

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

North Macedonia Flash Update – 46

Data as reported by national authorities by 23:00 CET, 17 May 2020

During the week end

- **Tests performed:** 462 and 426 SARS-CoV-2 tests and 4.7% and 7.0% tested positive on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Of those, 171 and 112 tests are part of the targeted screening among employees in kindergartens – no cases are registered.
- **New cases:** 22 and 30 new cases were reported on each day respectively
- **Recovered:** 42 COVID-19 patients
- **Fatalities:** 4 new COVID-19 deaths

Cumulative registered COVID-19 as of 17 May – 1792 (Incidence=86.6/100.000) – [See Daily Curve](#)

- **Total number of health workers infected: 251 (14.0%)**
- **Tests performed:** 21 436 SARS-CoV-2 tests.
- **Patients recovered: 1293 COVID-19 patients recovered** so far.
- **Fatalities: 101 COVID-19 fatalities (CFR 5.6%)** are registered.
- **Geographic spread and deaths:** COVID-19 cases are registered in 30 cities. Majority of all cases 83% are from five cities Skopje (612), Kumanovo (416), Prilep (200), Tetovo (143) and Veles (119). **77% of all deaths are registered in Kumanovo, Skopje, Struga, Tetovo and Prilep.**
- **Gender distribution:** More women are infected with coronavirus than men (936 and 856 respectively). However, almost **67% of all deaths are men.**
- **Comorbidity:** 74% of death cases
- **Age distribution:** >60-year: 21.7% of all confirmed COVID-19 cases; >60-year: 65% of all deaths; 0-9-year: 63 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 10-19-year: 78 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The Government adopted a third set of economic measures for new development economy in the country, stimulating consumption and promoting domestic supply.

Read more about the [transition from COVID-19](#) lockdown.

Read more about **North Macedonia and Greece Ministers of Health** coordinating opening of borders.

European Commission presented a Tourism and Transport package of [guidelines and recommendations](#) to help Member States gradually lift travel restrictions and allow tourism businesses to reopen, while respecting necessary health precautions

SURVEILLANCE – NORTH MACEDONIA

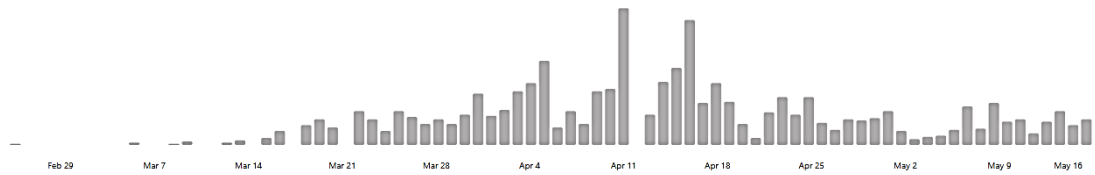
Figure 1. North Macedonia – Daily confirmed and deaths COVID-19 cases (n=1762) and deaths (n=98) by 17 May 2020

Confirmed Cases Over Time

1,762

confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization



Deaths Over Time

98

deaths

Source: World Health Organization

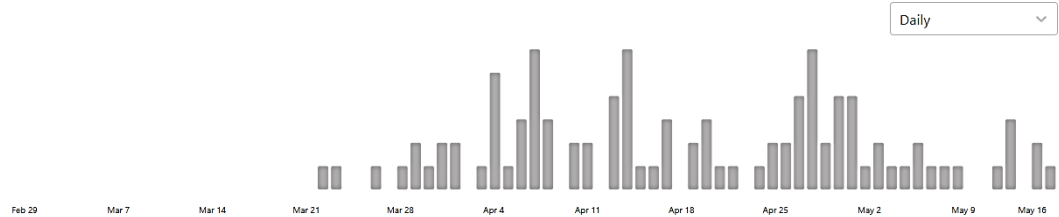
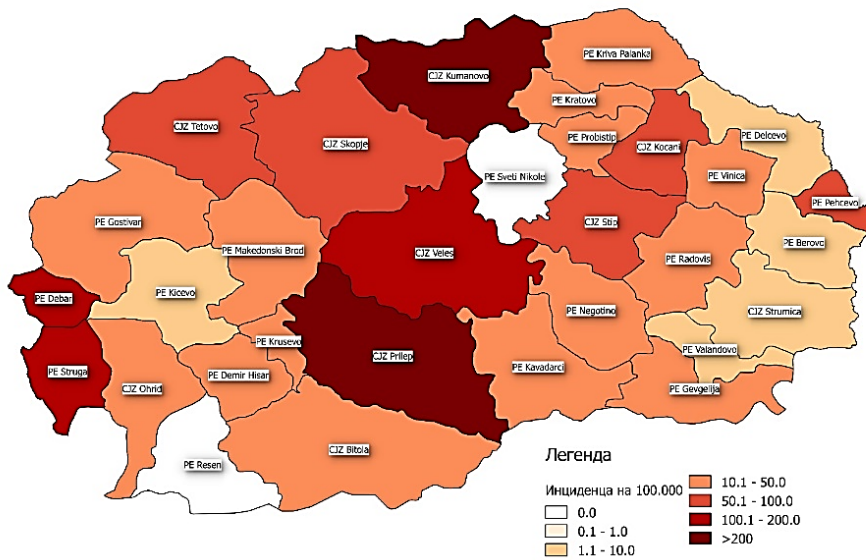


