



COVID-19 - Coronavirus disease 2019

NORTH MACEDONIA

FLASH UPDATE 7

25 March 2020

Data as reported by authorities by 17:00, 25 March 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

Epidemiology update

North Macedonia announced today the third COVID-19 fatality, a 66-years old woman that was under a respirator.

In the past 2 days, 29 and 12 new cases have been reported in the Republic of North Macedonia on 25 and 24 March 2020, respectively.

The total number of registered COVID-19 cases in the country is 177 from 9 municipalities indicating a geographical spread: Skopje, Debar, Kumanovo, Shtip, Veles, Kavadarci, Prilep, Ohrid and Gostivar. **17 health professionals tested positive for COVID-19.** Age of patients vary from 2-91 years old however the group with **highest number of registered cases is 30-39 years** (23.6%) while the **highest specific incidence** of 14.4 / 100,000 is noted in the group 50-59 years.

On Wednesday 18 March 2020, North Macedonia's President Stevo Pendarovski **declared a 30-day nationwide state of emergency.** All borders and the airport are still closed.

Latest national measures - www.vlada.mk/covid19

- ✓ North Macedonia has joined today the global WHO Solidarity study for COVID19 case management. (more info below)
- ✓ Ban on movement of all citizens during the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) in the period from 16:00 to 05:00 PM.
- ✓ The Government adopted a decision to abolish all customs for the import of protective medical equipment like face masks, gloves, disinfection products etc.
- ✓ The Government decided that work be organized in shifts for all companies in the country, issuing several directives. The Government adopted a decision to introduce online classes in education.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

total (new) cases in the last 24 hours

North Macedonia

177 confirmed (29)

3 deaths

1 recovered

Globally

372 757 confirmed (39 827)

16 231 deaths (1722)

Western Pacific Region

96 580 confirmed (943)

3502 deaths (29)

European Region

195 511 confirmed (24 087)

10 189 deaths (1447)

South-East Asia

1990 confirmed (214)

65 deaths (7)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

27 215 confirmed (1840)

1877 deaths (136)

Regions of the Americas

49 444 confirmed (12 428)

565 deaths (100)

African Region

1305 confirmed (315)

26 deaths (3)

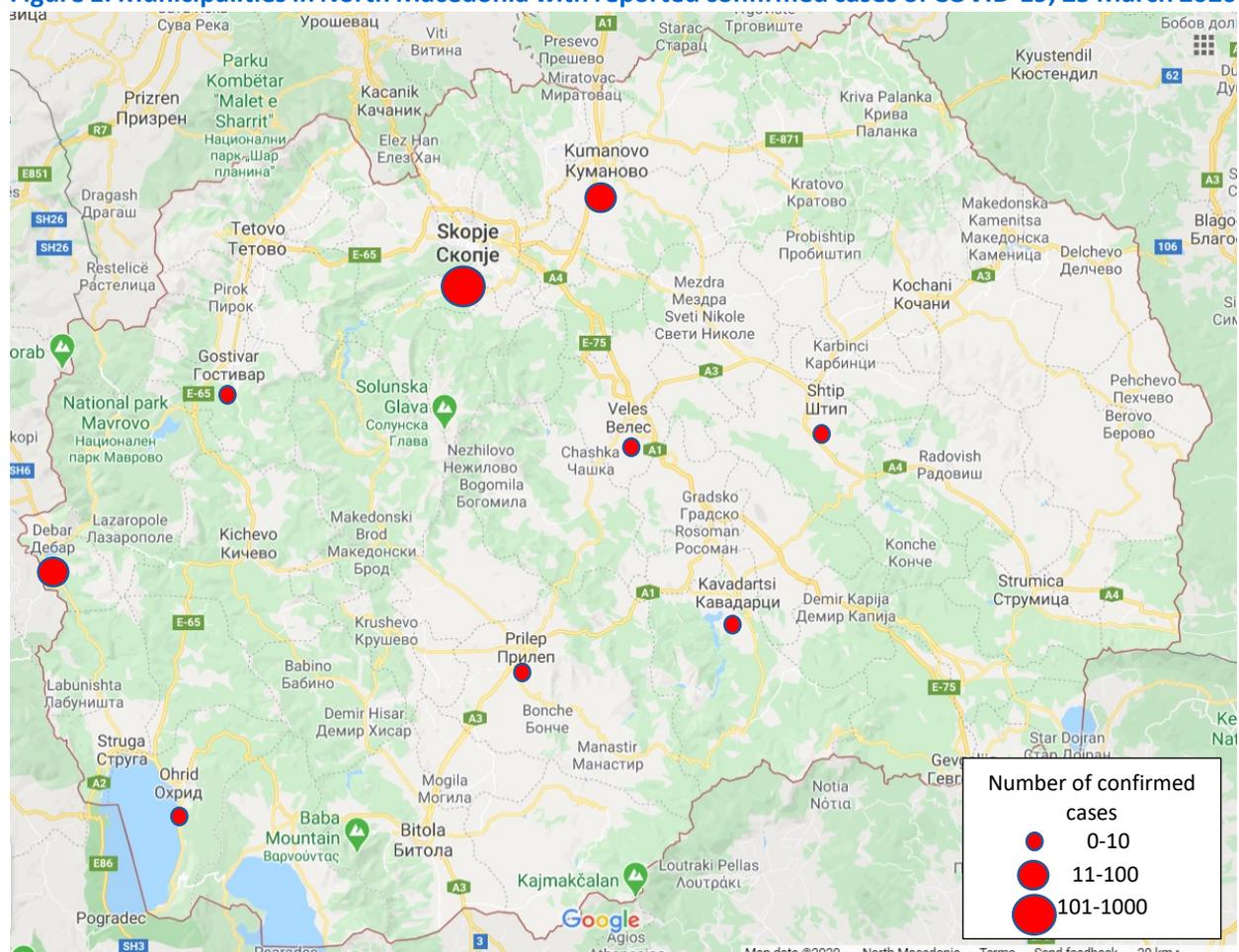
WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

