

Data as reported by national authorities by 20:00 29 March 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- Minister Filipche sent a clear message today: “the most difficult period is ahead, and cases will grow globally and in the country. All must respect the instructions and the success of this fight will depend on each one of us “
- Three additional COVID-19 fatalities over the weekend – a 31-year-old man, 66-year-old woman and 91-year-old man. 22 and 18 new cases have been reported on 28 and 29 March 2020, respectively. The total number of registered COVID-19 cases in the country is 259. Currently, 49 patients are hospitalized at CID and 7 have severe clinical manifestation.
- About 10% of all cases, i.e. 20 medical and nursing staff have acquired the infection while in their primary clinics or in professional meetings. This is of great concern. On 26 March, the Ministry of Health decided on the use of PPE in line with WHO specifications for the protection against SARSv2 by all healthcare professionals and in all health care facilities countrywide.
- First cases identified in Bitola, Gevgelija, Strumica and Struga, indicating further geographic spread.
- MOH is increasing the COVID19 case management capacity at the clinic of infectious diseases by raising a connected large mobile hospital of 130 beds to be ready during next week with the help of NATO and the National Army.
- North Macedonia is using NATO’s Next-Generation Incident Command System (NICS) to coordinate its national response to the COVID-19 crisis and to provide its public with real-time information and advice.
- Minister of Health announced the procurement of 25 ventilators by UNOPS with Norway funds as well as 30 ventilators by UNDP with EU funds. It is estimated that at least 50 more ventilators would be needed during the crisis. He announced the arrival soon of 500,000 masks and 20,000 lab tests. WHO is additionally procuring 5000 lab kits.
- Two additional COVID19 screening outposts in Skopje, Chair and Mlin Balkan polyclinics will be operational as of tomorrow and the end of next week, respectively. More will be open shortly across the country
- The WHO Director-General highlighted in his media briefing yesterday that the chronic global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) is one of the most urgent threats to our collective ability to save lives. To date, WHO has shipped almost 2 million individual items of PPE to 74 countries and is preparing to send a similar amount to a further 60 countries. The Director- General’s opening remarks at the media briefing can be found [here](#).

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

total (new) cases in last 24 hours

North Macedonia

259 confirmed (18)

6 deaths

3 recovered

Globally

634 835 confirmed (63 159)

29 957 deaths (3464)

Western Pacific Region

102 803 confirmed (1343)

3626 deaths (34)

European Region

361 454 confirmed (36 688)

21 493 deaths (2753)

South-East Asia Region

3709 confirmed (624)

139 deaths (25)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

42 777 confirmed (3846)

2668 deaths (160)

Region of the Americas

120 798 confirmed (20 484)

1973 deaths (488)

African Region

3005 confirmed (174)

51 deaths (04) 2831

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

VERY HIGH

NORTH MACEDONIA in declared emergency up to 18 April 2020; all borders and airports are closed.

