

# Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

## North Macedonia Flash Update – 50

Data as reported by national authorities by 23:00 CET, 21 May 2020

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### During the last 24 hours

- **Total number of tests performed:** 549 SARS-CoV-2 tests and 7.3% tested positive.
- **Targeted screening tests:** 125 tests are among employees in kindergartens – one case is registered in Skopje. 85 tests are in elderly homes – no case is registered.
- **New cases:** 40 new cases were reported
- **Recovered:** 11 COVID-19 patients
- **Fatalities:** 1 new COVID-19 death

### Cumulative registered COVID-19 as of 21 May – 1898 (Incidence=91.7/100.000) – [See Daily Curve](#)

- **Total number of health workers infected:** **254 (13.4%)** of which 234 (92.1%) have recovered.
- **Tests performed:** 23 316 SARS-CoV-2 tests.
- **Patients recovered:** **1378 COVID-19 patients recovered** so far.
- **Fatalities:** **111 COVID-19 fatalities (CFR 5.8%)** are registered.
- **Geographic spread and deaths:** COVID-19 cases are registered in 31 cities. Majority of all cases 83% are from five cities: Skopje (673), Kumanovo (419), Prilep (204), Tetovo (161) and Veles (127). **79% of all deaths are registered in Kumanovo, Skopje, Struga, Tetovo and Prilep.**
- **Gender distribution:** More women are infected with coronavirus than men (978 and 920 respectively). However, almost **68% of all deaths are men.**
- **Comorbidity:** 74% of death cases
- **Age distribution:** >60-year: 21.9% of all confirmed COVID-19 cases; >60-year: 65% of all deaths; 0-9-year: 69 confirmed COVID-19 cases; 10-19-year: 86 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

[The Smithsonian Science Education Center with support of the World Health Organization launches new COVID-19 guide for youth.](#) The guide, which is based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, aims to help young people understand the science and social science of COVID-19 as well as help them take actions to keep themselves, their families and communities safe.

[WHO and UNHCR join forces to improve health services for refugees, displaced and stateless people.](#) A key aim this year will be to support ongoing efforts to protect some 70 million forcibly displaced people from COVID-19.

[SUBJECT IN FOCUS- HERE: Progress on COVID-19 vaccines](#) - Over 120 candidate vaccines have been mapped by WHO across the world and WHO is tracking details in a landscape exercise on their type and progress.

## SURVEILLANCE – NORTH MACEDONIA

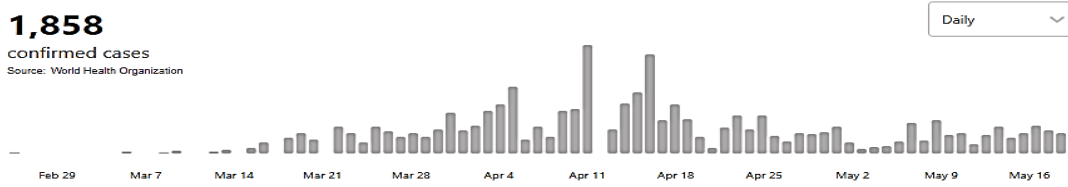
Figure 1. North Macedonia – Daily confirmed and deaths COVID-19 cases (n=1858) and deaths (n=110) by 21 May 2020

### Confirmed Cases Over Time

**1,858**

confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization



### Deaths Over Time

**110**

deaths

Source: World Health Organization

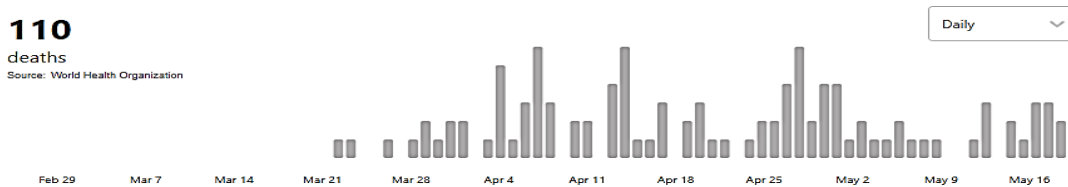
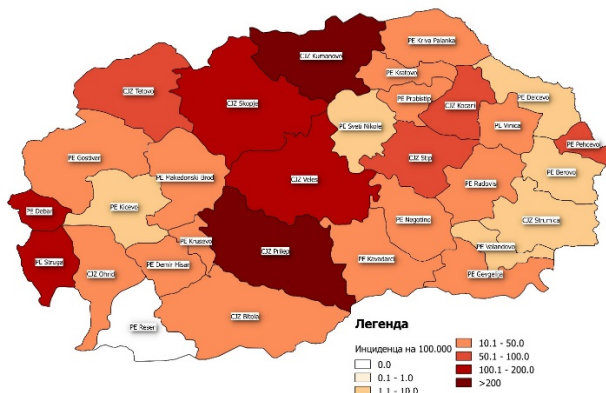


