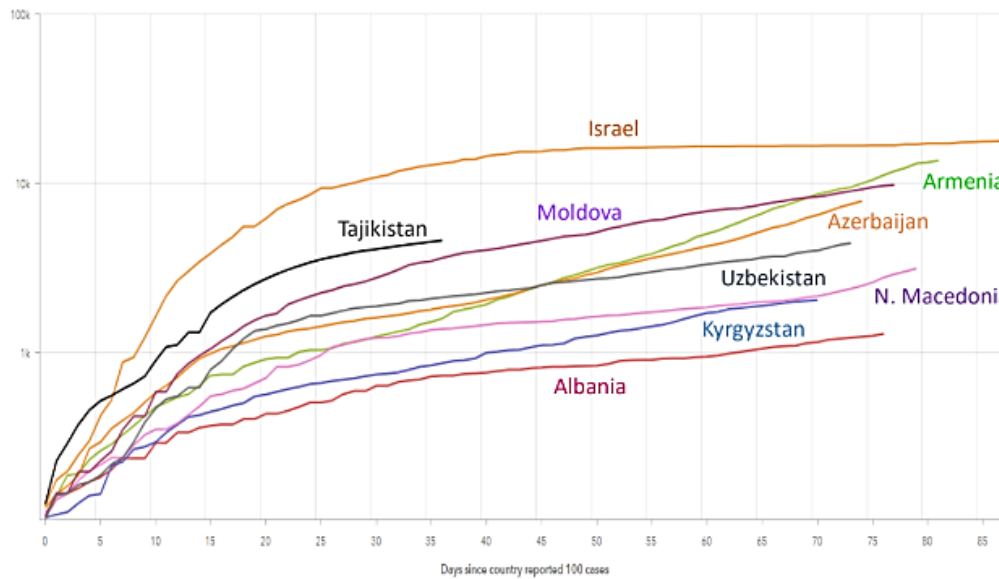
More information
WHO Global Situation Dashboard
WHO/Europe COVID-19 website



Countries of Concern:



Total confirmed cases plotted against doubling rates



COVID-19 began to spread among these focus countries from late March – early April.

A peak of cases was observed in late May – early June for most countries with the exception of Albania, Israel and Tajikistan.

COVID-19 transmission in all countries has increased, with a >23% increase in the number of new cases in the past two weeks with the exception of Tajikistan. Israel and North Macedonia have seen the most significant increase in new cases in the past two weeks.

The doubling rates across these countries signals that effective control measures must continue to be implemented.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEASURES (PHSM) - Situation Overview as of 8 June 2020

- As the local epidemiology of the disease changes, countries are adjusting public health and social measures accordingly. **16 countries in EURO are now implementing partial or full domestic movement restrictions** (Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan). **37 countries currently have no domestic movement restrictions in place.**
- 17 countries are currently in a state of national emergency due to COVID-19. In 15 the state of emergency has ended/been lifted.
- An increasing number of countries (49) have started adjusting some of the national PHSM measures with most countries implementing a phased approach.** Most common measures that are eased first are the opening of non-essential businesses and relaxation of domestic movement restrictions often followed by

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school openings and the reopening of cultural sport and/or religious establishments.