SURVEILLANCE

Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases, as 28 March 2020

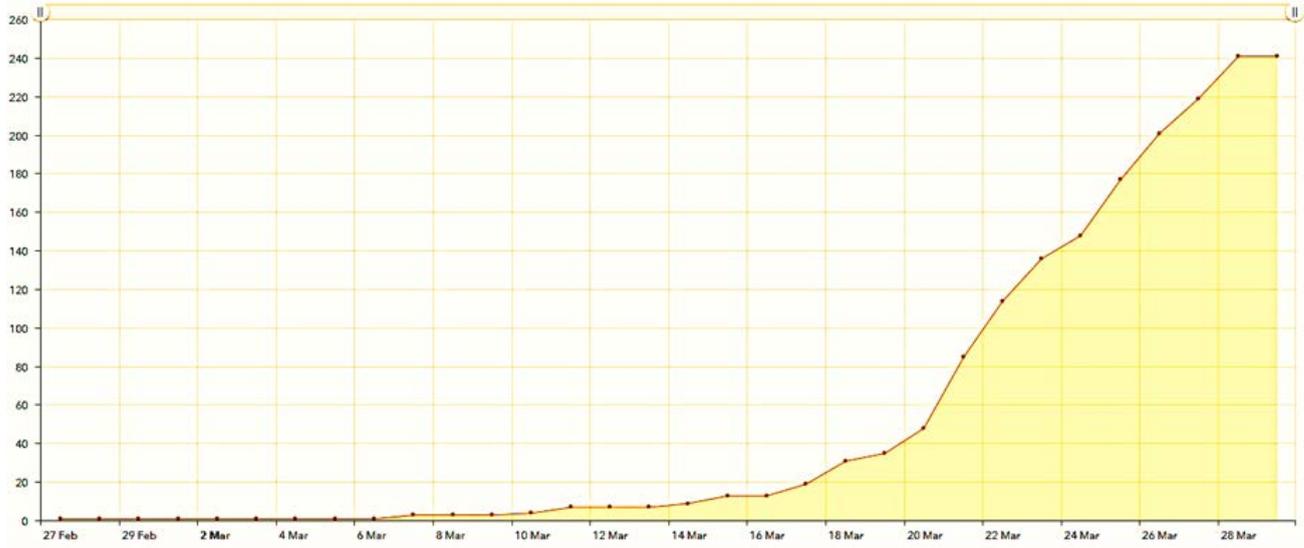
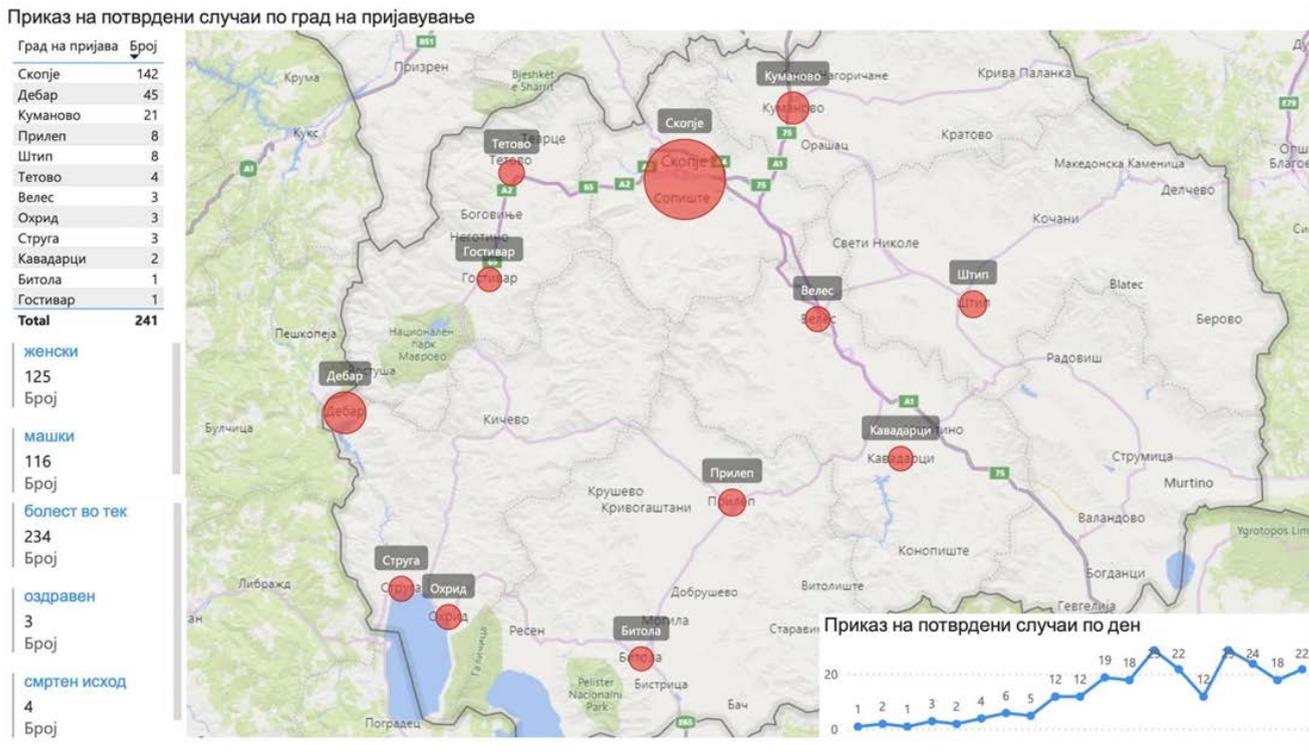


Figure 2. North Macedonia – Geographic Distribution of COVID-19 cases, (n = 241), as 27 March 2020



Risk Assessment of COVID-19 in North Macedonia as of 27 March 2020

The highest cumulative incidence is in Debar 154.9 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by 21.7 and 15.2 per 100,000 inhabitants for Skopje and Shtip respectively.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 27 March 2020 could be accessed at the [Institute of Public Health](#).