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 21 May 2020

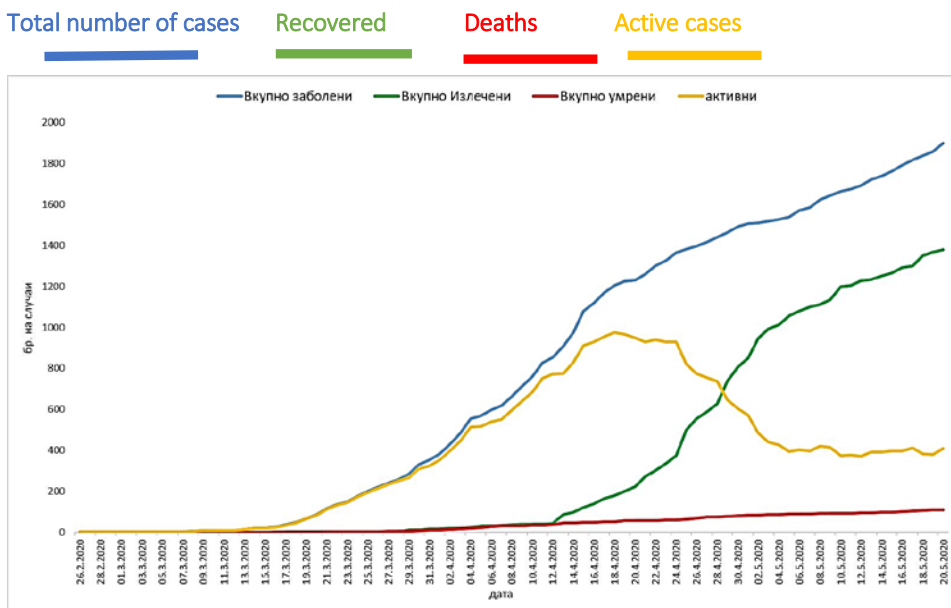


The highest cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (293.6/100,000 people), followed by Pilep (214.0/100,000 people), Veles (191.7/100,000 people), Debar (183.8/100,000 people), Skopje (109.0/100,000 people) and Struga (104.6/100,000 people). Four other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Tetovo, Shtip, Kochani and Pehchevo).

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

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 20 May 2020 which includes the cases reported on 21 May 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the [www.iph.mk](http://www.iph.mk)

Figure. 3 North Macedonia – COVID-19 statistics as of 20 May (n=1898)



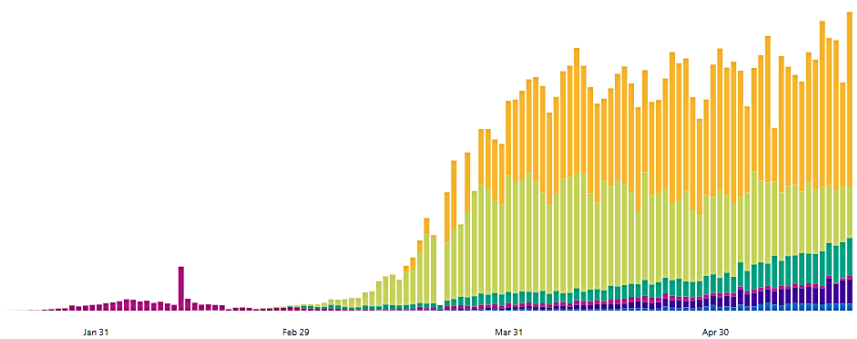
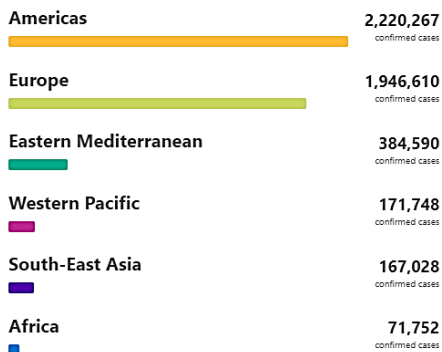
## GLOBAL SITUATION IN NUMBERS (BY WHO REGION) and TOTAL (NEW CASES IN LAST 24 HOURS)