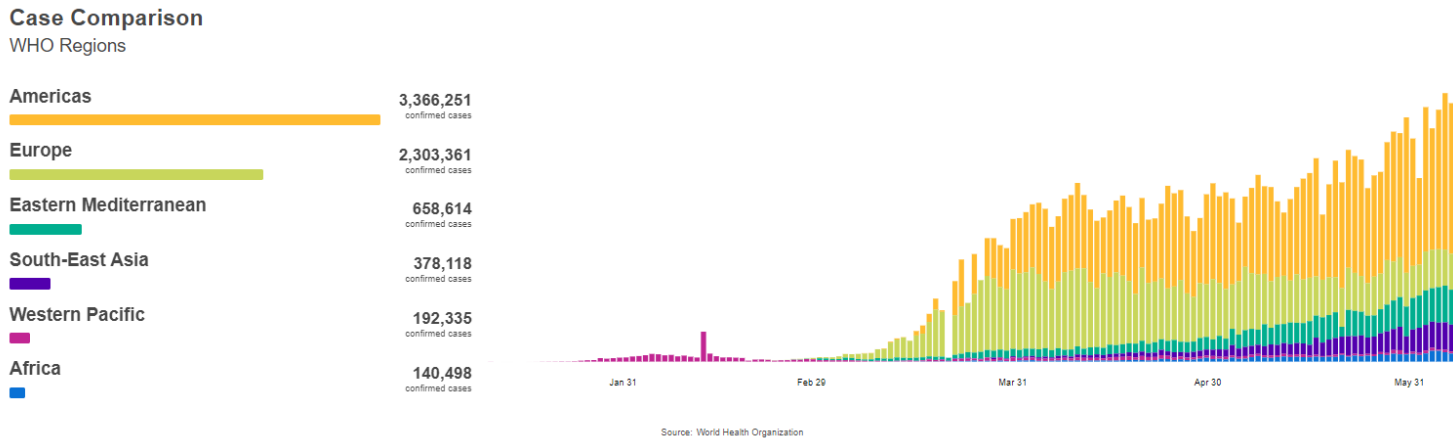
- Countries in the Region are increasingly implementing requirements and/or recommendations for the wearing of masks in public, each adopting different approaches: **11 countries have introduced a mandatory requirement or issued recommendations for the universal wearing of face masks for asymptomatic individuals in public. 36 countries have introduced similar requirements or recommendations but only applying to certain public settings according to a risk-based approach.**
- 54 out of 55 States Parties have implemented international travel measures (exception is Lichtenstein). 43 countries* are currently implementing a mandatory quarantine for travelers (foreigners and/or citizens) arriving from abroad. 5 countries have fully lifted mandatory quarantine measures that were previously in place (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Serbia). The UK has announced plans to implement mandatory quarantine.

Indicators for Top 10 Countries and Countries of Interest

Country	Cases	Deaths	Transmission scenario	Effective R	Overall Trend	Cumulative Cases per 100,000 population	14-day Cumulative Cases per 100,000 population	% Change in 14-day Cumulative Incidence
Russian Federation	476658	5971	Clusters	1 (1 – 1.1)	Stable	326.76	84.48	-6.70
United Kingdom	286194	40542	Community	0.9 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	423.80	39.44	-34.04
Spain	241550	27136	Community	0.9 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	516.83	12.36	-49.24
Italy	234998	33899	Community	0.9 (0.8 – 1)	Stable	388.11	8.49	-52.36
Germany	184193	8674	Community	1 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	220.55	6.73	-37.51
Turkey	170132	4692	Community	1 (0.9 – 1)	Stable	203.92	15.95	-26.77
France	153977	29155	Community	1.3 (1.2 – 1.4)	Increasing	236.42	13.90	54.62
Belarus	48630	269	Community	1 (1 – 1.1)	Stable	514.47	131.52	1.14
Sweden	44730	4659	Community	1.1 (1 – 1.2)	Stable	445.68	112.30	57.92
Ukraine	27462	797	Community	1.1 (1 – 1.2)	Stable	62.42	14.13	11.08
Israel	17783	294	Pending	1.6 (1.3 – 1.9)	Increasing	208.74	12.57	387.21
Armenia	13325	211	Community	1.1 (1 – 1.2)	Stable	450.51	210.03	66.94
Kazakhstan	12859	56	Clusters	1.1 (1 – 1.2)	Stable	69.32	23.33	27.56
Azerbaijan	7553	88	Clusters	1.2 (1.1 – 1.3)	Increasing	75.17	34.15	114.11
Tajikistan	4529	48	Pending	0.9 (0.8 – 1)	Stable	48.59	17.17	-30.93
Uzbekistan	4352	17	Clusters	1.1 (0.9 – 1.2)	Stable	13.20	3.55	52.36
North Macedonia	3028	153	Clusters	1.3 (1.1 – 1.5)	Increasing	145.34	50.40	212.46

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Figure 5: Comparison Epi curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 9 June 2020 for all WHO Regions



Situation in numbers (by WHO Region)

Total (new cases in last 24 hours)