Age of patients vary from 2-91 years. However, the highest risk groups remain those between 30-59 years.

According to the WHO risk categorization, Debar and Skopje are in Phase 4 (widespread community transmission) and the rest of the Republic of North Macedonia is in phase 2 (sporadic cases).

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), EUROPE

WHO European Region accounts for 57% of the global burden of 634 835 cases reported globally with 361 454 cases in total to date. **Italy is leading top-6** with 92 472 cases, or 26% of the total case count in

the Region, followed by Spain (72 248 cases), Germany (52 547 cases), France (37 575 cases), the United Kingdom (17 089) and Switzerland (13 152 cases). Seventeen more countries in the Region reported 1000 cases or more to date, listed in descendant order (The Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Turkey, Portugal, Israel, Norway, Sweden, Czech Republic, Ireland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Russian Federation, Romania, Finland and Greece).

Around 72% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (29 957) were from the European Region (21 496 deaths), with Italy and Spain reporting almost 73% of all deaths in Europe (10 023 and 5690 deaths respectively), followed by France (2311 deaths), the United Kingdom (1019 deaths), and the Netherlands (639 deaths).

WHO ROLE AND ACTION in North Macedonia

WHO procured locally new list of urgently needed PPE and lab supplies for the IPH Virology Lab and will be delivering by end of March additional COVID19 testing kits in support of the strategic national scale up of testing as per WHO guidance. North Macedonia has joined the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international study designed to generate robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective. 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/>. UNFPA and WHO are working now on producing the Albanian Language version.

WHO contributes to the efforts the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and also supports newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19, where UN RC takes the lead in order to streamline joint response efforts to the COVID-19 and provide support to the people and government of North Macedonia as effectively as possible.

COVID-19 could be regarded as an opportunity to upscale and accelerate the implementation of the **IHR Core Capacities**. Based on the Joint External Evaluation that was carried out in 2019 some areas require immediate strengthening: develop and implement a national IPC program and strategy for healthcare associated infections and strengthen biosafety and biosecurity.

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. Several measures are taken to interrupt human-to-human transmission including reducing secondary infections among close contacts and health

WHO action in COVID-19 outbreak in North Macedonia aims at limiting 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 all health matters including 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 for strong nation-wide strategic response.

care workers, preventing transmission amplification events, and preventing further spread. This can be achieved through a combination of 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

Today:

- North Macedonia adopted the NICS system to coordinate all parts of government in the event of an emergency. Experts from the Crisis Management Centre in North Macedonia have now quickly adapted the system to enhance the country's response to the coronavirus. NICS provides the public with real-time information on the current status of the pandemic in their area as well as information on who to contact for items such as food and medicines. The system also enables all of North Macedonia's institutions, as well as organizations like the Red Cross, to communicate and coordinate their activities as effectively and efficiently as possible. The NICS system is part of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) project "Advanced Regional Civil Emergency Coordination Pilot" (ARCECP), a collaboration between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Lincoln Laboratory (MIT LL), the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) and the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia and Montenegro.
- ✓ In relation to the death of the 66-year-old patient from Struga, the Director of the General Hospital in Ohrid will be removed as of 30 March and a new director will be appointed. Inspectors from the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate are investigating the responsibility of everyone involved in this case.
- ✓ A Commission of the Ministry of Health completed the review of all, but one, private health facilities and based on the findings will plan to utilize those capacities as part of the national response to COVID-19. The HIF is developing a model to support this type of collaboration between the public and private health system.
- ✓ Laboratories in the private sector testing for COVID19 were assessed and will introduce measures to improve their performance in testing.
- ✓ March 27, 2020 - Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises from the travel, freight shipping, and hospitality industry can apply for no-interest loans of EUR 3,000 to 30,000, according to the Government, which issued a call Wednesday. Interested parties, in line with official recommendations to protect people amid the coronavirus crisis, should submit their applications to the e-mail address kreditiranjecovid1@mbdp.com.mk, and the loans will be distributed through the Development Bank of North Macedonia.
- ✓ The amount of credit the banks will extend will vary according to the size of the enterprise, i.e., the number of employees. Businesses with up to 10 employees are eligible for loans of EUR 3,000 to 5,000. Businesses employing 10 to 50 people are eligible for loans of EUR 10,000 to 15,000. Businesses employing 50 to 250 people are eligible for loans of EUR 15,000 to 30,000. The interest is zero percent; repayment is due in 24 months, with a six-month grace period. The first installment will be paid in nine months.
- ✓ On 30 March, ministry of health worked with the military support to raise a mobile hospital increasing the capacity with additional 130 beds. This field hospital with 130 beds is being set up next to the Infectious Diseases Clinic in Skopje, meant to be used as the coronavirus epidemic escalates. Military teams helped clear out the area and will help set up the hospital. Macedonia has now over 200 diagnosed patients, several dozens of patients require constant assisted care.

