



HIGHLIGHTS

- In the last 24 hours: A total of 660 molecular SARS-CoV-2 tests were performed, 4.2% tested positive. 48 COVID-19 patients recovered, one COVID-19 fatality and 28 new cases were reported. The cumulative number of cases is 1259 of which 214 are among health professionals (17%). COVID-19 cases are registered in 25 cities – first case is registered in Valandovo. However, 71% of the cases are reported from three cities Skopje, Kumanovo and Prilep (422, 342, 126 cases, respectively).
- **64% of the deaths are in Kumanovo, Struga and Skopje.** Only 20% of the confirmed COVID-19 cases are in people above 60 years old but 70% of the deaths occurred in this age group. 77% of deaths had comorbidities. 50 and 52 cases are registered among children ages 0-9 and 10-19, respectively.
- **The Government adopted changes to ease the curfew restriction.** Starting today, the curfew on working days will last from 19:00 to 05:00 the next day, while on weekends the curfew will start on Saturday at 15:00 and will end on Monday at 05:00. All citizens to wear personal protection equipment in public, like face masks or scarves. **Self-isolation during coronavirus testing** is mandatory for all people.
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to continue the support of the COVID-19 response of North Macedonia and the country to receive support in the amount 250 million euro for the financial and energy sector and the small and medium enterprises but also the big companies.
- **HealthBuddy** is a multilingual interactive chatbot to access accurate information from various population groups, and to fight rumors and myths about the new virus in Europe and can be accessed [here](#). This tool is part of WHO’s digital innovation efforts to counter COVID-19 infodemic worldwide and will be available for use on health authorities’ websites in the European Region with country-specific information in national languages. It uses artificial intelligence to answer questions about COVID-19, including local information such as COVID-19 hotlines available in the European countries. Not only will the chatbot provide accurate health advice for everyone, it will also target information to the specific needs of healthcare workers, faith-based organizations, employers, and travel and tourism sectors.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

total (new) cases in the last 24 hours

North Macedonia

1259 confirmed (28)

56 deaths

272 recovered

214 Health Care Workers

Globally

2 471 136 confirmed (73 920)

169 006 deaths (6058)

European Region

1 219 486 confirmed (32 302)

109 952 deaths (3618)

Regions of the Americas

925 291 confirmed (32 172)

44 775 deaths (2089)

Eastern Mediterranean Region

139 349 confirmed (4879)

6326 deaths (141)

Western Pacific Region

136 271 confirmed (1765)

5793 deaths (108)

South-East Asia Region

33 912 confirmed (2242)

1427 deaths (86)

African Region

16 115 confirmed (560)

720 deaths (16)

WHO RISK ASSESSMENT

SURVEILLANCE

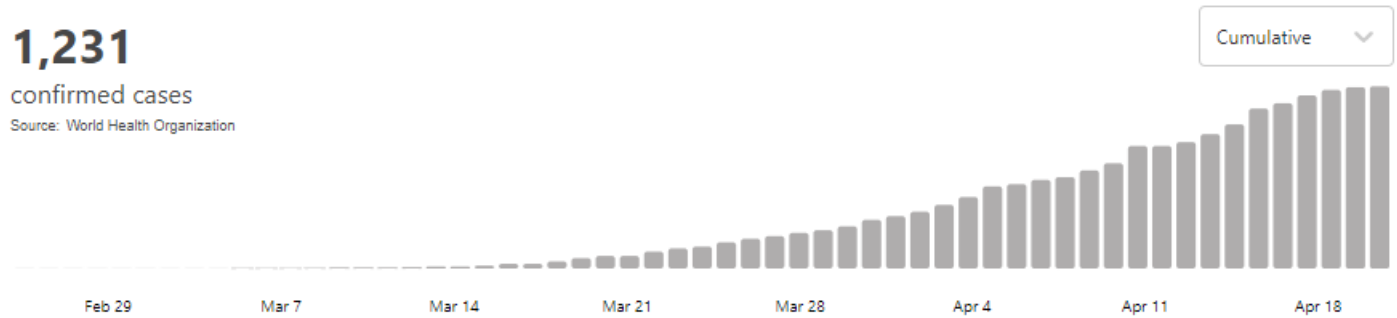
Figure 1. North Macedonia – Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases (n=1231) and deaths (n=55) by 22 April 2020 20:00