Globally	7 039 918 cases (108 918)	404 396 deaths (3 539)
Africa	140 498 cases (5 086)	3 352 deaths (116)
Americas	3 366 251 cases (54 864)	183 950 deaths (2 146)
Eastern Mediterranean	658 614 cases (17 185)	14 913 deaths (311)
Europe	2 303 361 cases (16 801)	184 671 deaths (551)
South-East Asia	378 118 cases (13 922)	10 376 deaths (406)
Western Pacific	192 335 cases (1 060)	7 121 deaths (9)

*Remember to check the European Region Situation Dashboards available in both [ENGLISH](#) and [RUSSIAN](#) for the latest, verified information on the COVID-19 situation in the Region.

**Access a Mobile Friendly Version of the European Region COVID-19 Situation Dashboard [HERE](#)

NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 HEALTH RESPONSE – in past 72 hours

Test, Trace and Isolate

- 15 people employed at the "September 8" city hospital in Skopje have been confirmed to be infected with coronavirus. Among the infected people are two doctors, and the rest are nurses and technical staff. Three of them were hospitalized. Two health workers in Shtip tested positive and 6 are isolated. Employees working in a building that is part of the Skopje city hall complex are in isolation after one of their colleagues was diagnosed with the coronavirus.
- Minister of Health urged infected citizens to cooperate fully with doctors as they are surveyed for their contacts. It has been reported that many diagnosed patients refuse to cooperate with the mandatory surveys which prevents the full mapping of the new clusters.

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Public Health Measures

- **The Government decided to introduce intensified controls and monitoring in targeted areas of the city of Skopje and municipalities of Arachinovo, Studenicani, Ilinden, Petrovec and Zelenikovo, as well as municipalities of Kumanovo, Lipkovo, Shtip and Karbinici, and Tetovo municipalities Bogovinje, Brvenica, Tarce, Zelino and Zelistrano – areas in which the larger number of new cases are registered.**
 - The Ministry of Interior, the Inspection Council and the Financial Police to develop special action plans to control, prevent and sanction the non-compliance with the protection measures.
 - In each isolation decision issued by the State Health and Sanitary Inspectorate to included the mandatory download of the application StopKorona for greater oversight and control over the spread of the virus.
- The Government passed on Tuesday changes to the Decree on implementation of the law for the population's protection from contagious diseases during a state of emergency. According to the Decree, if a person refuses to accept a decision for self-isolation, provides false personal information or false data related to persons they had been in contact with in previous days, or fails to implement the measure of home self-isolation, he/she is ordered a measure of 14-day strict isolation (quarantine), in facilities designated by the Government of North Macedonia, while the accommodation costs are covered by the person concerned.
- The proposal to introduce restrictive measures to be reconsidered by the Commission for Infectious Diseases.
- During the 82-hour long curfew over the past weekend **22 criminal charges were filed against accommodation businesses and facility owners for violating the regulations and protocols for protection from COVID-19.** Of these, 8 criminal charges were filed for objects in Ohrid, 4 in Struga, 5 in Bitola, 3 in Dojran and one in Ponikva and Mavrovo. Many citizens from the municipalities that were put under lockdown during the weekend decided to go to the touristic centers around the country right before the start of the curfew, with the State Roads informing that over 20,000 vehicles left Skopje on Thursday evening.
- The Interior Ministry registered **5,397 curfew violations**, most of which in Skopje (340), between 21:00 on Thursday (June 4) and 05:00 on Monday (June 8). 1,777 people were caught during this period without appropriate protective equipment, i.e. face masks, with the majority of such offences registered in Strumica (417) and Ohrid (356). A total of 8,188 people has been caught disobeying this measure thus far. The Interior Ministry issued during the long weekend 1,648 isolation orders, while 584 people signed self-isolation statements. During that period, 8,701 police controls were conducted to check whether people were abiding by stay-at-home orders.
- **The number of deaths in the country increased by 3.6%** compared to 2018 and the total number of deaths was 20,446 out of which the majority are male (10 616; 51.9%). The average age of death of the males is 71.6 years old and 76.0 for females or 4.4 years difference between men and women according to data from the State Statistical Office.