<b> Globally</b>	<b> 4 893 186 cases (103 981)</b>	<b> 323 256 deaths (4 467)</b>	
<b> Africa</b>	68 347 cases (2 391)	1 910 deaths (64)	
<b> Americas</b>	2 166 003 cases (60333)	128 649 deaths (2806)	
<b> Eastern Mediterranean</b>	376 379 cases (14 477)	10 468 deaths (165)	
<b> Europe</b>	1 946 610 cases (17811)	170 283 deaths (1250)	
<b> South-East Asia</b>	164 225 cases (8014)	5 140 deaths (169)	
<b> Western Pacific</b>	170 910 cases (955)	<b> 6 793 deaths (13)</b>	

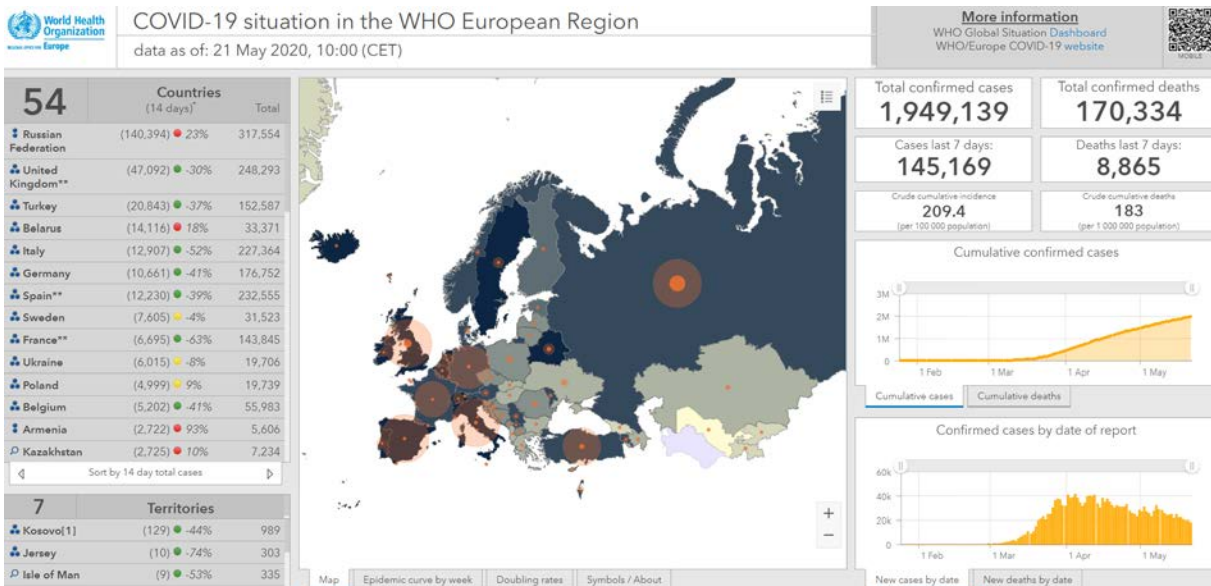
Figure 4: Comparison Epi curve of confirmed COVID-19, by date of report and WHO region through 21 May 2020 for all WHO Regions

