

Coronavirus Disease – COVID 19

Situation Report No. 17 (28 May 2020)



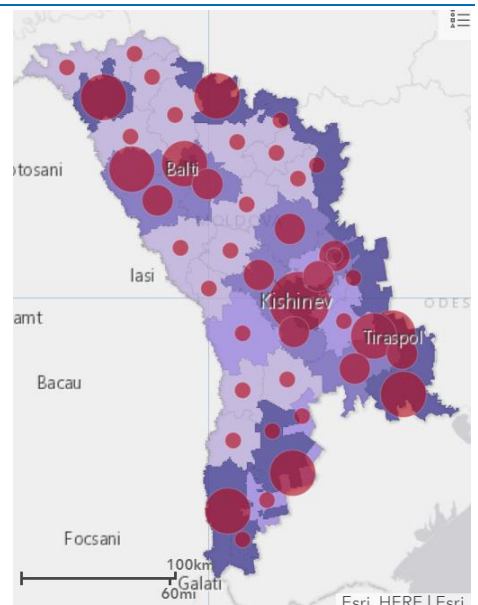
COVID-19
RESPONSE



This report is produced by UN Moldova in collaboration with Government and development/humanitarian partners.

Highlights – data as reported by national authorities*

- The total number of cases continued to grow over the past week, reaching 7,725 after the confirmation of another 188 cases today.
- The number of deaths also continued to grow, reaching 282 today. This translates into a case fatality rate of 3.7%, which is slightly above the middle of the range for countries in the region. However, the number of deaths per million in the country is at the upper end of the range for the region as shown in the chart below.
- Although the number of cases and deaths continued to grow, the number of recoveries has grown as well, reaching 4,123 today. This represents 53.4% of the total number of cases. In addition, the cumulative number of recoveries exceeded the cumulative number of new cases over the course of last week. That was mainly due to the unusually high number of recoveries on 20 May when the data from the Transnistria region came in as well as the high number of recoveries on 22 May. Hence, this positive development requires further confirmation.
- The number of active cases currently stands at 3,320, and 248 patients are in serious condition.
- The share of health care workers in the total number of cases decreased to 20% from 25% earlier in the month. A total of 1,562 doctors, nurses, medical assistants and other staff from the health care sector have been infected with the virus since the beginning of the outbreak.
- In terms of geographical distribution, Chisinau, with more than 30% of all confirmed cases, remains the most affected area if the number of cases is considered. The Transnistria region accounts for another 13% of all cases. Soroca, ATU Gagauzia, Cahul, Balti and Stefan Voda follow in the list of most affected areas, accounting for 4-6% of all cases each. Overall, two in three cases are from the areas mentioned above. If the size of the population is considered, however, Soroca, Stefan Voda, Dubasari, Glodeni and Chisinau, in the order listed, have been most affected by the disease.
- The distribution of cases by age has remained largely unchanged. Individuals in the 50-59 age group continue to be most affected by the disease, accounting for approximately a quarter of all confirmed cases. Those in the 40-49, 60-69 and 30-39 age groups follow, accounting for 15%-18% of all cases each. If the number of deaths is considered, older adults remain at a much higher risk of being seriously affected by the disease. While only 9% of all confirmed cases are people older than 70, two in five deaths from the disease have occurred in people over 60, and