Borders and Travel

- **Airports** in North Macedonia are not to be opened before the 15th of June. At the moment the number of flights compared to last year is just 7 to 10%, and these include military flights, special medical, state and humanitarian flights and repatriation flights for citizens who were out of the country during the outburst of the pandemic when the borders were closed.
- **Serbia** has given the green light for the entry of citizens from North Macedonia. **Slovenia, Bulgaria and Montenegro** have already introduced a 14-day quarantine for all coming from the country, **Cyprus** has not

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put North Macedonia on the list of countries whose citizens can enter the country, and **Greece** may not open the border on June 15 for North Macedonia. **Albania** has announced that it will monitor the situation with people infected with the coronavirus in the country and based on those figures will decide under what conditions it will receive the citizens of North Macedonia. **Kosovo** demands a negative test not older than 4 days or 14 days of domestic isolation for those who want to enter this country from North Macedonia.

NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT AND RESPONSE

- **The unemployment rate** in North Macedonia in the first quarter of 2020 is 16.2 % while the average unemployment rate in 2019 was 17.3 %, and in the last quarter of 2019 it was 16.6 %. According to the latest data from the State Statistical Office, the number of active population in Macedonia in the first quarter of 2020 is 967,733, of which 156,627 are unemployed, the activity rate is 57.4 % and the employment rate is 48.1 %, while the unemployment stands at 16.2%.
- As of Friday, 5 June 2020 over 34,000 companies have applied for the measure for subsidies for salaries, and that 90 % of the applications were processed and approved.
- The platform for distribution of vouchers for summer holidays in the touristic centres in the country will be operable by 15 June 2020. With this measure, citizens with monthly incomes lower than 15,000 denars can get a voucher of 6,000 denars which they can use for reservations in the touristic capacities around our country. They can use these vouchers till the end of 2020, and they are to compensate with own funds if the arrangement they intend to purchase is more expensive than 6,000 denars. The vouchers will be distributed in accordance with income data from the Public Revenue Office.
- The Organization of Employers of Macedonia (OEM) concludes that over **82 % of companies in Macedonia are negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis**. Nine sectors in which 62 % of all employees in our country are deeply affected by the crisis, while around 40,000 job positions are under serious risk. The sectors most affected by the crisis are service-providing businesses, retail sale, transport and storage, processing industry and construction. Managers of over half of companies included in the research claim their businesses will not make it through this crisis. Also, over 70 % of business owners believe that the state should prolong the measure for subsidising of salaries for another six months, in order to avoid shutting down of great number of businesses.
- The Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia (SSM) informs that they have received several reports by citizens that the companies they worked for payed them lower salaries, despite the fact that they have applied for the governmental measure for subsidisation of salaries with 14,500 denars per employee. From SSM they state that they will take all legal measures to pursue the companies that conform to this practice, if their investigations prove that these companies indeed underpay their employees.
- **COVID-19 Crisis lead to half a million passengers less that projected at the airports in North Macedonia.** The first four months of the coronavirus crisis in North Macedonia have caused serious damage to air traffic. Due to the decision on the 18 March to close the two airports as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in North Macedonia, by the end of May half a million passengers are “lost”. The data provided by the State Statistical Bureau indicate that during April 2020 there were 1.853 passengers using air travel – and all of them were citizens that were brought back to North Macedonia by the Foreign Affairs Ministry through humanitarian flights. In contrast to these numbers, during April last year, 213.261 passengers were registered at both airports in Skopje and Ohrid, while in May there were 219.141 passengers. In March 2019, there were 175.437 passengers while during the same month, but this year, there were 79.469 passengers.
- In the first three months of this years, the total **foreign investments** amount to €137.7 million, which is significant rise over the same quarter of 2019, when the foreign companies invested €48.5 million, the Central Bank of North Macedonia data shows. The biggest part of these investments, €108 million, was

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made in March, when the COVID-19 crisis started to escalate. Switzerland with €38 million topped the list of countries with direct investments in the first quarter of 2020, followed by Germany (€13 million), Slovenia (€10 million), Turkey (€7 million) and the Netherlands with €6 million.