### Case Comparison

WHO Regions



Source: World Health Organization



## CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), WHO EUROPE REGION as of 21 May 2020 10:00 CET

- The cases in the European Region now are **representing 40% of the global burden** reported to date.
- Globally, **USA carries the heaviest case load with 1.5 million cases**, followed by **Russian Federation and Brazil**. In addition, six more countries from the European Region are in the top-10 worldwide (United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Germany, Turkey and France). These are reporting over 100 000 cases.
- Besides, **fourteen more countries reported 10 000 cases or more**, listed in descending order (Belgium, Netherlands, Belarus, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Israel, Austria, Denmark and Serbia).
- Cumulatively, **53% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (323 256 deaths) have been reported in the European Region (170 283 deaths)**, with United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France each reporting more than 20 000 deaths and jointly accounting for 73% of all deaths in Europe.
- Another **ten countries in the Region reported 1000 deaths or more** – Belgium (9150), Germany (8147) Netherlands (5748), Turkey (4222), Sweden (3831) Russian Federation (3099), Switzerland (1629), Ireland (1571), Portugal (1571) and Romania (1141).

## SUBJECT IN FOCUS: PROGRESS ON COVID-19 VACCINES



### *What candidate vaccines do we have and what is their progress across the world?*

Over 120 candidate vaccines have been mapped by WHO across the world and WHO is tracking details in a [landscape](#) exercise on their type and progress. WHO provides a platform as well for regular open dialogue between researchers and vaccine developers to expedite the exchange of scientific results, debate concerns and propose rapid and robust methods for vaccine evaluation. There are currently eight candidate COVID-19 vaccines in clinical evaluation (on human subjects) i.e. already passed the safety trials, and about 110 in pre-clinical evaluation. WHO published the list and type of candidate vaccines [here](#). The centre-piece of the world's research response is a globally agreed scientific [R&D Roadmap](#) for COVID-19, which details steps for current and future work.

Together with global health actors and partners, WHO launched the [Access To COVID-19 Tools \(ACT\) Accelerator](#), a global collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

[A Solidarity trial for vaccine development has been launched](#), in addition to the one for therapeutics. This large, international, multi-site, individually randomized controlled clinical trial will enable the concurrent evaluation of the benefits and risks of each promising candidate vaccine within 3-6 months of it being made available for the trial. See Solidarity Trial's protocol for vaccines [here](#).

*Is the accelerated timeline for manufacturing of vaccines safe given that normal timelines in such situations are far longer?*

WHO support the development of vaccines with a system of global collaboration and co-ordination, that means making sure that the methods that are being used to evaluate and develop these vaccines are robust and scientifically sound. Different partners - scientists and public health professionals and leaders and manufacturers – gather to accelerate not only vaccine development but to ensure that when we do have vaccines there is equitable access to this vaccine. For some vaccine candidates, their development started prior to the emergence of COVID-19 and they began with SARS and with MERS, explaining why they are more advanced than others. As these vaccines are developed WHO requests that they meet all of the criteria to be safe and effective. Accelerated development of vaccines stresses the urgent need but not skipping any steps of safety and effectiveness testing. vaccine. It is also about ensuring that production capacity in place, and having means in place at country level for vaccine delivery to the population.

*How to ensure that once a safe and effective vaccine becomes available, it will be accessible to everyone who needs it?*

WHO will continue to work to align R&D, fast-track regulatory approvals and manufacturing so that all populations in all countries can access a vaccine as early as possible. The recent [WHA73 resolution](#) sets out a clear roadmap of the critical activities and actions that must be taken to sustain and accelerate the response to COVID-19 at the national and international levels. It assigns responsibilities for both the WHO and its member states and captures the comprehensive whole-of-government and whole-of society approach we have been calling for since the beginning of the outbreak. If implemented this would ensure a more coherent, co-ordinated and fairer response that saves both lives and livelihoods. The landmark resolution underlines WHO's key role in promoting access to safe, effective health technologies to fight the pandemic and member states' commitment to lift all barriers to universal access to vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics. The relevant international treaties should be harnessed where needed, including the provisions of the TRIPS agreement. COVID-19 vaccines should be classified as a global public good for health in order to bring the pandemic to an end.