Confirmed Cases Over Time

1,231

confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization



Deaths Over Time

55

deaths

Source: World Health Organization

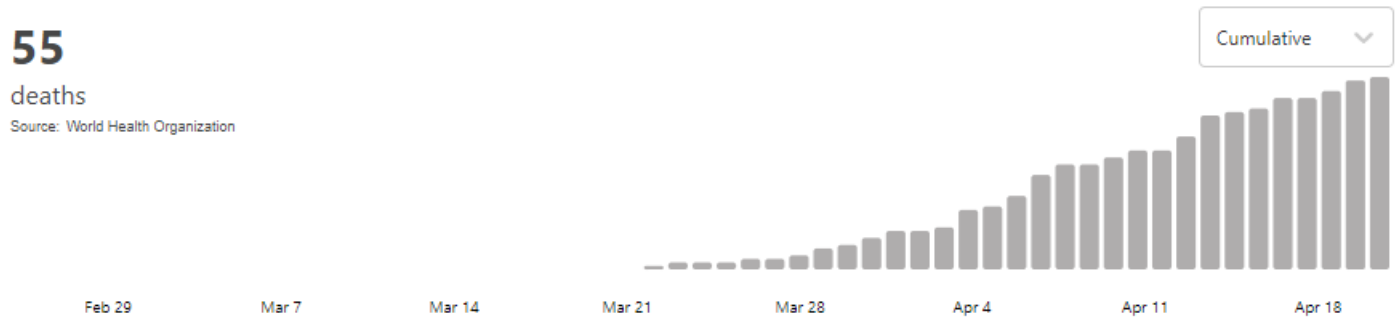
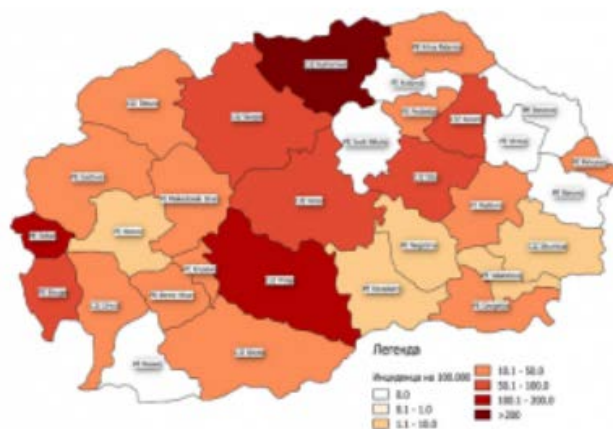


Figure 2. North Macedonia – COVID-19 incidence per 100,000 people, as of 22 April 2020



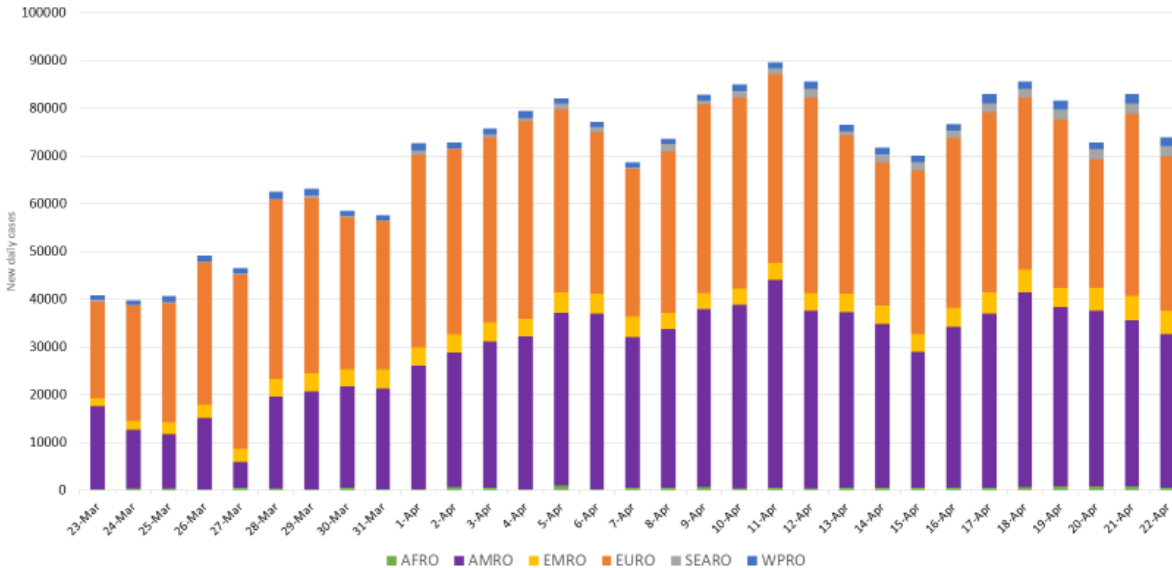
The highest cumulative incidence is in Kumanovo (239,7/100,000 people), followed by Debar (183.8/100,000 people) and Prilep (132,2/100,000 people). Five other cities have incidence above 50.0 cases per 100,000 people (Veles, Struga, Skopje, Shtip and Kochani).

Age of patients vary from 0-91 years (median age – 45 years old). However, the highest risk group is between 50-59 years old.

The disaggregated data of the confirmed COVID-19 cases through 21 April 2020 which includes the cases reported on 22 April 2020 by MoH could be accessed at the www.iph.mk

Global situation – the past month

Number of new cases of COVID-19 per day, by WHO Region



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-2019), EUROPE

Based on the WHO and ECDC data as of 22 April 2020 10:00 CET, there have been 1 219 486 cases reported in the WHO European Region, representing almost half of the global burden of 2 471 136 cases reported to date. Globally, USA carries the heaviest case load (776 907), with Spain and Italy concluding top-3. In addition, five more countries from the European Region are in the top-10 (Germany, United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and Russian Federation);

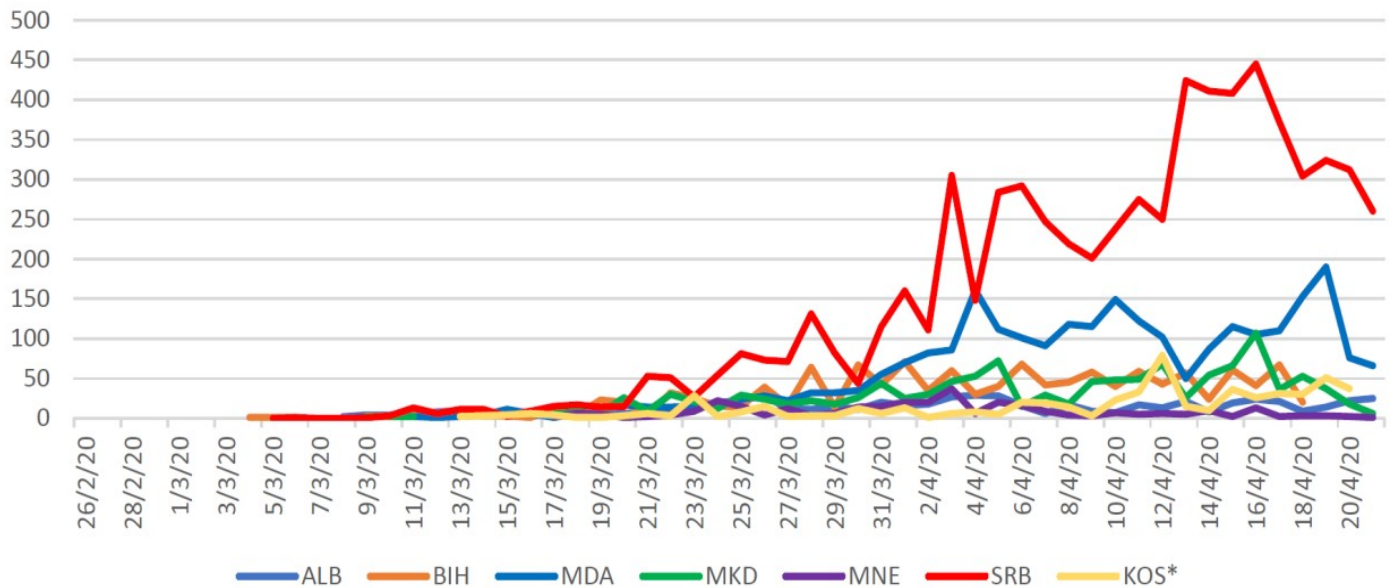
In Europe, five countries reported 100 000 cases or more, with Spain leading (204 178), followed by Italy (183 957), Germany (145 694), United Kingdom (129 044), and France (116 151). Ten countries reported 10 000 cases or more, listed in descending order (Turkey, Russian Federation, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, Sweden, Austria, and Israel);