- According to the preliminary data of the State Statistical Office, **the total value of exported goods from North Macedonia** in the period January-April 2020 amounted to 99.7 billion denars, an 21.5 % decrease compared to the same period last year. The value of imported goods in the same period was 141.2 billion denars, or 16.5 % less than the same period last year. The trade deficit in the period January-April 2020 was 41.4 billion denars. Import coverage by export in the period January-April 2020 was 70.6 %. The external trade by products shows that in the exports the most significant products are supported catalysts with precious metal or precious metal compounds as the active substance, ignition wiring sets and other wiring sets of a kind used in vehicles, aircraft or ships, parts of the seats of subgroup 821.1 and motor vehicles for the transport of 10 or more persons, including the driver, with compression-ignition internal combustion engine (diesel or semi-diesel). In the imports, the most significant products are the platinum and platinum alloys, unwrought or in powder form, petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (other than crude), flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, not clad, plated or coated and other metals of the platinum group and alloys thereof, unwrought or in powder form. In the period January-April 2020, according to the total external trade volume, the most important trade partners of Macedonia were Germany, Great Britain, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria.
- According to the estimated data, **the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** in the first quarter of 2020 was 0.2 %. In this quarter, the biggest increase was recorded in sections: J - Information and communication by 10.4 %; L - Real estate activities by 6.5 % and R, S and T - Arts, entertainment and recreation; Other service activities; Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use by 5.2 %. In the first quarter of 2020, Household final consumption, including Non-profit institutions serving households, increased by 2.7 % in nominal terms, and its share in the GDP structure was 63.2 %. Export of goods and services decreased by 7.1 % in nominal terms, while Import of goods and services decreased by 4.6 %.
- **The World Banks estimates a 2.1% drop in the country's GDP this year and 3.9% increase in 2021.**
- The Energy Regulatory Committee (ERC) determined the new pieces of gasoline in North Macedonia, which will enter into force on Tuesday at midnight. With an increase of 1.5 denars, the new prices are: 58 denars per litre of Eurosuper BS-95, 60.5 denars per litre of Eurosuper BS-98, 50 denars per litre of Eurodiesel, 39 denars per litre of extra-light household oil and 24.6 denars per kilogram of petroleum jelly.
- According to the State Statistical Office data, **the Consumer Price Index and Retail Price Index in May 2020** in comparison with the previous month were 100.4. An increase in the Consumer Price Index in May 2020, in comparison with the previous month, was registered in fresh or chilled fruit by 7.2 %, fish and seafood by 0.9 %, spirits by 0.8 %, sugar, jam, honey, chocolate and confectionery, mineral waters, soft drinks, fruit and vegetable juices, beer by 0.4 %, meat, fresh or chilled vegetables other than potatoes and other tubers by 0.3 %, bread and cereals, milk by 0.2 %. In May 2020, there was also an increase in the indices of bicycles, liquid fuels and lubricants for personal transport equipment by 3.3 %, domestic services and household services by 3.2 %, equipment for sport, camping and open-air recreation by 1.8%, services for maintenance and repair of the dwelling by 0.8 %, materials for the maintenance and repair of the dwelling by 0.7 %, other medical products, recording media, gardens, plants and flowers by 0.5 %, other articles of clothing and clothing accessories, footwear, carpets and other floor coverings by 0.4 %, motor cars, stationery and drawing materials by 0.3 %. A decrease in the Consumer Price Index in May 2020, in comparison with the previous month, was registered in oils and fats by 0.6 %, eggs by 0.5 % and wine by 0.2 %. In May there was also a decrease of the indices of liquid fuels for household by 4 %, equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound and picture by 2.2 %, electric appliances for personal care by 1 %, major household appliances by 0.9 %, small electric household appliances by 0.8 %, clothing by 0.4 %, other personal effects

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n.e.c by 0.3 %, glassware, tableware and household utensils, therapeutic appliances and equipment, information processing equipment, books, other appliances, articles and products for personal care by 0.2 %. The Consumer Price Index in May 2020, in comparison with May 2019, decreased by 0.2 %, while Retail Price Index decreased by 1.3 %.

