

SITUATION REPORT #11

COVID-19



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA

28 MAY 2020

2,077

confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country.

1,486

fully recovered patients.

121

deaths associated with COVID-19.

IN THE FOCUS

UN COVID-19 Response Framework (CRF) for North Macedonia

Following the global guidance from the UN Sustainable Development Group, elaborated in the United Nations' framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 crisis, the UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia informed the DPM for Economic Affairs and the Chair of the Sustainable Development Council and the DPM for EU Affairs and National Aid Coordinator of the United Nations Country Team's (UNCT) commitment to support the country with collective and strategic advice aimed at mitigating the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

This joint exercise of the UNCT will be elaborated in the country-specific COVID-19 Response Framework (CRF), which was welcomed by the Government as a vehicle to support national policy response towards faster and sustainable recovery.

The assessment and recommendations within the CRF are organized in five distinctive pillars.

The North Macedonia CRF is not limited to the UN-specific offer and programme interventions, but builds on the



collective, global and country-specific know-how and experience of UN agencies, providing recommendations

in each of the five pillars that can be streamlined in the Government policies and implemented as a comprehensive, whole-of-country response.

CRF compiles the available analyses and assessments, and will be used to inform the Common Country Analysis (CCA) serving as the baseline for developing the UN's key strategic planning document, the 2021-2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF) in support of the country's path towards sustainable development and to ensure follow up of the suggested measures, particularly those focusing that no one is left behind. Furthermore, individual UN agencies will support more specific and in-depth analysis aimed to support policy creation with detailed and disaggregated data particularly focusing on vulnerable groups.

Excerpts with key findings and recommendations from each of the CRF pillars will be published successively in the next editions of the UN Situation Reports.

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19

Limited data describe clinical manifestations of COVID-19 that are generally milder in children compared with adults, but also show that some children do require hospitalization and intensive care. Recently, however, reports from Europe and North America have described clusters of children and adolescents requiring admission to intensive care units with a multisystem inflammatory condition with some features similar to those of Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome.

Case reports and small series have described a presentation of acute illness accompanied by a hyperinflammatory syndrome, leading to multiorgan failure and shock. Initial hypotheses are that this syndrome may be related to COVID-19 based on initial

laboratory testing showing positive serology in a majority of patients. Children have been treated with anti-inflammatory treatment, including parenteral immunoglobulin and steroids.

It is essential to characterize this syndrome and its risk factors, to understand causality, and describe treatment interventions. It is not yet clear the full spectrum of disease, and whether the geographical distribution in Europe and North America reflects a true pattern, or if the condition has simply not been recognized elsewhere.

There is therefore an urgent need for collection of standardized data describing clinical presentations,

severity, outcomes, and epidemiology. WHO has developed a preliminary case definition and case report form for multisystem inflammatory disorder in children and adolescents. The preliminary case definition reflects the clinical and laboratory features observed in children reported to date and serves to identify suspected or confirmed cases both for the purpose of providing treatment and for provisional reporting and surveillance. The case definition will be revised as more data become available.

[Scientific Brief: Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children and adolescents](#)

(Source World Health Organization WHO)

ILO Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses in North Macedonia

On 28 May Intentional Labour Organization (ILO) published a Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses in North Macedonia, revealing expectedly concerning data about the impact of COVID 19 on the employment in the country.

Key findings elaborated in the report include the following:

- The decline in working hours in North Macedonia during the second quarter is equivalent to the loss of 85,550 full-time jobs. Pending release of ILO country-level estimate, these numbers are calculated by applying the Western Balkans declining ratio of 11.6%, based on declines in working hours from both lay-offs and other temporary reductions in working time.
- Certain jobs are curtailed only temporarily, while others will be lost permanently. Enterprise survey conducted by the employers' organizations, in collaboration with the ILO and the EBRD, showed that the

pandemic has severely affected 82% companies, with the micro companies hit the hardest and the large companies showing more resilience.

- The repercussions and lingering effects of the COVID-19 crisis on jobs and enterprises in specific sectors also depend on their relative vulnerability to shocks. Aggregating labour vulnerabilities in 39 sectors of the economy (over 90% of the workforce), ILO's Rapid Analysis shows that nearly 62% all employers and non-employer enterprises in North Macedonia are in hard-hit sectors, while the situation is worsening if considering gender- and age-related vulnerabilities.
- Nine sectors that have been strongly impacted by the crisis also display elevated labour vulnerabilities: 40,000 jobs are at immediate risk. The sectoral analysis shows that food and beverages services, retail, transport, warehousing, personal services, food manufacturing, construction and related specialized activities, and services to buildings combine high labour vulnerabilities

and a high impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

The assessment the policy measures suggests that:

- The main employment retention measures put in place by the Government were timely, but the intensity of the support may be too low to achieve the desired impacts.
- Unemployment benefit is not functioning as an automatic stabilizer and the rules governing eligibility may need to be relaxed temporarily.
- Decision-makers must be careful not to exacerbate a dynamic of "winners and losers" emerging from the current crisis.

From this analysis eleven policy recommendations have emerged which will be further evaluated and adjusted through social dialogue. Details about this will be presented in the next situation reports.

COVID-19: Human development on course to decline in 2020 for the first time since 1990

Concerted action with a focus on equity could still limit the impacts of this unprecedented crisis: closing the digital divide would reduce by more than two-thirds the number of children currently not learning because of school closures.

Global human development — which can be measured as a combination of the world's education, health and living standards — could decline this year for the first time since the concept was introduced in 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) warned.

Declines in fundamental areas of human development are felt across all most countries, rich and poor, globally. COVID-19's global death toll has exceeded 300,000 people, while the global per capita income this year is expected to fall by four per cent.

With school closures, "effective out-of-school rate" — the percentage of primary school-age children, adjusted to reflect those without Internet access — estimates indicate that 60 per cent of children are not getting an education, leading to global levels not seen since the 1980s. The combined impact of these shocks could signify the largest reversal in human development on record. This is not counting other significant effects, for instance, in the progress towards gender equality. The negative impacts on women and girls span economic — earning and saving less and greater job insecurity —, reproductive health, unpaid care work and gender-based violence.

The drop in human development is expected to be much



higher in developing countries that are less able to cope with the pandemic's social and economic fallout than richer nations.

In education, with schools closed and stark divides in access to online learning, UNDP estimates show that 86 percent of children in primary education are now effectively out-of-school in countries with low human development—compared with just 20 percent in countries with very high human development.

But with more equitable Internet access, — where countries close the gap with leaders in their

development group, something feasible — the current gaps in education could close. Determined, equity-focused interventions can help economies and societies rally, mitigating the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implementing equity-focused approaches would be affordable. For instance, closing the gap in access to the Internet for low- and middle-income countries is estimated to cost just one per cent of the extraordinary fiscal support packages the world has so far committed to respond to COVID-19.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

To-date, international assistance to North Macedonia's COVID-19 response has reached \$79/€73.2 million in grant support, off which \$9/€8.3 million has been made available to finance the immediate health response and \$70/€64.8 million has been earmarked for socio-economic response, a significant share of which is expected to be operationalized in the coming months. The three biggest sources of support for the response (in terms of grants or in kind support) have been the European Union (EU, \$72.6/€67.2 million), the United Nations (UN, \$1.8/€1.7 million) and the United States (\$1.2/€1.1 million), followed by Norway, Switzerland, Czech Republic and China. Most of this funding has been redirected from existing or planned programmes for North Macedonia, with limited new COVID-19 specific funding being made available predominately for immediate health response.

In addition, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and EU have provided the country with sizable favourable conditions loans of over \$521/€483 million. These loans offer easily accessible credit financing to support the liquidity of the budget and help reduce risks and cost to the country associated with borrowing on the currently uncertain international markets.