Cumulatively, 65% of the global burden of COVID-19 deaths (169 006 deaths) have been reported in the European Region (109 952 deaths), with Italy, Spain, France and the United Kingdom each reporting more than 10 000 deaths and together accounting for 77% of all deaths in Europe (24 648, 21 282, 20 763, 17 337 deaths respectively). Another six countries in the Region reported 1000 deaths or more – Belgium (5998), Germany (4879), Netherlands (3916), Turkey (2259), Sweden (1765), and Switzerland (1186);

MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL today held their fourth COVID-19 video conference to deal with

- ✓ The Joint European Roadmap towards lifting of COVID-19 containment measures.
- ✓ Joint Roadmap for Recovery which sets out some important principles - solidarity, cohesion and convergence.
- ✓ The agreement on three important safety nets for workers, businesses and sovereigns, amounting to a package worth 540 billion euros.
- ✓ The agreement to work towards establishing a recovery fund.

Daily trend of COVID 19 cases (Balkan Hub Countries) as of April 21 2020



Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia/Kosovo1 [UN Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)]

Serbia remains the most affected country in the Balkan Hub with 7114 cases and 134 deaths reported as of 23 April. While the total number of cases increased 46% over the past 7 days, **the daily trend has been decreasing since 16 April. Trends in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina** seem to be stabilizing while **Moldova and Kosovo1** continue to fluctuate. **Montenegro and North Macedonia** have seen a decreasing trend in daily cases reported for the past 4 days.

WHAT IS NEW

Risk Communication

- University of Texas-Austin, in partnership with UNESCO and WHO and with financial support from the Knight Center for Journalism and UNDP, has launched a [massive open online course \(MOOC\) on "Journalism in a pandemic: Covering COVID-19 now and in the future."](https://journalismcourses.org/) The MOOC is available in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (Arabic and Chinese to come) and starts on 1 May 2020. It is an asynchronous course: participants can take the course at a time and place convenient to them. Use this link to access and join the course: <https://journalismcourses.org/>

Infection Prevention and Control:

- The new FAO/WHO guidance document titled, [COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for competent authorities responsible for national food safety control systems](#), provides advice and recommendations for national food safety authorities to optimize food control functions and prioritize critical services that preserve the integrity of food safety systems. This guidance is now available online, [HERE](#).

Vulnerable Groups:

- Please find [attached](#) the document “[Notes on Migrants and COVID-19](#)”, published by the International Centre for Migration, Health and Development in Geneva. It points out areas of vulnerability and proposes practical actions to address their situation during COVID-19.
- [United Nations Secretary-General’s Policy Brief on COVID-19](#) is now available [HERE](#). This paper aims to translate the UN SGs [Call to Action for Human Rights](#) to put human rights at the heart of UN actions, including in times of crisis, into concrete action to assist with the response to the pandemic. It presents six key messages that must be central to an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT WHO IS DOING FOR COVID19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

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.