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 17 May 2020

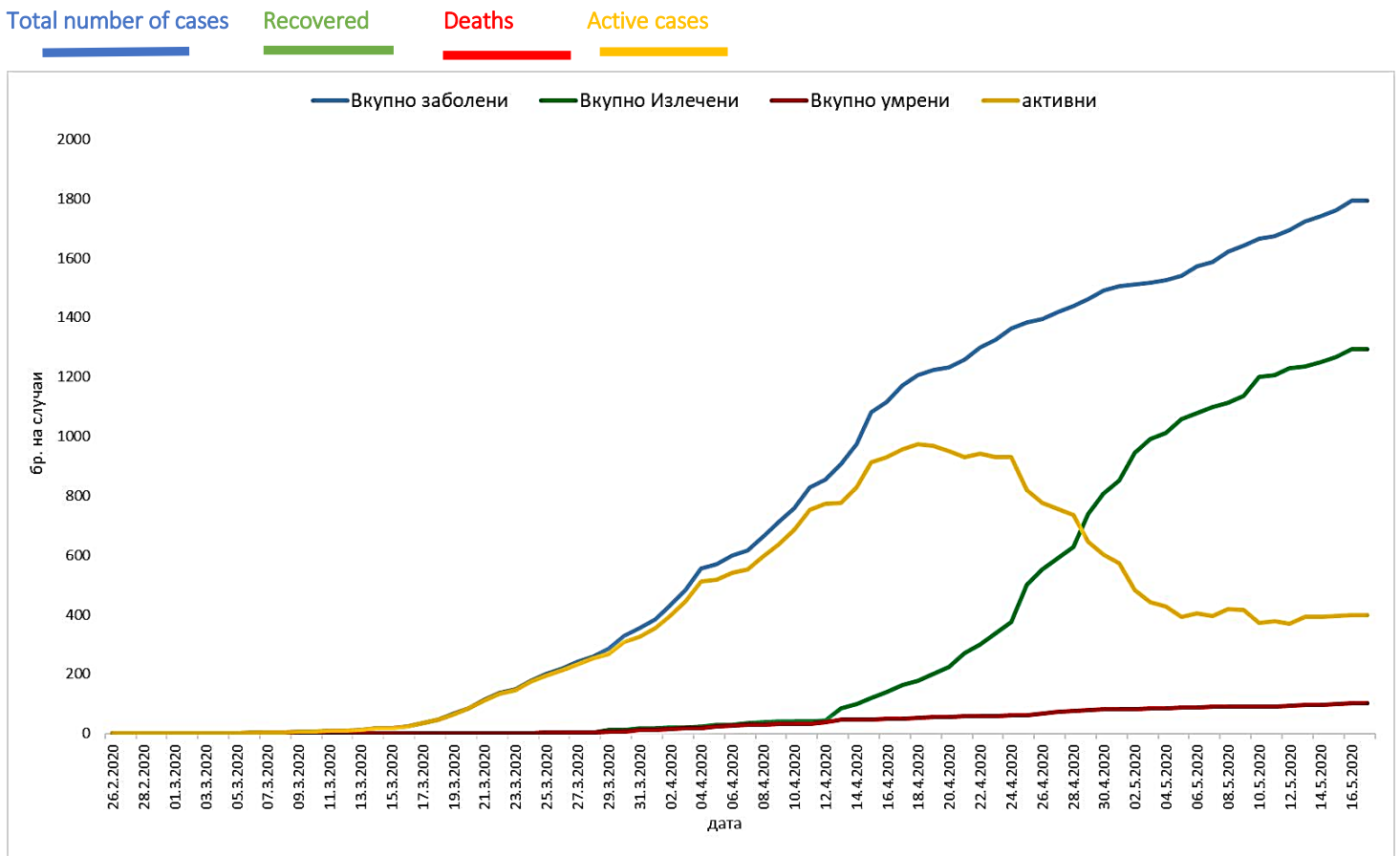


The highest cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (291.5/100,000 people), followed by Prilep (209.8/100,000 people), Debar (183.8/100,000 people), Veles (179.6/100,000 people) and Struga (101.7/100,000 people). Five other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Skopje, Tetovo, Shtip, 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 16 May 2020 which includes the cases reported on 17 May 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the www.iph.mk