All levels Very high

- ✓ Additional restrictions on movement have been introduced in the municipality of Kumanovo.
- ✓ The Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices (MALMED) approved the combined treatment for COVID-19: Chloroquine and Azithromycin.
- ✓ The private health care institutions having intensive care and treatment units will provide services for COVID-19 patients under an agreement with health insurance fund.
- ✓ Mobile COVID-19 testing to be introduced to improve the access to testing services and to reach high risk communities.
- ✓ The Government reviewed and adopted the information related to the management of potentially COVID-19 contaminated medical waste, including the waste in quarantine and self-isolation sites.

SURVEILLANCE

Figure 1. Municipalities in North Macedonia with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 25 March 2020



<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/685d0ace521648f8a5beeee1b9125cd>

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 24 March 2020 could be accessed at the Institute of Public Health www.iph.mk/sostojba-so-covid-19-vo-severna-makedonija-i-svetot-23-3-2020

Risk Assessment of COVID-19 in North Macedonia according to geographical spread

The WHO risk assessment at the global and European level of COVID-19 further states that the risk is very high. In North Macedonia, the highest cumulative incidence per 100,000 population is registered in Debar with 144.7 followed by Skopje 17.5, and Shtip is 13.3 per 100.000 population.

According to the WHO risk categorization, it is estimated that:

- Debar is in Phase 4 (widespread community transmission).
- Skopje is in phase 4 (widespread community transmission).
- The rest of the Republic of Northern Macedonia is in phase 2 (sporadic cases).

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-2019), Europe

Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 25 March 2020 10:00 CET, the WHO European Region accounts for almost **59% of the global burden**. In Europe, **Italy** is leading top-6 with more than 69 000 cases (31%) of the total case count in the Region, followed by **Spain** (almost 40 000 cases), **Germany** (over 31 000 cases), **France** (over 22000 cases), **Switzerland** (almost 9000 cases), and the **United Kingdom** (over 8000 cases). **Twelve more countries in the Region have reported over 1000 cases**, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey. Currently, 53 out of 55 IHR States Parties (>96%) in the Region have been reporting CoVID-19 cases. **More than 73% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (16 362) have been reported in the European Region (11 987 deaths)**, with Italy and Spain reporting almost 80% of all deaths in Europe (6 820 deaths, 56.9% and 2 696 deaths, 22.5% respectively), followed by France (1100 deaths, 9.2%), United Kingdom (422 deaths, 3.5%), and Netherlands (276 deaths, 2.3%).