COVID-19 UN AND PARTNER COORDINATION

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.

- ✓ The German Embassy to North Macedonia is allocating funds from the budget of small-scale projects as assistance to Skopje-based Clinic for Infectious Disease, Clinic of Anaesthesiology, Reanimation and Intensive Care and Clinic of Neurosurgery meant to treat Covid-19 patients. Ambassador Thomas Gerberich, Health Minister Venko Filipche and HOPE's regional manager Dr. Vlatko Uzevski signed a donation agreement amounting to MKD 2.450,000 (1EURO = 51 MKD) for purchase of medical equipment.

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 and also protecting the health care workers.

- **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;
- **Challenges:**
 - Protecting health care workers whether those working in the COVID-19 designated facilities or elsewhere countrywide because of the community transmission.
 - Procurement : Access to local or international supplies and mainly respirators for the critical needs identified because of international shortages.
 - Shortage in health workforce if the situation progresses
 - Ensuring sustainability of the health facilities and health care during and after the crisis.
 - Community support and outreach activities for the vulnerable
 - Ensuring continuity of treatment and access to regular health care for all citizens including the vulnerable groups with other diseases and pathologies.
 - Isolation and mental health support to the elderly and disabled.
 - Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS NORTH MACEDONIA

<p><i>Useful Links</i></p> <p>WHO Facebook/Twitter</p> <p>MoH Facebook/Twitter</p> <p>WHO Europe website for COVID-19</p> <p>All Government information and measures / ENG</p> <p>MoH COVID-19 information</p> <p>NATO's Next-Generation Incidence Command System (NICS)</p> <p>Detention centers: guidance on Preparedness, prevention and control of COVID-19 in prisons and places of detention.</p>	<p><i>For questions related to COVID-19</i></p> <p>Call Center 0800 002 03</p> <p>"Alo Doctor" 02 15 123</p> <p><i>In case of symptoms and asymptomatic travelers</i></p> <p>CPH Bitola 071 261 330</p> <p>CPH Veles 071 219 278</p> <p>CPH Gevgelija 071 219 278</p> <p>CPH Kochani 071 373 913</p> <p>CPH Kumanovo 070 215 851</p> <p>CPH Ohrid 070 723 029</p> <p>CPH Prilep 076 475 747</p> <p>CPH Skopje 071 289 614</p> <p>CPH Strumica 072 235 543</p> <p>CPH Tetovo 075 240 464</p> <p>RU Gostivar 076 365 161</p> <p>CPH Shtip 078 365 613</p> <p>IPH Skopje 078 387 194</p> <p><i>Psychological support</i></p>	<p><i>Red Cross mobile teams for elderly support</i></p> <p>Red Cross Center 070 297 166</p> <p>Red Cross Kisela Voda 071 349 225</p> <p>Red Cross Chair 070 208 383</p> <p>Red Cross Karpos 071 349 230</p> <p>Red Cross Gazi Baba</p> <p>Team for support of homeless people</p> <p><i>Foreign Affairs</i></p> <p>Regular line 075 446 647</p> <p>Regular line, Viber and WhatsApp: 070 282 078</p>
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<p>Guidance document on immunization services during COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>How to stay physically active during COVID-19 self-quarantine</p> <p>Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding</p> <p>New WHO Global Campaign – “Pass the message: Five steps to kicking out coronavirus” with FIFA</p>	<p>-Self-isolated adults 072 919 009</p> <p>-Citizens of municipalities Debar and Center Zhupa 070 241 807</p> <p>-adolescents and their parents 078 378 728</p> <p>-parents of children with disabilities 070291574</p> <p>-Parents of preschool and school children 072 912 676</p>	 <p>Text hi to +41 79 412 32 36 on WhatsApp</p>
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Countries, territories or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. Data as of 28 March 2020*