- The latest analyses of the Federation of Trade Union of Macedonia (SSM) reveal that **the average consumer basket for May 2020 amounts 33,315 denars**. Of these, an average family of four would use the majority of funds for food and beverages (14,196 denars), then 10,426 denars for housing, 2,325 denars for personal hygiene products, 2,447 denars for transport services, 2,144 denars for clothes and footwear, 1,066 denars for attendance of cultural events and 707 denars for healthcare. The analyses of SSM also reveal that in May 2020 the average net salary paid per employee in Macedonia amounted 26,422 denars, or almost 7,000 denars less than the average consumer basket for May 2020.

SUPPORT TO NORTH MACEDONIA COVID-19 EMERGENCY

- The U.S Government through the USAID has provided additional \$450 000 to support North Macedonia in the response to COVID-10 pandemic, bringing its total contribution to \$1.5 million.

SUBJECT IN FOCUS – COVID-19 UPDATED MASKS GUIDANCE

WHO has published updated guidance on the use of masks for control of COVID-19. Our new guidance is based on evolving evidence and provides updates on who should wear a mask, when it should be worn and what it should be made of. It remains critical that people who use masks continue to take a comprehensive approach to protecting their health, including physical distancing and hand hygiene the guidance we are publishing today is an update of what we have been saying for months: that masks should only ever be used as part of a comprehensive strategy in the fight against COVID.

What you need to know is that Masks on their own will not protect you from COVID-19.

Here is what has not changed:

Use of Masks when a person has symptoms:

- WHO continues to recommend that people who are sick with symptoms of COVID-19 should remain at home, and should consult their health care provider.
- People confirmed to have COVID-19 should be isolated and cared for in a health facility and their contacts should be quarantined.
- If it is absolutely necessary for a sick person or a contact to leave the house, they should wear a medical mask.

Use of Mask when you are caring for a sick person: WHO continues to advise that people caring for an infected person at home should wear a medical mask while they are in the same room as the sick person.

Health workers should have priority for the masks: WHO continues to advise that health workers use medical masks and other protective equipment when dealing with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

Here is what's new:

- **In areas with widespread transmission**, WHO advises medical masks for **all people working in clinical areas of a health facility**, not only workers dealing with patients with COVID-19. That means, for example, that when a doctor is doing a ward round on the cardiology or palliative care units where there are no confirmed COVID-19 patients, they should still wear a medical mask.
- Second, **in areas with community transmission**, we advise that **people aged 60 years or over**, or those with underlying conditions, should wear a medical mask in situations where physical distancing is not possible.
- Third, WHO has also updated its guidance on the use of **masks by the general public** in areas with community transmission.

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- In light of evolving evidence, WHO advises that **governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread transmission and physical distancing is difficult, such as on public transport, in shops or in other confined or crowded environments.**
- Our updated guidance contains **new information on the composition of fabric masks**, based on academic research requested by WHO.: Based on this new research, WHO advises that **fabric masks should consist of at least three layers of different material.** Details of which materials we recommend for each layer are in the guidelines.
- We also provide guidance on **how to wash and maintain a fabric mask.**
- Our guidance also explains **how to use a mask safely.**

Please remember that :

- People can potentially infect themselves if they use contaminated hands to adjust a mask, or to repeatedly take it off and put it on, without cleaning hands in between.
- Masks can also create a false sense of security, leading people to neglect measures such as hand hygiene and physical distancing. **Masks alone without hand hygiene and distancing will not protect you from COVID-19.** Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing, hand hygiene and other public health measures. Masks are only of benefit as part of a comprehensive approach in the fight against COVID-19.

Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19:

[https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)

When and how to use masks

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Q&A: Masks and COVID-19:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-and-masks>

HIGHLIGHTS OF WHO NORTH MACEDONIA ACTION IN COVID-19 TIMES

- The Weekly Laboratory Workshop was held on 8 June. Dr. Shantal Reusken, from the Netherlands Institute of Public Health, shared his experiences and the experiences in the Netherlands regarding immunodiagnostic testing (ELISA).

WHAT IS [NEW]?