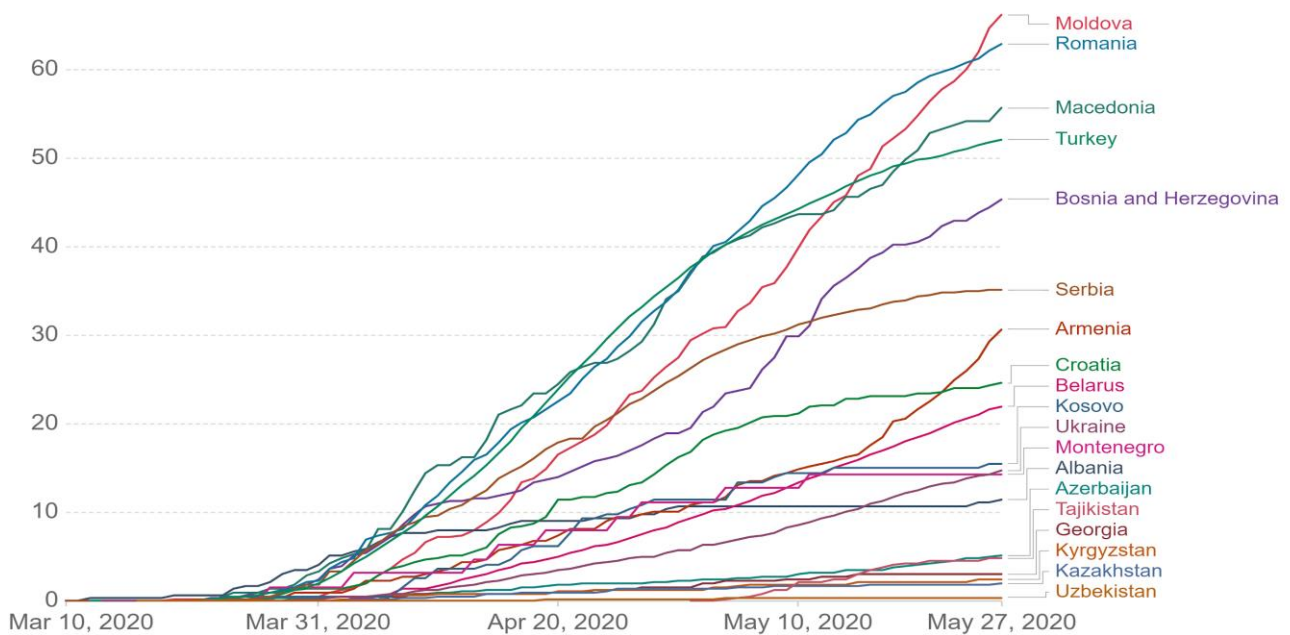


- more than 90% of all deaths have been reported in patients 50 years of age and older. The average age of patients who have died from the disease is 66.2.
- More women continue to be infected with the virus than men, 59% vs. 41%. However, a few more men have died from the disease compared to women from the beginning of the outbreak. Furthermore, the case fatality rate among men is higher than among women, 4.5% vs. 3.1%.
- Real time figures and graphs can be accessed [here](#) in Romanian and in Russian [here](#). This site has reached more than 1.5 million views to date.