Reporting Country/ Territory/Area [†]	Total confirmed ‡ cases	Total confirmed new cases	Total deaths	Total new deaths	Transmission classification [§]	Days since last reported case
European Region						
Italy	86498	5959	9136	971	Local transmission	0
Spain	64059	7871	4858	769	Local transmission	0
Germany	48582	6294	325	72	Local transmission	0
France	32542	3756	1992	297	Local transmission	0
The United Kingdom	14547	2885	759	181	Local transmission	0
Switzerland	12104	1390	197	36	Local transmission	0
Netherlands	8603	1172	546	112	Local transmission	0
Austria	7697	668	68	16	Local transmission	0
Belgium	7284	1049	289	69	Local transmission	0
Turkey	5698	2069	92	17	Local transmission	0
Portugal	4268	724	76	16	Local transmission	0
Norway	3581	425	16	2	Local transmission	0
Israel	3460	425	12	2	Local transmission	0
Sweden	3046	240	92	26	Local transmission	0
Czechia	2279	217	9	0	Local transmission	0
Ireland	2121	302	22	3	Local transmission	0
Denmark	2046	169	52	11	Local transmission	0
Luxembourg	1605	152	15	6	Local transmission	0
Poland	1389	168	16	0	Local transmission	0
Romania	1292	263	24	7	Local transmission	0
Russian Federation	1264	228	4	1	Local transmission	0
Finland	1025	67	7	3	Local transmission	0
Greece	966	74	28	2	Local transmission	0
Iceland	890	88	2	0	Local transmission	0
Slovenia	632	55	9	4	Local transmission	0
Croatia	586	91	3	1	Local transmission	0
Estonia	575	37	1	0	Local transmission	0

Serbia	528	71	7	0	Local transmission	0
Armenia	372	43	1	0	Local transmission	0
Lithuania	358	59	5	1	Local transmission	0
Hungary	343	43	11	1	Local transmission	0
Ukraine	311	93	8	3	Local transmission	0
Slovakia	295	69	0	0	Local transmission	0
Bulgaria	293	29	3	0	Local transmission	0
Andorra	289	58	3	0	Local transmission	0
Latvia	280	36	0	0	Local transmission	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	233	20	4	1	Local transmission	0
San Marino	228	10	21	0	Local transmission	0
North Macedonia	219	18	3	0	Local transmission	0
Kazakhstan	204	79	1	1	Imported cases only	0
Republic of Moldova	199	22	2	0	Local transmission	0
Albania	197	11	9	1	Local transmission	0
Cyprus	162	16	5	2	Local transmission	0
Azerbaijan	147	25	3	0	Local transmission	0
Malta	139	5	0	0	Local transmission	0
Uzbekistan	104	21	1	1	Local transmission	0
Belarus	94	8	0	0	Local transmission	0
Georgia	85	4	0	0	Local transmission	0
Montenegro	70	3	1	0	Local transmission	0
Liechtenstein	60	4	0	0	Imported cases only	0
Kyrgyzstan	58	0	0	0	Local transmission	1
Monaco	19	0	0	0	Local transmission	5
Holy See	4	0	0	0	Under investigation	2
Territories**						
Faroe Islands	144	4	0	0	Local transmission	0
Kosovo ^[1]	88	9	1	0	Local transmission	0
Gibraltar	55	20	0	0	Local transmission	0
Jersey	52	20	1	0	Local transmission	0
Guernsey	36	2	0	0	Local transmission	0
Isle of Man	29	3	0	0	Local transmission	0
Greenland	9	3	0	0	Under investigation	0

^[1] All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (19