



Latest News

Armenia's government has approved extending the state of emergency declared over the coronavirus outbreak until June 13.

Hundreds of Central Asian migrants have reportedly been stranded at Kazakhstan's border crossings for several days.

Media reports claim that that medics in the Russian Federation are 16 times more likely to die than health workers in other counties were the epidemic has reached similar levels.

Authorities in Turkmenistan, where no coronavirus cases have been officially reported, have approved measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Council of Europe has adopted a decision to provide up to 3 billion euros of macro-financial assistance to ten enlargement and neighbourhood partners to help them cope with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Ukraine

*References to Kosovo are in line with UNSCR 1244/1999

Weekly Highlights

COVID Overhaul for IOM's Migration Translation App (MiTA)

IOM's new [Migration Translation App](#) has been given a rapid upgrade to take account of the added challenges facing migrants in the Western Balkans. A new section is designed to help border management officials identify persons at risk and refer them for medical screening. It includes questions related to basic symptoms, recent travel history, and travel companions.



First Issue of COVID-19 Central Asia Newsletter



Photo by NGO "Doris". A concerned citizen assists the NGO partner in Aktobe, Kazakhstan

IOM staff in Central Asia have been hard at work, not only on the frontlines but also in their home offices, creating the first regional newsletter, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic. The document, available [here](#) in Russian and English, spotlights the regional response, with articles on the efforts to get migrants home from the Russian Federation, Information campaigns, Hotlines, Diaspora outreach, and assistance to partner NGOs during lockdown.

Award for IOM's COVID Response in North Macedonia

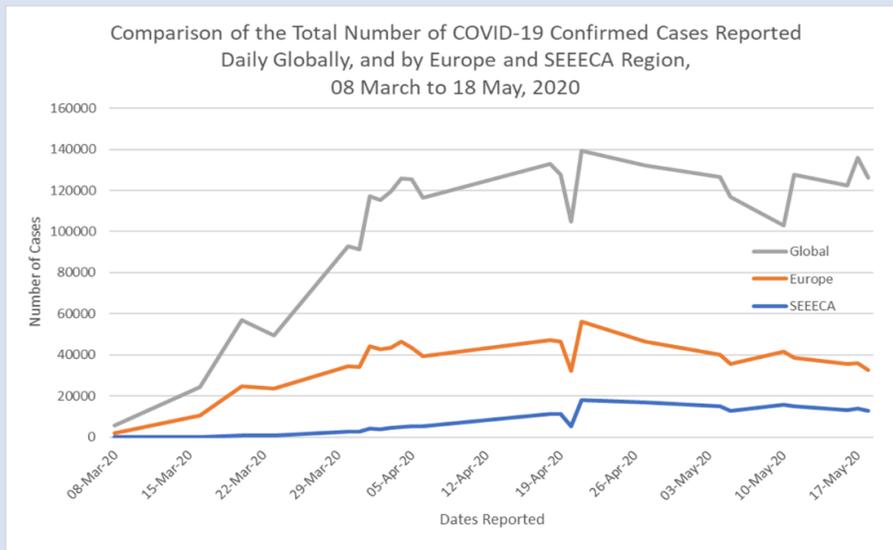
IOM Skopje has been commended by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia, receiving an honourable mention for successful cooperation and continuous support in the management of the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic, as well as letters of appreciation for successful cooperation in the area of border management and migration management.