Total confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

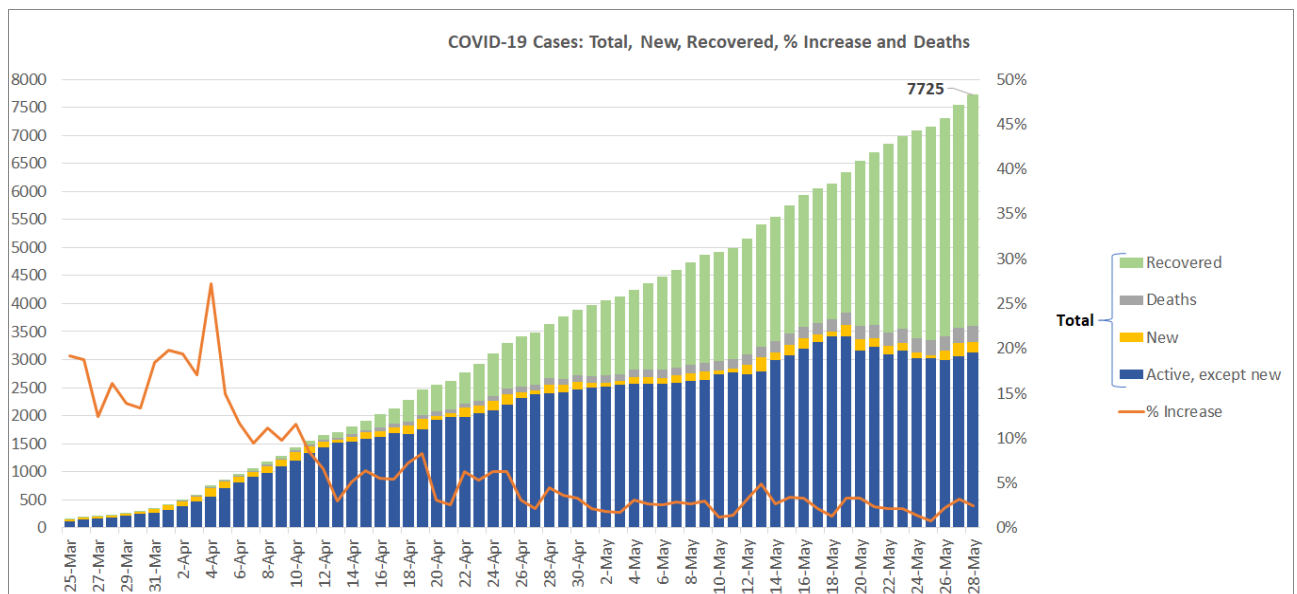


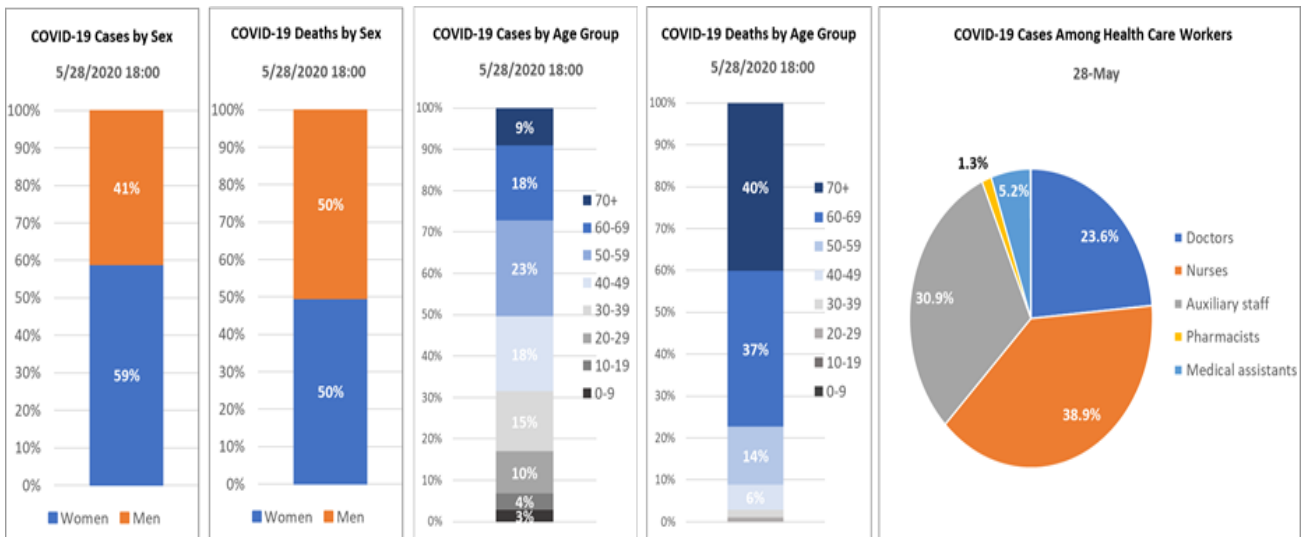
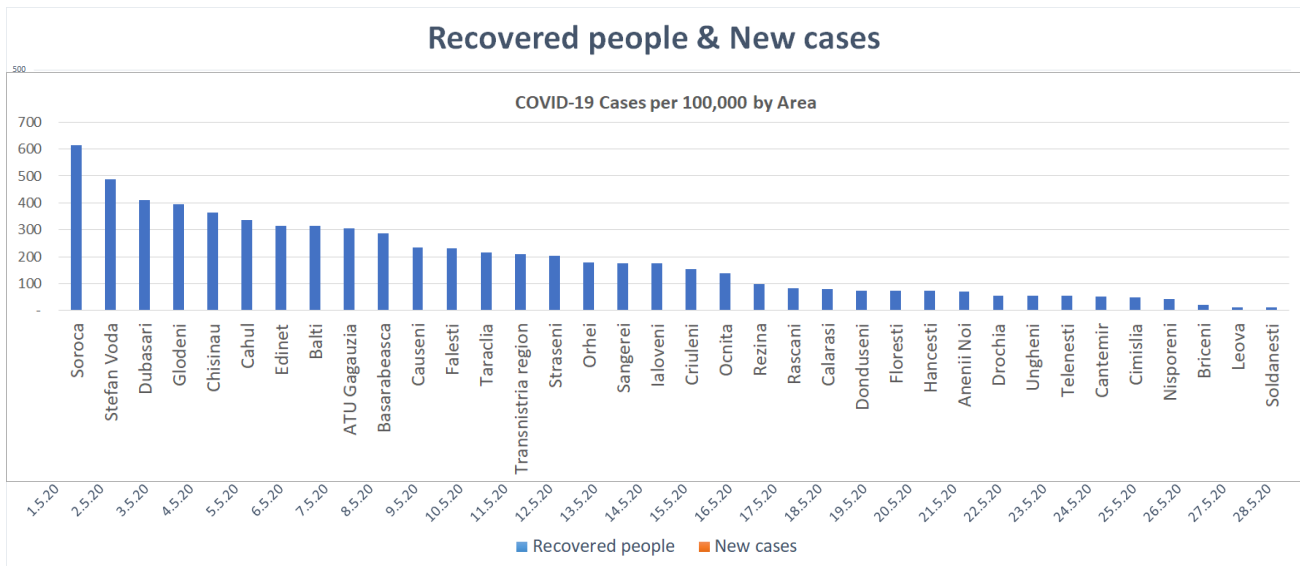
Limited testing and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death means that the number of confirmed deaths may not be an accurate count of the true number of deaths from COVID-19.