*What is the technology pooling initiative of WHO and Costa Rica on access to COVID-19 health products for all?*

On 15 May 2020, Presidents Carlos Alvarado Quesada of Costa Rica and Sebastián Piñera of Chile joined WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to announce progress on a technology platform that aims to lift access barriers to effective vaccines, medicines and other health products against COVID-19. Costa Rica proposed the idea at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak and several countries are now backing the proposal. It's a Solidarity call to action to Member States, to academia, to companies, research institutions and cooperation agencies, based on global social responsibility, on a voluntary basis, promoting more global nonexclusive voluntary licensing. The platform 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. Through the open sharing of science and data, numerous companies will be able to access the information they need to produce the technologies, thereby scaling up availability worldwide, lowering costs and increasing access. WHO and Costa Rica will officially launch the platform on 29 May. On that date, a Solidarity Call to Action will be published on WHO's web site where governments, research and development funders, institutions and companies can express their support. The solidarity of all of WHO's Member States will be critical to ensuring the technology platform can be a meaningful tool for equitable access to COVID-19 health products.

## [New] WHAT IS NEW?

### UPCOMING WEBINARS

- **COVID-19 and the health of seafarers: 28 May 2020, Morning session: 11:00-12:00/Afternoon session: 15:30-16:30** Register in advance for the webinar [HERE](#). This webinar will highlight the concerns affecting the health of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as international and national legislation implications for ensuring access of seafarers to care.
- **Maintaining blood supply and safety and collecting convalescent plasma during COVID-19 pandemic 27 May 2020, Morning session: 09:00-11:00/Afternoon session: 15:00-17:00**



## WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Infection control and prevention in health care settings

- **WHO organized the Laboratory Workshop kick-off on 18 May 2020 – a weekly online meeting to discuss open questions and concerns around COVID-19 virus testing. The workshop is intended for health professionals working in a laboratory involved in COVID-19 virus testing/diagnostic. This week topic was Saliva as sample for testing and North Macedonia is participating as well.**
- WHO organized a **Virtual training on Core Components of IPC programmes and Hospital Readiness COVID-19 tools** on 6 May 2020 for hospital-based health workers and those caring for COVID19 patients
- As part of the USAID grant to WHO preparatory activities for undertaking of rapid infection prevention and control assessment (IPC assessment) with accent to COVID – 19 for EMS, primary, secondary and tertiary care facilities including long term care for the elderly, palliative care, home-based patronage services, nursing homes and outpatient clinics have been initiated. The assessment will be undertaken in collaboration with the Macedonian Association for Control of Intra - hospital Infection <https://www.mzkihi.mk/index-en>. The assessment will be undertaken by using the WHO IPC assessment tools listed below which **have been translated in Macedonian language**:
  - WHO Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Framework: Health care facility level <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/tools/core-components/IPCAF-facility.PDF?ua=1>
  - Hospital readiness checklist for COVID-19 [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/430210/Hospital-Readiness-Checklist.pdf?ua=1](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/1FAIpQLSdoo6OBWeowgiNq\\_Wdc3GrXuH5WmXoOVVsFBzrPbBoOOaoCCQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdoo6OBWeowgiNq_Wdc3GrXuH5WmXoOVVsFBzrPbBoOOaoCCQ/viewform)

### Identification, virus testing and contact tracing

- **WHO organized on 8 May 2020 Virtual laboratory training for scaling up national laboratory capacities addressed to Macedonian professionals.** The national laboratories in North Macedonia engaged in COVID-19 testing to take part in it. The objective of the conference is to:
  - Update on tests available for COVID-19 testing
  - Verification and validation processes
  - Recommendations to ensure procurement during scaling up national laboratory capacities for COVID-19
  - Recommendations and discussion on training possibilities for scaling up
- WHO **donated 5000 COVID tests** to the Virology Lab of the Institute of Public Health on 8 April 2020.
- With WHO/USAID support, the health **emergency operations venue at MOH** is now equipped and functional in its temporary premises, refurbished and with IT equipment.
- WHO is supporting North Macedonia as part of the **Unity Study for Sero-epidemiological studies** investigating the extent of infection in the general population, as determined by seropositivity. A standardized WHO master protocol is available that is being now tailored to country needs in terms of public health, laboratory and clinical systems, capacity, availability of resources and cultural appropriateness. Using this standardized protocol allows for comparability of data across different countries and helps to determine important epidemiological parameters (e.g. the proportion of the population that remains susceptible to infection, proportion of asymptomatic infections etc.) which inform public health action. The protocol can be accessed here: [HERE](#)

### Risk Communication

- WHO held on 8 May a **Meeting online with all EUROPE Ministers** attended by North Macedonia– about COVID-19 response, **transition experience** and lessons learned. The Ministerial Roundtable included health ministers from

countries that have eased restrictions to share their experiences and discuss lessons learned and the challenges that lie ahead.