International grant/in kind support for response

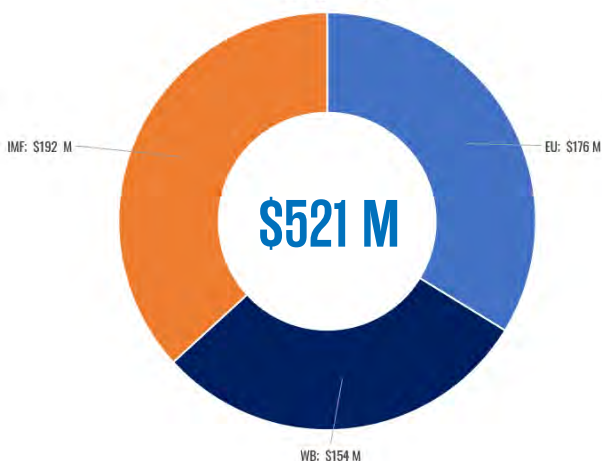
Austria Bulgaria China Czech Republic EU Germany Hungary Netherlands Norway
OSCE Slovenia Sweden Switzerland Turkey UK UN/Interim USA



Financial data in US Dollars, based on triangulation of data compiled by the UN in North Macedonia, information made available by the Secretariat for European Affairs (Government of North Macedonia) and estimated value of in-kind donations based on average market prices of items in cases when only item description was provided. Data includes secured funding and announced funding that may be pending final approval.

International loan support for response

EU WB IMF

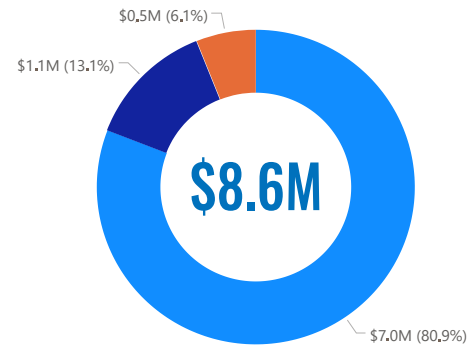


Financial data in US Dollars. Source: UN North Macedonia and SEP

UN SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

Grant assistance channeled through the UN entities in North Macedonia

Health Social Mitigation Economic Mitigation



Financial data in US Dollars, includes secured funding and announced funding pending approval. Source: UN North Macedonia

United Nations in North Macedonia has collectively supported the Government and international partners with the overview of needs and procurement of urgent medical and protective supplies, and equipment for immediate response, as well as conducting the analysis and framing the broader response to the socio-economic impact of the crisis.

The UN agencies, funds and programmes in North Macedonia are – in close coordination with its Government counterparts – have reported the following activities since the issuance of the previous Situation Report #10 (14 May):

United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) delivered 7 ventilators (out of ten ordered) to the Ministry of Health. Some 2,368 household hygiene kits have also been distributed to households throughout the country. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in assessing when and how to reopen kindergartens. A new Guidance developed by the regional office was shared with the Ministry and measures were suggested to ensure safe operations of kindergartens. Furthermore, to additionally support safety measures, UNICEF is supplying non-contact digital thermometers for kindergartens as well as risk communication material.

On April 30, 2020, the World Bank approved € 90 million (US\$ 98.5 million equivalent) of financing to support North Macedonia's efforts to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19, strengthen national systems for public health preparedness, and help mitigate some of the social consequences of the pandemic. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

In addition to this emergency project, on Government's request, the World Bank activated € 50 million from an emergency funding mechanism that is embedded in the recently approved Local Roads Connectivity Project. This mechanism provides fast-disbursing funds that will be used to protect jobs in viable micro, small and medium enterprises impacted by both the public health measures limiting commercial activities and by depressed demand locally and internationally.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continued with provision of medical assistance to the migrants in the Transit Reception Centres. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the COVID related screenings are also being implemented.

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has delivered 750,000 gloves, 100,000 protective caps, 100,000 surgical masks, 20,000 protective goggles, 1500 litres of disinfectants and around 14,500 pieces of catheters, tubes

UN SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

and infusion lines to the Ministry of Health and the Infectious Diseases Clinic as part of the “EU Assistance to COVID-19 Response of the Government of North Macedonia” project.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continued to support the regional law enforcement agencies of South Eastern Europe by offering free access to the UN e-learning modules in the area of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The offer included free access to the platform for three months; three 60-minute modules on smuggling of migrants translated in the local languages and additional modules on trafficking in persons in English.

UNODC e-learning courses are developed by leading international experts, enabling law enforcement officers and other professionals to expand their knowledge and stay up to date with the international practices in the fight against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism in line with the United Nations standards and norms and other relevant international instruments.

To date, 24 officers representing the relevant national authorities of Montenegro and North Macedonia welcomed the opportunity and took part in the online training. UNODC will continue to support the law enforcement agencies in the region through e-learning and other tools during the COVID-19 outbreak.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to inform the persons under its mandate on all the vital information regarding COVID-19 through their [Help Page](#) and the [Hotline](#) +389(0)70229001, which is administered by professional UNHCR staff.