Source: European CDC – Situation Update Worldwide - Data last updated 27th May, 23:18 (GMT+03:00)

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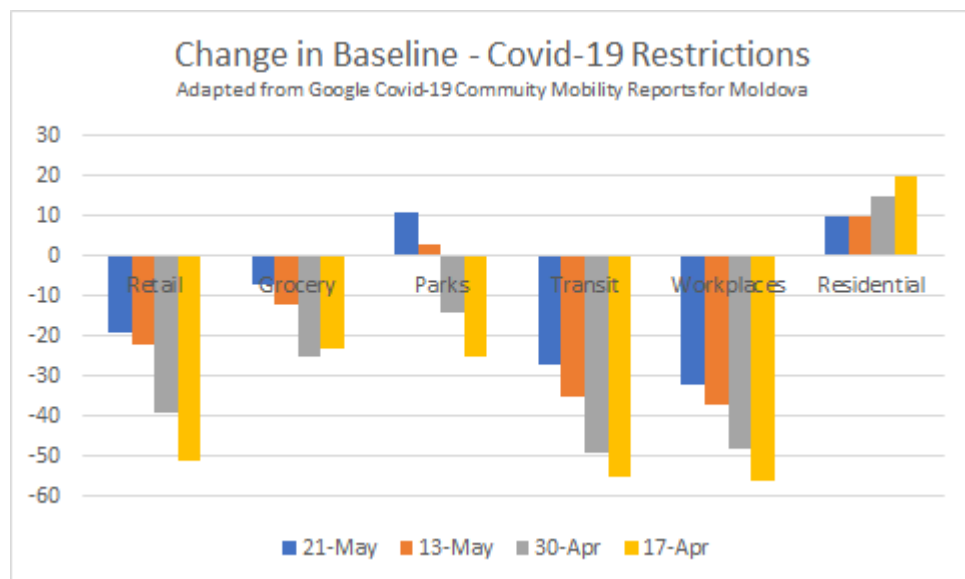
Overview of Key Decisions & Announcements

- The MoHLSP released a [Report on Infection Response Measures Covid-19](#) (January to May 2020) on 28 May. An unofficial translation (without annexes) has also been shared with Development Partners.
- The next meeting of the National Extraordinary Committee for Public Health chaired by the PM is scheduled for 29 May. There remains considerable pressure to ease restrictions further, including lifting all restrictions (e.g. cafes, restaurants, fitness centres, airport, etc.). However, the epidemiological situation remains volatile and more time is required to see trends.
- The last two weeks have seen some of the highest weekly and daily figures since the first case was reported on 7 March. The contagion rate (R0) dropped to 0.89 last week after registering an increase over the previous two weeks. Given the high number of new cases reported over the past couple of days, this positive development requires further confirmation over the next few weeks.