WHO ROLE AND ACTION in North Macedonia

WHO is the lead UN agency for Health and main technical and health policy advisor to the government on COVID-19 containment and mitigation. **Western Balkan including North Macedonia is one of the priority countries for the WHO European Region. WHO works in coordination closely with other UN agencies as per the UN reform.**

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.

WHO Globally is informing the public through [daily situation reports](#) and dashboards displaying real-time data: [WHO Health Emergency dashboard](#); [WHO COVID-19 situation dashboard in European Region](#).

WHO action in COVID-19 outbreak in North Macedonia is to limit virus spread, protect health and the health workers at the frontline, preserve the health care system capacity and its sustainability to respond.

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 has joined today 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 trial provides simplified procedures to enable even hospitals that have been overloaded to participate. Several countries from all corners of the globe have already confirmed participation. (Argentina, Bahrain, Canada, France, Iran, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Thailand). The trial uses an adaptive design, with five initial arms: 1) the usual care that is provided to the patients in the country; 2) Remdesivir 3) Lopinavir/Ritonavir; 4) Lopinavir/Ritonavir with interferon beta and 5) includes chloroquine.
- ✓ 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 has helped MOH preparing list of critical needs of protective supplies** and testing kits for the next three months for the health sector and coordinating with partners the support of the identified needs – **and coordinated through the office of the deputy prime minister for European affairs, Minister Bujar Osmani.**
- ✓ The **country strategic preparedness and response plan and Contingency Plan** for COVID – 19 is adjusted to accommodate **2000 patients taking into consideration the capacity of treatment in the country.** The plan provides strategic interventions in line with 8 pillars.
- ✓ New WHO Global Campaign – **“Pass the message: Five steps to kicking out coronavirus”** with FIFA - <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-03-2020-pass-the-message-five-steps-to-kicking-out-coronavirus>

Have questions about **COVID-19?**
We have answers



Click this link and
text hi to
the whatsapp number



WHO EUROPE SITE FOR COVID19

[Visit our COVID-19 website for daily updates on the situation and WHO's response.](#)

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NEW GOVERNMENT MEASURES ON 20 MARCH 2020

North Macedonia mobilized an all-of-government action to fight this new coronavirus, including scaling up emergency response mechanisms in all sectors. We have seen recently a positive society response and compliance as well as more trust in the government protective measures and instructions for social distancing. MOH has started a vigorous risk communication campaign in social media, on TV and other. Actions and readjustments of measures are continuous and monitoring of the situation is ongoing on daily basis. On the health front, the country is working hard now to ensure its hospitalization surge capacity with the necessary personnel are in place in case of larger community-based transmission.

The Steering committee was formed as governmental body for coordination and management within a national crisis management system composed of: Ministers of: Interior, Health, Transport and Communications, Defense, Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Assessment Group are also meeting ad hoc with the Minister of Health and the Operational Committee for decision making on highest level.

Ministry of Health is coordinating the response through its responsible expert committees:

1. Infectious diseases commission as a technical expertise to MOH
2. IHR multisectoral commission
3. Operational Committee – Task Force for COVID-19

The country is in declared national emergency Announced by the President of the Republic on 18 March 2020 for one month.

- ✓ Additional restrictions on movement is introduced for the week end across country from 16:00 – 05:00 every day.
- ✓ In the municipality of Kumanovo:
 - All public transport to and inside the city of Kumanovo is stopped.
 - All shops inside malls, except food stores and supermarkets are closed in the city.
 - The Government recommended manufacturers and trade markets on the territory of Kumanovo that have large production and sales capacities to adjust their operations or to completely shut down. This recommendation follows the Government's decision to completely shut down the local and intercity public transport on the territory of Kumanovo which might result in reduced number of employees.
- ✓ The private health care institutions having intensive care and treatment units will provide such services for COVID-19 patients. For this purpose, the HIF will conclude agreements with these institutions, which will determine the scope and type of services that these private health care institutions will be providing for the duration of the state of emergency.
- ✓ The Government adopted a recommendation for organization of work in shifts for all companies in the country, issuing several directives:
 - The number of employees in a certain facility should be limited so there is distance between each of them of at least 1.5 metres
 - Employees should be provided with protective and disinfection equipment
 - Working premises to be disinfected at least once a week
 - Employees from different departments should avoid physical contact with each other as much as possible