- **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 supports 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 is supporting North Macedonia 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

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>

health action. The protocol can be accessed here: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/population-based-age-stratified-seroepidemiological-investigation-protocol-for-covid-19-virus-infection>

- WHO **donated 5000 COVID tests** to the Virology Lab of the Institute of Public Health on 8 April 2020.
- With WHO/USAID support, the **Epidemiological emergency operations venue at MOH** is now equipped and functional in its temporary premises, refurbished and with IT equipment.
- **WHO held a training meeting on Solidarity trial** to all those involved in the scheme from COVID19 treating hospitals.
- 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 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 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 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>

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/>
- Generating Robust data needed to show which treatments are the most effective, by North Macedonia joining the WHO SOLIDARITY Trial which is a large, international therapeutic study that will allow also receiving free of charge medicines for COVID19 and latest evidence-based indications for changing treatment protocols when needed to reduce mortality, length of stay under mechanical respiration and reducing complications.
- 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 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.

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.

- The Government a set of changes in the duration of the curfew and the use of protective equipment by citizens:
 - All movement is prohibited between 19:00 and 05:00 during weekdays across the entire territory of the country. During weekends, movement is prohibited from 15:00 on Saturday until 05:00 on Monday.
 - During the weekdays, older people above 67 years old can move between 05:00-12:00 and young people up to age 18 can move between 13:00 to 19:00. On Saturday, older people can move between 05:00-11:00 and young people between 12:00-15:00.
 - Mandatory use of masks, scarfs, shawls or similar piece of clothing to cover the mouth and nose at all enclosed public spaces such as markets, pharmacies, banks etc. has been introduced as of 23 April 2020. The same is applied on open spaces in situations when those areas are crowded.
 - The ban of gatherings and groups of people and other restrictive measures regarding physical distancing on public spaces and parks to remain the same.
 - Exceptions for wearing protective equipment are 1) if the person is staying in the yard of a residential family house, 2) rides a bicycle or is physically active outdoors, but keeps the required 2 meters distance, 3) when driving a passenger motor vehicle with persons with whom are living together, 4) when moving in public spaces and open areas and maintains the minimum 2 meters distance from the other people.
- Retail business owners to regulate the circulation of people in their objects, depending on the object's surface, i.e. to let inside one person for each 20 m² of the object's surface.
- A Decree with legal force is adopted for mandatory self-isolation during coronavirus testing. All domestic and foreign nationals, symptomatic and asymptomatic who have been tested for coronavirus, should be self-isolated from the moment of taking the test material until issuing the result. The self-isolation should last until negative test result is obtained.
- Minister Filipche informed that starting today, a well-known cardiologist and expert in management of patients in ICU from the University Clinic in Maribor will be working with and supporting the team at the University Clinic for Infectious Diseases.

- At the University Clinic for Oncology clinic 8 health professionals tested positive on COVID-19 and 20 contacts are isolated, thus the work of the clinic is reorganized. The subcutaneous treatment for the patients will be available at the Clinical Hospital in Tetovo, Shtip and Bitola and these patients would not need to travel to Skopje.
- More than 45,000 citizens have so far downloaded the StopKorona application, which aims to protect against the spread of coronavirus. The Ministry of Health has advised family doctors to recommend this application to patients.

UN, DONATIONS AND PARTNER COORDINATION- COVID-19

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.