Update on Restrictions*

*these are subject to changes and amendment and should be viewed as an overview and not as a definitive source for decision making

- On 25 May the National Extraordinary Committee for Public Health has decided to (*please see [here](#) for full details, the below is for general information purposes only*):
 - Update the list of individuals allowed to transit or visit Republic of Moldova, among them: [1] transiting people, [2] persons needing to travel because of health issues and those who assist them, [3] people on humanitarian missions, [4] personnel working on borders and customs services, [5] transport industry staff.
 - Closed state customs points shall be opened gradually, allowing transport of people, goods and access of foreign citizens.
 - Starting with 26 May, the railways and public roads shall be fully accessible for the transportation of persons in international traffic, while being compliant with the healthcare prevention measures.
 - Libraries, museums, but also markets in Chisinau and Balti will open starting with 1 June, while following the healthcare prevention measures. Public mass events are forbidden. HORECA units, sports complexes, and other entities, will be allowed to start their activity as of 15 June, while respecting the same prevention measures.
- The next meeting of the National Extraordinary Committee for Public Health chaired by the PM is scheduled for 29 May.
- As can be seen below, there is a consistent move across all listed sectors towards a return to baseline figures. Though a return to workplaces as depicted here still seems to indicate a substantial number of people either not working or working from home.



Political Situation

- Moldova's parliament (50 MPs voted for the motion) decided on 21 May that the country would hold regular presidential elections on 1 November, with campaigning set to begin 60 days earlier. The leaders of the National Unity Party (PUN), Octavian Ticu, and the Dignity and Truth Party DA, Andrei Nastase, have announced that they too will run for president. President Igor Dodon stated that he will most likely confirm his official candidacy only in September.
- The Speaker of Parliament has ordered all MPs to self-isolate after the Democratic MP, Eugeniu Nichiforciuc, tested positive for Covid-19. All MPs will be tested for the virus and will be able to end self-isolation only if they receive a negative result. Covid-19 tests of four ministers and the Deputy Prime minister for reintegration, who had contact with a Democratic party member of parliament with the coronavirus, came back negative on 27 May.

- Three Parliamentary MPs—Violeta Ivanov, Elena Bacalu, and Vasile Bitca—have lost their chairpersonships on the legislative foreign policy and European integration; social protection, health, and family; and public administration committees. The three legislators recently left the Democratic Party.
- The Ciocana District Court issued a 30-day arrest warrant for former Democratic Party head, Vlad Plahotniuc. Mr. Plahotniuc is suspected of involvement in the plundering of the banking system. On 18 May, the Prosecutor General stated that Mr. Plahotniuc was one of the main beneficiaries of the banking fraud case and added that he will ask for Mr. Plahotniuc's extradition from the United States to stand trial in Moldova.
- Another five doctors residing in the Transnistria Region, but working in health institutions on the right bank of the Nistru River, have accepted accommodation on the right bank in order to simplify transit to their places of work. In total, 26 doctors have joined this programme that is funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP Moldova and supported by the Bureau for Reintegration Policies. This interim solution was created in response to the strict quarantine requirements imposed by the de facto authorities on anyone entering/returning to the region.
- The Bureau for Reintegration Policies has announced that it has agreed with the de facto authorities to give access to 37 farmers to their land, which is located on territory controlled by de facto authorities.
- On 22 May, Chisinau and Tiraspol conducted two Working Group meetings on customs and human rights through videoconferencing facilities provided by the OSCE Mission to Moldova. During the customs Working Group, the Sides touched upon import issues in the context of the Covid-19 crisis and closure of borders, tariffs and other customs payments applied to transit operations as well as exchanged information on existing customs services. Among the topics raised during the Working Group on human rights were the protection of people living with HIV/AIDS, access to healthcare in the context of Covid-19 and related freedom of movement issues. These are the two first working group meetings to take place since the start of the Covid crisis and since the increased rhetoric and tension between the sides. It is hoped that a return to the focus on practical discussions may help the sides to re-engage and move beyond the current deadlock at the higher political level.
- A recent report on party financing from Promo-Lex has found that only 19 parties (43% of the total) reported their expense reports for 2019 within the set deadline of 7 May, with one party providing the report late and 26 failing to do so entirely. The NGO believes that about 19.02m Lei have therefore remained unreported.
- The Prime Minister, in a recent statement, stated that the Russian government has not responded to Chisinau yet on the possibility of renegotiating the terms of the possible €200m loan.