- MOH and WHO launched on 5 May a media campaign for **Hand Hygiene and Nursing** see below.
- **Western Balkan ministerial WHO briefing on exit strategies** was held on 5 May 2020.
- Translation of **WHO guideline on Safe Ramadan** practices in the context of the COVID-19: in Macedonian, Albanian, Pashto, Dari, Turkish and Roma languages.
- **European immunization week**: WHO supported the country to raise awareness about maintaining essential health services and importance of immunization in preventing diseases and protecting life at the time of COVID19. Activities are held during the European Immunization Week 2020, from 20-26 April 2020. Click here : **European Immunization Week** . WHO MKD supported translation and adaptation of the following materials for social media:
  - EIW Poster adaptation
  - Video Adaptation - How do vaccine work?
  - Video Adaptation - Why should I get vaccinated

### Health Professionals

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

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

### Case management

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

### Planning, monitoring and evaluation of the COVID19 Response

- **WHO is supporting the country in assessing the situation in view of eventual relaxation of restrictive public health measures.** WHO guidance is available on *“Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19”* - [Access the publication](#) . This document provides guiding principles for adapting measures (loosening/tightening). This will be followed by:
  - Indicators (criteria) for when measures can be adapted
  - Practical advice on how to adapt measures in key settings such as schools, workplaces etc.
- WHO emphasizes that there should be gradual alleviation, close monitoring and constant calibration of measures. **As measures are loosened, surveillance should be tightened. Different surveillance approaches (identification, confirmation, isolation, and contact identification and quarantine, event-based surveillance, sentinel ILI/SARI surveillance etc.) should be applied.**
- WHO continuing the roll out of the **Partners Platform for the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)**: Onboarding has taken place supporting North Macedonia to link with international support; the Country Preparedness and Response Plan has been uploaded for increasing capacity for 2000 COVID19 cases. The country is active on the platform <https://covid-19-response.org>
- SPRP includes health systems continuity, the Platform will have a **9th Pillar** for assessment of priority actions to maintain essential health services.
- **COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM)** has been formally launched by WHO EURO and the European Observatory for Health systems. North Macedonia is participating. <https://www.covid19healthsystem.org/mainpage.aspx>



- A Ceremony for **launching of the USAID / WHO joint support** to the country to help contain and mitigate the COVID19 virus spread <https://un.mk/ceremony-for-launching-of-the-usaid-who-support-to-the-country-to-help-mitigate-the-spread-of-covid19/> was organized on 7 April 2020. This act of solidarity is directed mainly to support the health staff at the frontline of this fight against the virus: to ensure they have the means and the skills to protect themselves and control the infection all health care settings not only in treatment centers. A large part of the grant will also help the Institute of Public Health to continue its remarkable work in tracing and testing and early identification of the cases.

WHO continues to be actively engaged in:

- In risk communication targeted messages and developed many messages and infographics in national languages for display at MOH media channels and other. *WHO* [Facebook/Twitter](#) ; *MoH* [Facebook/Twitter](#); [WHO Europe website for COVID-19](#)
- Providing technical advice and support to many national and international partners for stepping up everyone's engagement in halting the virus spread and its impact on North Macedonia.
- Ensuring lab and testing tools are available for COVID19 related testing kits and PPE.
- Assisting the MOH in gaps and needs assessment and bridging those gaps for better health system coping and response.
- Establishing bilateral partnerships, resource mobilization, and joint plans to address gaps and needs of the MOH.
- Sustaining professional and technical knowledge of all health care workers in the country through the online WHO training course for COVID-19 for health care and infection control and protection (IPC) is now available in Macedonian Language on the WHO learning platform for Health workers. <https://openwho.org/>
- **Tracking the epidemiological** spread of the virus, supports early warning system and keep communities and frontline responders informed with the latest technical guidance.
- Contributing to the UN in the country to make sure that timely procurement takes place and supporting the newly set UN coordination mechanism for the COVID19. [1UN MK@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/1UNMK/)

## NORTH MACEDONIA STRATEGIC RESPONSE AND ACTION

- North Macedonia mobilized **an all-of-government action to fight this new coronavirus**, including scaling up emergency response mechanisms in all sectors. Actions and readjustments of measures are continuous and monitoring of the situation is ongoing on daily basis. The country is still in **declared national emergency** announced by the President of the Republic on 18 March 2020.
- 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 country now is in transition phase** from COVID-19 restrictive measures , and slowly easing the lockdowns.