Figure. 3 North Macedonia – COVID-19 statistics as of 17 May (n=1792)



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

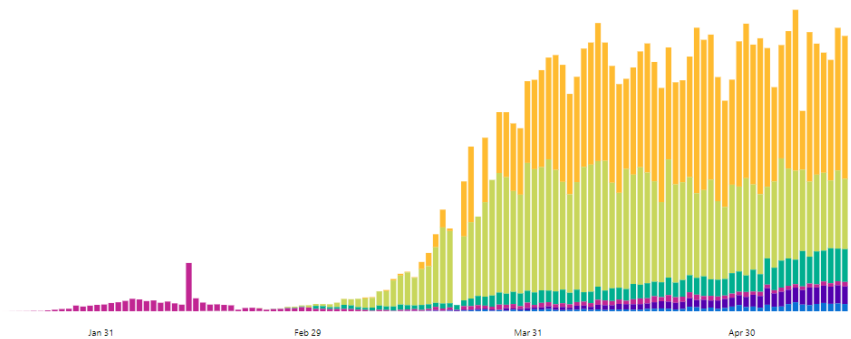
GLOBALLY	4 525 497 cases (100 012)	307 395 deaths (5 336)
Africa	58 663 cases (2 202)	1 710 deaths (43)
Americas	1 966 932 cases (57 449)	118 799 deaths (3 742)
Eastern Mediterranean	326 568 cases (10 900)	9 841 deaths (140)
Europe	1 870 545 cases (22 100)	165 951 deaths (1 228)
South-EastAsia	134 531 cases (6 536)	4 351 deaths (150)
Western Pacific	167 546 cases (825)	6 730 deaths (33)

Figure 4: Comparison Epi curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 17 May 2020 for all WHO Regions