Security:

- NTR

Transnistria Region:

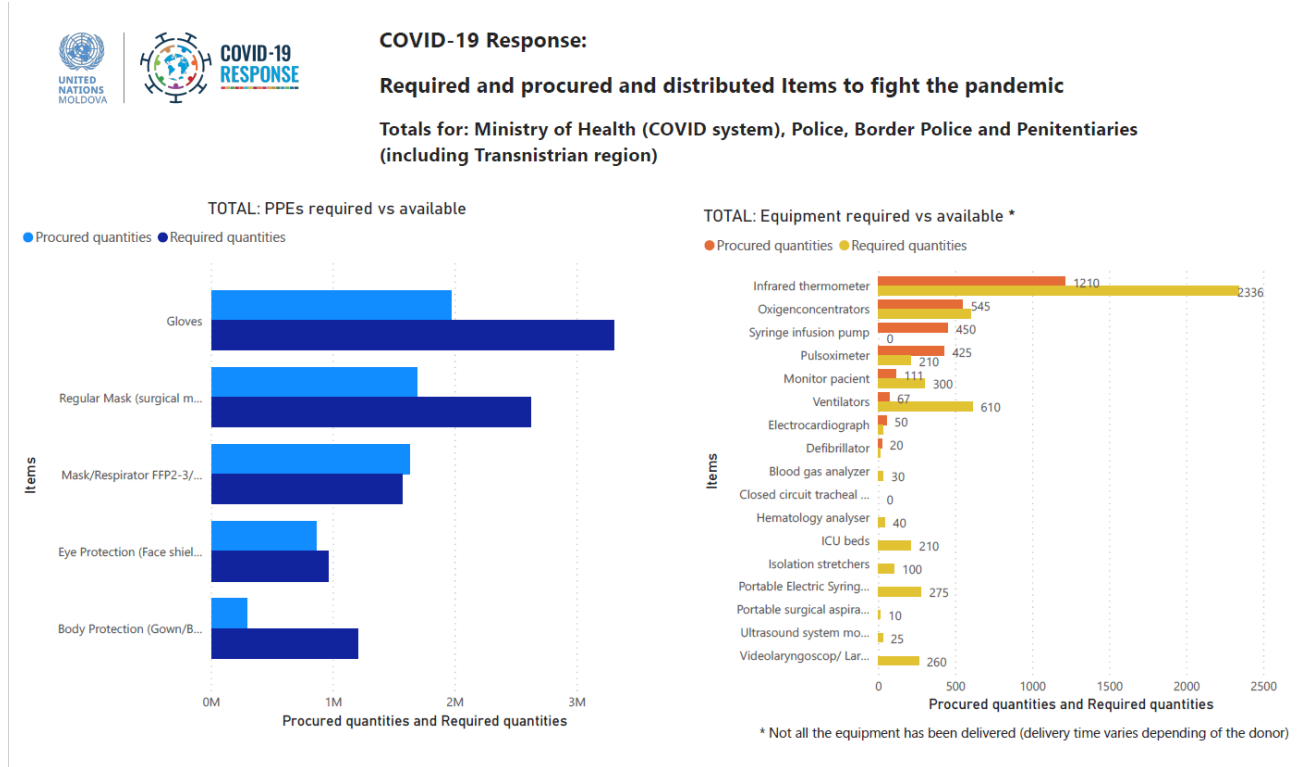
- The de facto leader of the Transnistrian Region announced the extension of the state of emergency in the region until 15 June.
- According to the Transnistria Region de facto leader, 40,000 Covid-19 tests are currently available to the regional healthcare system and 10,000 are on their way. As of the 25 May, 23,000 tests have been performed. These figures may differ from the official Moldovan Government figures. One of the preventive measures that will be undertaken by the de-facto authorities over the next few weeks, is random Covid-19 testing of the staff of recently opened commercial units and businesses providing services to the public. Notary bureaus, real estate agencies, transport registration offices, along with the passport and ID offices are open and accept visitors based on a preliminary booking. During the next stage of the lessening of restrictions, Dental and basic healthcare services shall be accessible, with the exception for elderly healthcare personnel, which temporarily will not function. The de facto Emergency Operational Group under the de facto leader also decided to perform selective Covid tests of highly exposed groups or groups with high risks for infection, especially staff of social services and families with many children.