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

### IN THE PAST 24 HOURS:

#### Risk Communication

Health authorities released a **video describing the modes of SARS-CoV-2 transmission** and how the citizens can protect themselves through wearing mandatory face protection, maintaining physical distance and frequent handwashing and disinfection. The video is available [HERE](#).

## Physical Distancing

The Islamic Religious Community wrote a letter to the Government that it is opposed to the increase of curfew for the upcoming Eid holiday (24 May). Also, IRC announced that it will not cancel prayers for the holiday, but it pointed out that the measures for protection against coronavirus will be respected such as the mandatory distance between the believers.

## Physical Infrastructure

A new cellular plasmapheresis separator is introduced at the Institute for Transfusion Medicine. According to the health authorities the device will be used to donate convalescent plasma and after the end of the pandemic it will be used to donate standard plasma platelets.

## Case management

Five COVID-19 patients treated with blood plasma have recovered. Health authorities published a guide “Who, when and how can one donate convalescent plasma” and a COVID-19 donor form – it can be accessed [HERE](#). The Minister of Health urged COVID-19 patients who have recovered to donate convalescent plasma.

## Public Health

- **State Inspectorate conducted 2 895 controls between 12-18 May 2020.** In this period, the State Market Inspectorate has shut down 14 hospitality and catering objects (restaurants, cafés etc.) of which 12 are located in Tetovo, one in Ohrid and one in Strumica. It also acted upon reports from citizens, and has issued 15 penalty resolutions and 42 warnings to different retail business objects, mostly supermarkets and smaller shops.
  - **The Labor Inspectorate** also detected several cases in which the employers have violated the rights of workers, namely parents of children under the age of 10, single parents, pregnant women or people suffering from chronic illnesses.
  - **The Agency for Food and Veterinary** conducted 195 controls, and issued 12 resolutions for irregularities, mainly about bad hygiene conditions.
- **38 are caught breaking the curfew** – 30 of them are detained. 81 violations of the measure for mandatory protective equipment are registered. 210 people have been issued isolation decision and 7 people have signed statement for self-isolation. One person is caught breaking the isolation and self-isolation decision.

## Essential Health Services

**The primary care dentists** are alarmed about the increased expenses for personal protection equipment according to the protocols for prevention and protection from COVID-19. Thus, they are asking for consultations with the Health Insurance Fund to discuss the current model of capitation payment. The dental practices had an emergency mode of work since 11 March and later they were completely closed per the recommendation from the Ministry of Health and the Dental Chamber. They re-opened on 13 May under special conditions with limited number of interventions and patients.

## Socioeconomic Measures and Impact

- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has initiated a **research programme aiming at the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in North Macedonia**, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The aim is to produce free, publicly available, high-quality research reports to overcome information barriers that depress market liquidity. Making markets more transparent by increasing the amount of reliable information is regarded as key to increasing the availability of financing for SMEs. The 2-year research programme will be implemented by WOOD & Company, an investment bank specializing in emerging markets. The programme is also fully aligned with the objectives of the European Commission’s Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union.
- The Economic Chamber of Macedonia (SKM) and its regional partners united in the Chamber Investment Forum (CIF) have started an **initiative for strengthening the economic cooperation in among the Western Balkan countries in time of pandemic**.
- The **total deposits remain unchanged compared to March**, and the annual growth rate is 6.3%, with a higher growth in household deposits, according to data from the National Bank. Lending continues to grow on a monthly basis and the annual growth of 5.5% is due to the increased lending in both sectors (households and private) with a greater contribution from the households sector.

- **The average monthly net salary per employee** in March 2020 was 26 422 mkd, which compared to the same month last year which is an increase of 7.4%. The gross salary was 39 437 mkd which is an increase of 8.1%, according to the State Statistical Office.

## 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