The UNHCR supported by Red Cross delivered 200 personal hygiene kits to TC Vinojug, to be distributed to refugees/migrants and asylum-seekers staying at the centre, and to be used by UNHCR staff during field activities. Additionally, 500 PPE packages containing a face mask and hand sanitizing gel were distributed to the local population and refugees.

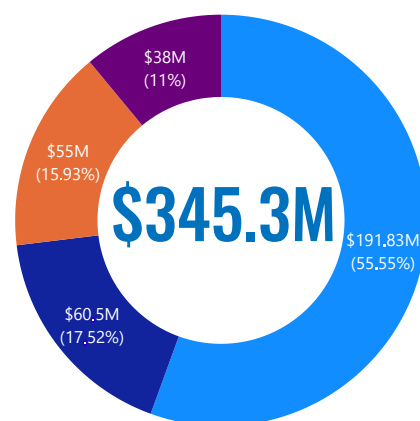
Within the UN joint project “Working Bottom up – Building a local model on deinstitutionalization”, **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women)** is supporting responsible parties DPO Polio Plus and CSO HERA in disability data collection as one of the key elements for developing policies, tracking progress and advocating for change for the rights of persons with disabilities. DPO Polio Plus and CSO HERA are undertaking series of advocacy and lobbying initiatives by working closely with the National Coordinative Body on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the local self-government units, with regards to the effectiveness of the protection measures against COVID-19.

The initiatives call on the urgent need of disability statistics and data collection by taking into consideration specific set of criteria to identify/address barriers faced by persons with disabilities that might cause discrimination against them when trying to benefit from a certain protection measure.

International Labour Organization's (ILO) Policy Brief [Sickness benefits during sick leave and quarantine: Country responses and policy considerations in the context of COVID-19](#) warns that the COVID-19 health crisis has exposed two main adverse effects of gaps in sickness benefit coverage. Firstly, such protection gaps can force people to go to work when they are sick or should self-quarantine, so increasing the risk of infecting others. Secondly, the related

Loan assistance secured through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, per category

● General ● Social Mitigation ● Economic Mitigation ● Health



Financial data in US Dollars, includes secured funding and announced funding pending approval. Source: UN North Macedonia

loss of income increases the risk of poverty for workers and their families, which could have a lasting impact.

In “normal” times, assessments of social protection benefits can be prepared well in advance and are based on comprehensive information and sophisticated actuarial models. In the context of the COVID 19 crisis, however, urgent and decisive action may be needed. To support policymakers, the ILO has developed [Rapid Social Protection Calculator for COVID-19](#). Based on a minimum set of parameters, users can cost several policy options, such as the extension of coverage of existing schemes to new beneficiaries; the increase of current benefit levels; and the introduction of universal or categorical lump sum benefits or temporary wage subsidies.

MAIN LINKS

Government

<https://koronavirus.gov.mk/>

Institute of public health

www.iph.mk

Ministry of health

<http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/korona-virus/>
<https://www.facebook.com/zdravstvomk/>

WHO North Macedonia

<https://www.facebook.com/WHOMKD>
<https://twitter.com/WHOMKD>

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

If symptoms (fever, tiredness, dry cough) occur, individuals should contact health care provider or the designated epidemiological contact telephones service and inform about their travel history and symptoms; they should not visit the health facility unless told to do so.

In case of symptoms and asymptomatic travelers

CPH Bitola	071 261 330	CPH Skopje	071 289 614
CPH Veles	071 219 278	CPH Strumica	072 235 543
CPH Gevgelija	078 545 444	CPH Tetovo	075 240 464
CPH Kochani	071 373 913	RU Gostivar	076 365 161
CPH Kumanovo	070 215 851	CPH Shtip	078 365 613
CPH Ohrid	070 723 029	IPH Skopje	078 387 194
CPH Prilep	076 475 747		

Psychological support

Parents of (pre)school children	072 912 676
Self-isolated adults	072 919 009
Citizens of Debar and Center Zhupa	070 241 807

General information

“Alo Doctor” Call Center	02 15 123
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