- All meetings to be conducted via telephone, video-link or e-mail
 - In case some of the employees has been in contact with a person tested positive for COVID-19, they must be put in 14-day isolation at once.
- ✓ The Government adopted a decision regarding teaching and assessment in primary, secondary and higher education i.e. the Government has ordered schools and faculties to find ways to teach, test and evaluate pupils and students online via video conferencing platforms, e-mails or other electronic data exchange systems.

COVID-19 UN AND PARTNER COORDINATION

- ✓ 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, in collaboration with the two DPMs, Mila Carovska and Bujar Osmani.
- ✓ Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European Affairs Bujar Osmani in a letter to the European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenercic called for the activation of the European Civil Protection Mechanism for the Republic of North Macedonia: in view of expected growing number of patients in the country, in the coming period, the country will need additional medical supplies, materials and equipment for appropriate outreach activities. According to the Secretariat for European Affairs, the Republic of North Macedonia is a member of the European Civil Protection Mechanism, from which, in 2016, it used assistance during the floods in the Skopje region. Minister Dimitrov stated that reallocation of EU IPA funds to fight coronavirus is required.
- ✓ Prime Minister Oliver Spasovski and the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Bujar Osmani announced that the initial EU aid for tackling coronavirus is expected in a few days, and it would amount to 40-70 million euros which will be activated at different stages for the health system and for the economy.

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 WHO GUIDANCE

- Detention centers

guidance on Preparedness, prevention and control of COVID-19 in prisons and places of detention.

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/pages/news/news/2020/03/preventing-covid-19-outbreak-in-prisons-a-challenging-but-essential-task-for-authorities>

- Immunization

Guidance document on immunization services during COVID-19 pandemic:

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-technical-guidance/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak-technical-guidance-europe/> [recache](#) and here

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/rotavirus/publications/> [recache](#)

- [How to stay physically active during COVID-19 self-quarantine](#)

- [Q&A on COVID-19, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding](#)

HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND LATEST OFFICIAL MEASURES?

All Government information and measures are now organized in english at the government website:

<https://vlada.mk/node/20488?ln=en-gb> and www.vlada.mk/covid19

IMPORTANT NUMBERS NORTH MACEDONIA

The Call Center (0800 002 03) for questions related to COVID-19 is functional as of 21 March 2020 in the Primary Health Care Center Skopje.

Call Center for questions related to COVID-19	0800 002 03
COVID-19 general information	
“Alo Doctor” Call Center	02 15 123
In case of symptoms and asymptomatic travelers	
CPH Bitola	071 261 330
CPH Veles	071 219 278
CPH Gevgelija	078 545 444
CPH Kochani	071 373 913
CPH Kumanovo	070 215 851
CPH Ohrid	070 723 029
CPH Prilep	076 475 747
CPH Skopje	071 289 614
CPH Strumica	072 235 543
CPH Tetovo	075 240 464
RU Gostivar	076 365 161

	CPH Shtip	078 365 613
	IPH Skopje	078 387 194
Psychological support		
	Parents of preschool and school children	072 912 676
	Self-isolated adults	072 919 009
	Citizens of municipalities Debar and Center Zhupa	070 241 807
Red Cross mobile teams for elderly support		
	Red Cross Center	070 297 166
	Red Cross Kisela Voda	071 349 225
	Red Cross Chair	070 208 383
	Red Cross Karpos	071 349 230
	Red Cross Gazi Baba	071 243 078
	Team for support of homeless people	02 3096 227
Foreign Affairs		
	Regular line, Viber and WhatsApp	075 273 732
	Regular line	075 446 647
	Regular line, Viber and WhatsApp	070 282 078
WHO		
	Facebook/Twitter	@WHOMKD
Ministry of Health		
	Facebook/Twitter	@zdravstvomk