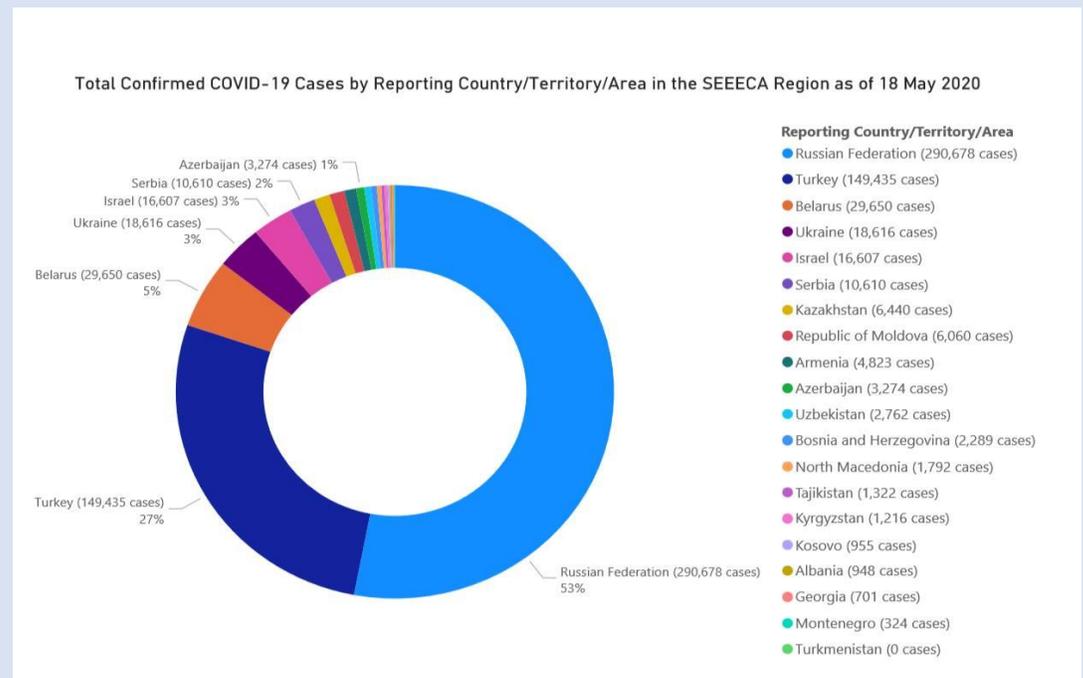


Latest Trends

- The increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the SEECA region continues to slow down, from 25 per cent to 21 per cent (452,617 to 548,502).
- In one week, the number of deaths increased by just 19 per cent (from 7,399 to 8,787).
- The Russian Federation now has the second highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world, and the highest in Europe. However, the increase in the number of cases reported has decreased from 42 per cent to 31 per cent in a week. Turkey's rate of increase in COVID-19 cases over one week has also decreased from 9 to 8 per cent.
- As self-isolation is gradually easing in Austria, the increase in the total number of confirmed COVID-19 patients has increased slightly from one to two per cent (15,787 to 16,154 cases) in just over a week. The weekly proportion of deaths continues to slow, from three per cent to two per cent.



Graph: Confirmed cases globally, Europe, and SEECA region; dip on 19 April due to Orthodox Easter Monday



Graph: Cases within the SEECA region



Country-specific responses

In Bosnia and Herzegovina:

More migrants have been leaving the temporary reception centres to attempt crossing the border towards the European Union. This is leading to an increased need for isolation areas as people return to the centres after unsuccessful attempts crossing the borders

In Georgia:

An IOM rapid needs assessment confirms high vulnerability and disproportional exposure of migrants in Georgia to COVID-19 related risks. Migrants have lost their jobs due to COVID-19, both in the formal and informal sectors, as well as financial support from families abroad. The assessment showed a need for more information and legal assistance. A comprehensive report of the survey findings can be found [here](#).

In Kazakhstan:

Direct assistance was provided to 677 migrants in vulnerable situations affected by COVID-19 by IOM in cooperation with civil society partners. The migrants were from Uzbekistan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and the Russian Federation. To identify opportunities for decent employment for youth facing long-term exclusion from the labour markets IOM started an assessment.

In Serbia:

IOM delivered large tents (Rubb halls), hygiene kits, and protective equipment to reception centres. The four Rubb halls can accommodate 540 people. The protective equipment included 50,000 masks, 200,000 gloves, 6,500 litres of liquid soap, 10,000 litres of disinfection solution, and over 43,000 hand sanitizers.

In Turkey:

To support the production of masks for Syrian refugees and the host communities IOM donated 10 sewing machines to the sub-governorate in Sanliurfa.

Proposal Development and Fundraising

- **34 proposals** have been developed for a total of **USD 38.2 million**. Over USD 11 million has been confirmed for the SEECA region, covering 11 countries (representing almost 20% of the regional COVID-19 appeal).
- The Regional Office in Vienna developed a **guidance document on COVID-19 Project Development** to guide Country Offices in their PD efforts to respond to COVID-19 pandemic and impacts. The document includes good tips and concrete examples on how to conceptualize and develop strong project proposals on COVID-19. The guidance contains specific sections on M&E and cross-cutting issues (such as gender and migrants' rights). Two annexes were also developed: the first annex provides a list of **innovative ideas on COVID-19** per activity pillar (this document was enriched by a webinar on COVID-19 innovative interventions, organized on 13 May); and the second annex provides examples of **results statements, indicators and activities** per activity pillar.

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