DG's Statement – WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 08 June can be accessed in full [Here](#). **Dr. Tedros'** key messages focused on:

- Results from studies to see how much of the population has been exposed to the virus show that most people globally are still susceptible to infection.
- The DG' continues to urge countries to use active surveillance to ensure the virus does not rebound, especially as mass gatherings of all kinds are starting to resume in some countries.
 - All those protesting around the world should do so safely.
- As part of a comprehensive approach, digital contact-tracing tools offer the opportunity to trace larger numbers of contacts in a shorter period of time, and to provide a real-time picture of the spread of the virus.

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- WHO is running the COVID-19 Partners Platform, an online tool that enables countries to match needs with resources. It enables countries to enter planned activities for which they need support, and donors to match their contributions to these activities.
 - The platform includes the COVID-19 Supply Portal, enabling countries to request critical supplies of diagnostics, protective equipment and other essential medical provisions.

DG's Statement – WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 05 June can be accessed in full [Here](#). **Dr. Tedros'** key messages focused on:

- Guidance on the use of masks will soon be published and is based on evolving evidence, and provides updated advice on who should wear a mask, when it should be worn and what it should be made of.
- Masks should only ever be used as part of a comprehensive strategy in the fight against COVID. New guidance includes:
 - Wearing medical masks for all people working in clinical areas of a health facility, not only workers dealing with patients with COVID-19.
 - In areas with community transmission, people aged 60 years or over, or those with underlying conditions, should wear a medical mask in situations where physical distancing is not possible.
 - Masks should be used by the general public in areas with community transmission.
 - Fabric masks should consist of at least three layers of different material. Details of which materials we recommend for each layer are in the guidelines.
- Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing, hand hygiene and other public health measures.
- Governments should encourage the general public to wear masks where there is widespread transmission and physical distancing is difficult, such as on public transport, in shops or in other confined or crowded environments.

Surveillance

- The **COVID-19 surveillance report for the epi week 22** is now published on the WHO Euro website. It is accessible [Here](#) and on the COVID-19 site homepage. It is possible to download the report as a PDF using Chrome and Firefox browsers (via the menu on the right top corner).

Infection Prevention and Control

- A WHO news story was just published: **WHO/Europe encourages health workers to ask “why?”** available [Here](#). Organized teleconferences have reached just under half the countries in the Region at least once per month. They last for 2 hours and offer simultaneous translations. There are no limits on the number of people who can attend and any health worker can sign up. As a result, early sessions in Albania and Kazakhstan saw over 700 people connect.

Clinical Management

- **Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents with COVID-19**, scientific brief available in [RUSSIAN](#).
- **Case Report Form for suspected cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS) in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19** is now available in [RUSSIAN](#).
- Revised interim guidance on **Clinical management of COVID-19** (as of 27 May 2020) is now available [Here](#). From the key changes as per this guidance: “Discontinue transmission-based precautions (including isolation) and release from the COVID-19 care pathway: For symptomatic patients: 10 days after symptom onset, plus at least 3 days without symptoms (without fever and respiratory symptoms).”

Travel and Trade

- A study on **modelling the effect of international travel restrictions**, using effective distance concept to understand the relationship between restrictions and first reported cases was recently published [Here](#).

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Vulnerable Populations

- A **UNSG Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19** has been launched and is available [Here](#). The global crisis of COVID-19 is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing the extent of exclusion and highlighting that work on disability inclusion is imperative. People with disabilities—one billion people— are one of the most excluded groups in our society and are among the hardest hit in this crisis in terms of fatalities.

COVID-19 and the environment

- In preparation for World Environment Day on 5 June, a WHO news story on **Protecting nature protects health – lessons for the future from COVID-19** was recently published [Here](#). While the COVID-19 pandemic is tragically affecting people's health, lives and livelihoods, it has also had a noticeable positive impact on our environment in just few months. In many places, reduced economic and transport activities brought about by measures to reduce the spreading of the pandemic have resulted in the short term in cleaner air, reduced carbon emissions and less noise.
 - For further reading find the *WHO Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19* [Here](#) and the Web page for World Environment Day [Here](#).