Case Comparison

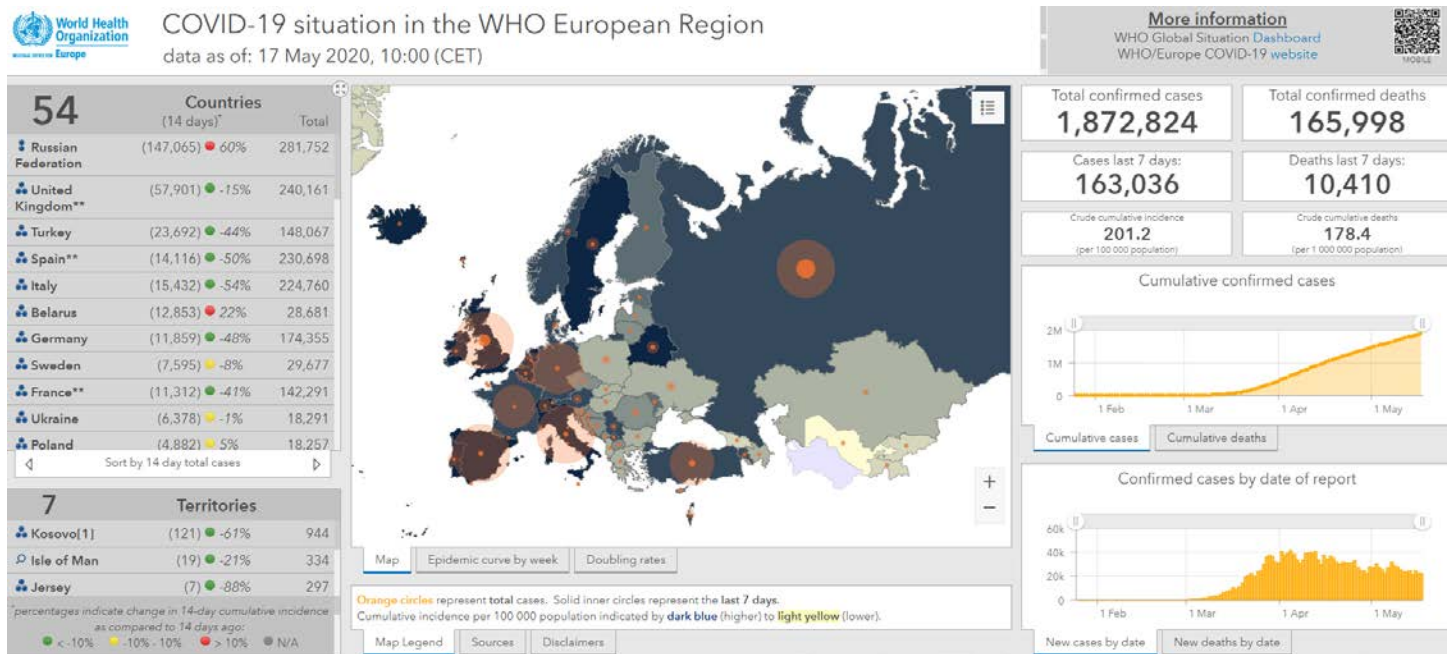
WHO Regions

Americas	1,966,932 confirmed cases
Europe	1,870,545 confirmed cases
Eastern Mediterranean	335,088 confirmed cases
Western Pacific	167,755 confirmed cases
South-East Asia	135,036 confirmed cases
Africa	58,663 confirmed cases



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), WHO EUROPE REGION as of 17 May 2020 10:00 CET

EURO accounts for 41% of cases and 54% 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



Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load with 1.41 million cases, followed by the Russian Federation (281 752 cases) and United Kingdom (240 165 cases). In addition, five more countries from the European Region are in the top-10 worldwide (Spain, Italy, Germany, Turkey and France). These countries reported over 100 000 cases.

The situation in countries with the highest cumulative case count in Western Europe seems to be stabilizing (e.g., Germany, Italy and Spain) with a consistent decline in the 14-day cumulative incidence, while a continuing growth in case numbers is still observed in several countries, mostly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

[New] WHAT IS NEW?

- Presidents Carlos Alvarado Quesada of Costa Rica and Sebastián Piñera of Chile [joined the WHO Director-General Dr Tedros on 15 May](#) to [announce progress on a technology platform](#) that aims to lift access barriers to effective vaccines, medicines and other health products against COVID-19. The platform, which will officially launch on 29 May, will pool data, knowledge and intellectual property for existing or new COVID-19 health products to deliver ‘global public goods’ for all people and all countries.
- WHO and International Olympic Committee [team up to improve health through sport](#). The current COVID-19 pandemic is particularly affecting people with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The agreement has a special focus on preventing NCDs through sport.
- The **European Commission** presented a Tourism and Transport package of [guidelines and recommendations](#) to help Member States gradually lift travel restrictions and allow tourism businesses to reopen, while respecting necessary health precautions. The package includes: an overall strategy towards recovery in 2020 and beyond; a common approach to restoring free movement and lifting restrictions at EU internal borders; a framework to support the gradual re-establishment of transport; a recommendation which aims to make travel vouchers an alternative to cash reimbursement for consumers; and criteria for restoring tourism activities and for developing health protocols for hospitality establishments. – [More](#)
- WHO has published **new** guidance on “[Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19](#)”, intended for healthcare professionals, public health professionals and health authorities that are developing and implementing cleaning and disinfection policies and standard operating procedures.
- WHO and UNICEF have published a document on [frequently asked questions](#) (FAQs) about **immunization in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**. These FAQs accompany WHO’s [Guiding principles for immunization activities during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).
- **WEBINAR EPI-WIN** will host webinar this week where experts from the World Health Organization will share guidance on why and how to establish contact tracing capacity. Participants will then be able to hear about the development of contact tracing apps in Switzerland and Austria.
Contact tracing in the context of COVID-19
Tuesday 19 May 14h00 Geneva. Register in advance for this webinar [HERE](#)