- **EU Ambassador** to Macedonia Samuel Zbogar informed via Twitter that North Macedonia will receive aid by the Mechanism for Civil protection of the European Union, which will include 5 energy generators, 25 tents, 200 mattresses and 1,000 blankets. In meantime, the European Commission (EC) has suggested establishment of a fund of 3 billion euros for the Western Balkan countries and several other countries as assistance to tackle the pandemic. With this decision, EC will provide 160 million euros in aid for Macedonia.
- A **Chinese donation** consisting of 5 016 COVID-19 tests, 5 000 protective suits, 30 000 medical masks, 20 000 pairs of gloves, 10 000 pieces of shoe protection in the amount of 400 000 dollars arrived in Skopje on 19 April 2020 and 30 000 eur financial support to MoH
- **Bulgaria donated** 100 protective suits and masks to the Ministry of Defense as a sign of solidarity in the fight against coronavirus and additionally this week is expected to arrive:
 - 500 suits for multiple use and 500 protective glasses and face shields
 - 2.000 masks, 200 glasses and 200 protection suits for the Delcevo and Strumica hospitals
- **US**
 - 1,1 million dollars for soft measures to be implemented by WHO and UNICEF including capacity building for addressing the pandemic. Also the US delivered packages for the most vulnerable groups via Red Cross – 2,350 packages of hygiene products for families of social risks for protection from the spreading of the coronavirus. Of these, 1,000 packages will be donated to families in Suto Orizari, Skopje, 500 in Trizla, Prilep, 500 in Bajro, Bitola, 250 in Keramidnica, Gostivar and 100 in Crnik, Delcevo.
 - 600.000 dollars through WHO – preparation of laboratory systems for large-scale testing of COVID-19; enhance case-finding and event-based surveillance for COVID-19, prevent and control infections in health-care facilities; help implement emergency plans to screen people arriving at countries' various points of entry, such as airports and land-border crossings; strengthen clinical care while minimizing the risk of onwards transmission to others and further support communication mechanisms to provide the public with reliable, verifiable information to keep everyone informed about how to protect themselves and each other
 - 30,000 dollars from the Embassy contingencies for supply of equipment for the Public Health Institute.
 - U.S. companies like Coca Cola, Microsoft and other are also offering assistance to North Macedonia in the COVID-19 crisis management, as announced by Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Balkans, Matthew Palmer.
- **Netherlands** – ongoing supply of two PCRs and 4.000 tests for the Public Health Institute and Veterinary Institute
- **Czech Republic** donation of 1 million masks arrived Skopje by a military plane from Prague.
- **Japan** - consultations are **ongoing for 4 projects applications submitted on 2019** from 4 different health institutions as a request for supply of equipment in total amount of 223.486 EUR, to be financed through GGP grants.

- **Slovenia** donation of protection equipment in the amount of 110.000 EUR via the EU Civil Protection mechanism distributed to the Kumanovo Hospital including 100,000 surgical masks and 100,000 protective masks.
- **Norway** has donated medical supplies to North Macedonia (worth 200 000 Euro) which will be shipped from the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). North Macedonia is currently using a field hospital donated by Norway, allowing it to double the capacity at the Infectious Disease Clinic and the delivery of 20 respirators is expected.
- **Switzerland** supported the temporary prefabricated modular units for emergency hospital and donated non-medical equipment amounting to a total of 245,000 Euro
- Sixteen applications have been picked out of more than 500 sent for the **CREATON public** call to tackle COVID-19 challenges, issued by the Fund for Innovations and Technology Development. The public call was supported by the Embassy of Switzerland to North Macedonia, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, and the Chamber of Commerce for Information and Communication Technologies – MASIT. Nearly 158 applications were shortlisted. Of those that made the cut, there are solutions involving medicine, digital tools as support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to weather the crisis, education digital tools, culture and leisure tools. The total budget is 10 million denars and each proposal can receive up to EUR 10,000 in local currency. The call is the first in a series of the Fund’s initiatives to tackle with the COVID-19 consequences.
- The **Hungarian government** donated 100,000 protective masks and 5,000 protective suits to the general hospital 8th September
- **Turkey** delivered a donation to North Macedonia to deal with the coronavirus on 8 April 2020. The Turkish donation consists of 50,000 protective medical masks, 1,000 protective suits, 1,000 diagnostic tests and other medical supplies.
- **Germany** offered support to the Ministry of Health with an amount of USD 2 million in PPE and provided equipment in amount of 40,000 EUR for the Clinic of infectious deceases, KARIL and Neurosurgery Clinic
- **British Embassy** Donated Equipment to Defence Ministry: The Embassy of the United Kingdom to Macedonia handed over to the Defence Ministry a donation consisting of protective equipment for better handling of the coronavirus situation in the amount of 2.500 pounds
- **EU support**
 - **EUR 4 million** of urgent assistance implemented via UNOPS
 - **EUR 50 million Performance Award**, it will officially be reallocated for socio-economic recovery. Currently under discussion with DEU in terms of pre-conditions and criteria for the final beneficiaries. Still, the Government has decided to use 40ME to inject support in three areas: 1. part of the funds to be allocated as revolving funds for supporting micro and small enterprises for fast restructuring to enable income generation and saving jobs, esp. in export oriented companies, but also the agricultural and textile sector; 2. to support the informal economy especially persons who will be laid off due to the crisis and provide measures for their subsequent entry in the labor market; 3. to extend the ongoing active labor measures. The proposed projects in all three areas have to ensure sustainable growth and value-added impact. Other 10ME will be divided, 5 ME will be reallocated to EUIF and 5 ME will be programmed from MoH as recovery of this sector after COVID crisis.
 - **EUR 9 million** for direct support of SMEs via grant scheme
 - **EUR 3 million** for sector budget support for Youth and Employment
 - Requested support via **RescEU** for procurement of emergency medical supplies and equipment under EU CPM.
 - North Macedonia has joined the **Joint Procurement Agreement (JPA)** to procure medical countermeasures
 - Preparatory activities for use of **European Solidarity Fund**
- **WHO** medical support consisting of PPE, tests and laboratory kits for IPH in the amount of 96 023 USD and non-medical support consisting of COVID-19 related videos in Macedonian and Albanian language, development of training courses in MKD language for health workers, design and printing of promotional materials, office and IT equipment of IPH in the amount of 26 378 USD.
- **World Bank** - Emergency COVID-19 Project prepared by WB Country Team in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health to curb the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen

the health system to detect and treat cases, and mitigate some of the social consequences of the pandemic. Estimated value 100 Million USD, pending approval from Board of Directors.

- **IMF** - Emergency financing under the Rapid Financing Instrument. Secured. Budget: 175,2 Million USD
- **OSCE** protection equipment for the police in amount of 12.500 dollars, protection equipment for the Clinic of Infective diseases in the amount of 30.000 dollars, terrain vehicle for the Red cross families in Macedonia that are socially and economically hit by the health crisis, announced the **Foundation Open Society – Macedonia** which donated the funds.
- **Macedonian Red Cross** supports the elderly and the disabled in shopping and basic needs for hygiene, protection and their livelihood.
- **The Steiermärkische Sparkasse Group**, through the two local banks Ohridska Banka and Sparkasse Bank Macedonia, jointly donated funds to support various segments of the health system in the total amount of 110,000 Euros. Ohridska Banka expressed their solidarity with the help of 1,500 socially disadvantaged families in cooperation with the Red Cross of the City of Skopje. For the needs of the University Clinic for Infectious and Febrile Diseases in Skopje, they donated 54,000 Euros for the purchase of protective masks and suits, and for the maintenance and repair of existing medical equipment - two mobile X-ray machines and the purchase of a vertical laminar chamber. As part of this donation, the Group has allocated funds to support the two general hospitals in Kumanovo and Ohrid, and provided fuel for 32 vehicles available for emergency medical care
- Disabled and elderly persons will receive aid during the coronavirus crisis. This activity is accomplished with the **UNDP** and in cooperation with the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**.
- Government authorized the Minister of Health Venko Filipce to sign the Donation Agreement between the **Information Technology Company Nextsen DOO** as a Donor and the Ministry of Health as a recipient of the donation.
- **MOH Solidarity fund is established:** Companies, individuals, organizations, institutions, embassies donated 59.3 million denars on the account of the Ministry of Health including donations of medical devices, protective equipment and other materials.

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, protecting the health care workers and ensuring essential social and medical care to the vulnerable.

➤ **Technical needs at the health front:**

- 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:**

- 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;
- socioeconomic relief for vulnerable groups and employment protection.
- Maintaining Essential health and social services
- 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.

➤ **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
- 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
- Compliance of the citizens to instructions of the government and self-isolation

IMPORTANT CONTACTS NORTH MACEDONIA: Call Center 0800 002 03; “Alo Doctor” 02 15 123