COVID-19 and Food Safety

- In preparation for World Food Safety Day on 7 June, a WHO news story on **Unsafe food continues to affect millions in Europe during COVID-19 pandemic** was recently published [Here](#). Links to campaign material in various European languages can be found below the article.

Country Operations

- A WHO News story on **COVID-19: WHO coordinates large-scale response operation in Tajikistan** was recently published [Here](#). An aircraft carrying medical specialists from Poland, WHO experts and a tonne of medical equipment landed in Dushanbe on 7 June, marking the beginning of a large-scale COVID-19 response operation in Tajikistan, involving emergency medical teams (EMTs) and mobile laboratories coordinated by WHO/Europe.

Partner Coordination

- A WHO news story about **WHO joining forces with 17 central European countries to step up tailored COVID-19 response** was recently published is available [Here](#).

Journal articles

- A study published by the Imperial College of London **Estimating the effects of non-pharmaceutical interventions on COVID-19** in Europe was recently published (available [Here](#)). In response to COVID-19, many European countries have implemented unprecedented non-pharmaceutical interventions such as closure of schools and national lockdowns. The study examines the impact of major interventions across 11 European countries for the period from the start of COVID-19 until the 4th of May 2020 when lockdowns started to be lifted.

Other WHO news

- The **Weekly Global Operational Update on COVID-19** is now available [Here](#). This report shows a snapshot of the activities being carried out in the different WHO Regions between 30 May – 5 June.

NEW COURSES AND LANGUAGES ON OPENWHO THIS MONTH FOR COVID-19

We are pleased to announce the following two new courses which have recently become available on OpenWHO:

- **Decontamination and sterilization of medical devices**: The processes of sterilization and decontamination are complex, requiring specific infrastructure, equipment and process. In this course, which is divided into two

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parts, you will learn about the overall procedure for managing decontamination and sterilization of medical devices.

- [Standard precautions: Environmental cleaning and disinfection](#): In this course, you will learn the role of an IPC professional in environmental cleaning and understand how cleaning and disinfection prevent contamination of the health care environment.

New translations for COVID-19

The following 10 courses for COVID-19 have been launched recently:

- Health and safety briefing for respiratory diseases – ePROTECT in [Albanian](#), [Bengali](#) and [Macedonian](#).
- Standard precautions for hand hygiene in [French](#)
- A general introduction to emerging respiratory viruses, including novel coronaviruses in [German](#) and [Tetum](#)
- How to put on and remove PPE for COVID-19 in [French](#), [Portuguese](#) and [Thai](#)
- Standard precautions for hand hygiene in [Portuguese](#)

All courses for COVID-19 can be accessed [here](#). You can use the toolbar to filter courses by language.

WEBEX SESSIONS FOR THIS WEEK

Using artificial intelligence & social listening to inform policy-making – 15 June 15:00 CEST

Should you be interested in joining this meeting [register HERE](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic is accompanied by an ‘infodemic’ - an overabundance of information that makes it difficult to distinguish between the accurate information and the mis- or disinformation. In a similar manner to an epidemic, an infodemic spreads between humans through digital and physical information systems. Enhanced understanding of the infodemic during a crisis can inform a more effective response.

In this webinar, we will hear why and how the Inter-American Development Bank and Citibeats are using artificial intelligence to analyze millions of public civic opinions across 26 countries, to create a real-time view of social needs that are then made public for anyone to use. We will also hear how AI, social listening, and partnerships in information systems for health, are used by the Pan American Health Organization and partners to bring policy-makers closer together to respond to the COVID-19 challenges.

Webinar NCD hard talks: making health systems deliver – COVID-19 and NCD: deadly interplay and continuity response

- **WHEN:** Thursday 11 June 2020 13:00 – 14:30 CEST
- **WHERE:** Virtual Zoom Meeting; [Registration link](#)

Latest data shows massive disruptions in access to NCD services worldwide, which threatens a long-term upsurge in deaths from NCDs. This webinar explores the latest data and operational guidance, with key insights from experts and country perspectives on how to balance the demands of the health system during the pandemic, and how to execute an adaptive, forward-looking strategy inclusive of NCDs to build back better.