UNDERSTANDING EASING THE LOCKDOWN – NORTH MACEDONIA

<https://mia.mk/who-s-tawilah-individual-protection-must-be-maintained-despite-relaxation-of-public-measures/?lang=en>



[WHO’s Tawilah: Individual protection must be maintained despite relaxation of public measures – MIA](#)

Skopje, 16 May 2020 (MIA) – Restrictions introduced to stop the spread of the new coronavirus in North Macedonia are being eased as of this past week. Shopping malls, betting houses, driver education centers and many businesses have reopened. In the past two months since the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic have been under a lot of psychological pressure.
mia.mk

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 is organizing 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 is 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: Translation and adaptation of the following WHO on-line COVID – 19 courses for Health Professionals has been initiated:

- Clinical Care Training for Respiratory Infections (SARI) in Macedonian language; <https://openwho.org/courses/severe-acute-respiratory-infection>
- ePROTECT Respiratory Infections in Macedonian and Albanian languages; <https://openwho.org/courses/eprotect-acute-respiratory-infections>
- How to put on and remove PPE in Macedonian and Albanian languages; <https://openwho.org/courses/IPC-PPE-EN>

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 48 HOURS:

National Behavioral Insight Study in COVID-19

The **Institute of Public Health** is conducting a survey questionnaire: Insight into the behavior for COVID-19 in order to improve actions taken in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Answers will be used exclusively for scientific

purposes, to improve the national response to this virus. Data will be stored at the Institute and can be used for research and theoretical lectures in the future. This is a non-commercial study and is supported by the **World Health Organization**.

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

Surveillance

- **581 employees in the kindergartens are tested for SARS-CoV-2** over the last three-day as part of the targeted screening of which, one COVID-19 case is registered in Bitola.

Health Professionals

- **91% of the infected health professionals have recovered.**

Essential Health Services

- **The 8 September Hospital**, which was designated center for COVID-19 patients, **will continue its regular work** in a week. The COVID-19 Center will be reallocated in a different isolated area of the hospital. The first floor of the hospital equipped with 20 respirators will be designated as an ICU for COVID-19 patients.

Socioeconomic Measures and Impact

- The Government adopted a **third set of economic measures for revival of the economy** through direct support of the citizens and the economy and encouraging private and public consumption based on solidarity and social security. The economic measures are organized in 3 main pillars amounting to **355 million euros** and will cover **730 000 beneficiaries**:
 - Payment cards for the citizens – for higher consumption and for development of the domestic economic activities
 - Direct support of the economy – innovation and development to preserve the existing and new jobs
 - Support of the farmers – new income

The statement of the Prime Minister and the full details of the third set of economic measures is available [HERE](#).

[New] Borders and travel



Ministers of Health of North Macedonia and Greece Venko Filipche, and Vassilis Kikilias, and announced opening the borders with aligned protocols for travel and ensuring fast flow of borders during the summer and provide easy access to citizen s' health services in case of coronavirus infection during their stay in Greece and Northern Macedonia. Five out of six borders will be re-opened between the two countries as of next week.

Minister of Health Venko Filipce shared that once the borders open, it will not be possible to implement the 14-day quarantine in any of the countries in the region. For now, anyone who returns to North Macedonia or wants to go abroad must quarantine for two weeks.

[New] Social Responsibility

Humanitarian aid packages within president's initiative 'we volunteer for a solidarity society' on May 16, 2020 – First Lady Dr Elizabeta Gjorgievska, along with volunteers from partner organizations, prepared humanitarian packages to support the most socially vulnerable people, affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Humanitarian aid packages are part of President's initiative 'We Volunteer for a Solidarity Society' under the motto "We Are Here, We Serve the Community, We Help Each Other!" #WeAreHere. Partners in this humanitarian initiative are the Red Cross of the Republic of North Macedonia, the initiative #RetweetMeal, "Kindness", Association for human and social development – Project "Happiness" and "Food for All – Food Bank". The goal of this initiative is citizens, socially

responsible companies, civil society organizations, diplomatic missions in the country, as well as international organizations and institutions, in accordance with their capabilities and resources, to join and to provide the necessary assistance to as many of our fellow citizens as possible. So far, a dozen socially responsible companies, one diplomatic mission and citizens have joined the humanitarian initiative. The President's Mladi Hub Office in Skopje works three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), and volunteers take care of the reception of the products, as well as the preparation of the humanitarian packages and their distribution.

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