Economic Update:

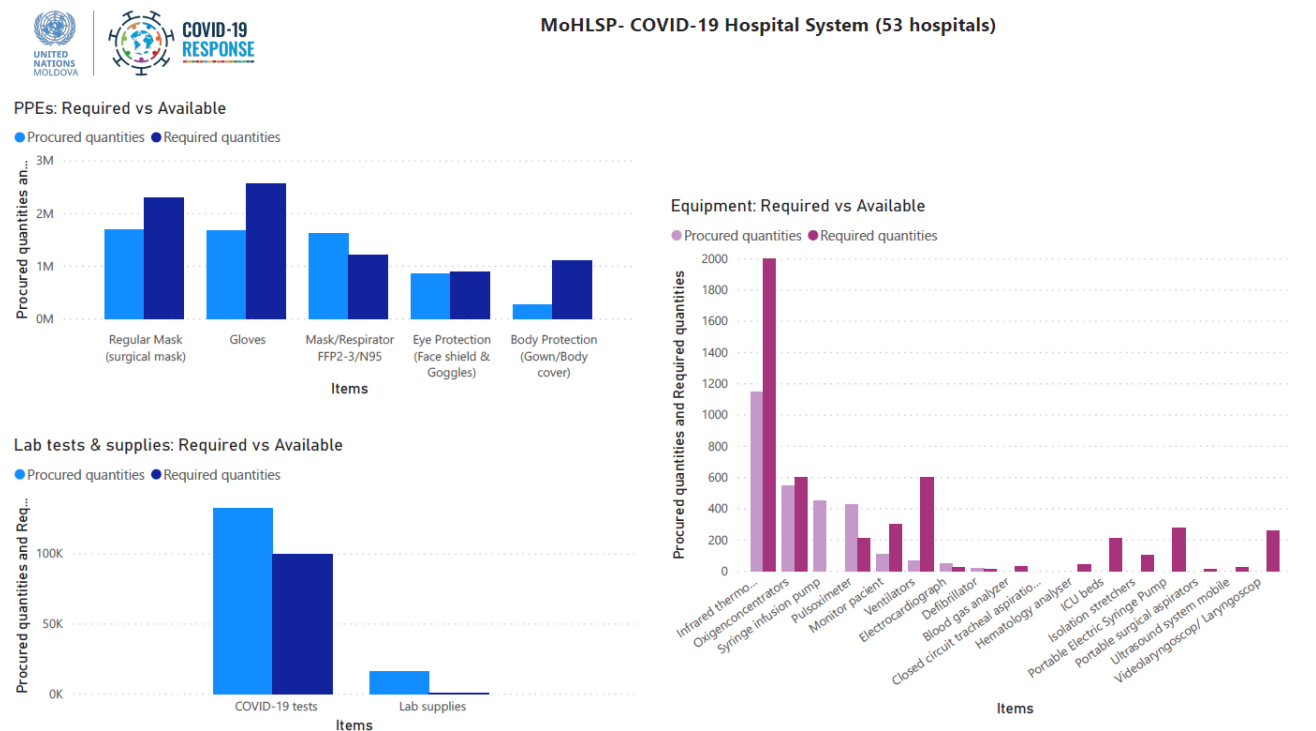
- The Oxford Economics Think Tank recently revisited their initial economic forecasts downgrading the global GDP growth forecast from projected earlier - 2.8% to - 4.8% based on a more pessimistic assessment of the economic implication from the lockdowns. Despite positive expectations of a rebound for Q3'20, a very weak situation in Q1 and Q2, combined with a large degree of uncertainty surrounding the extent to which global GDP will shrink in Q2, is suggesting that the global contraction could be almost twice as large as in Q1. The OE projects that global GDP will return to its Q4 2019 level only by early-2021. However, it is likely that the GDP will not converge to the forecast path seen prior to the Covid-19 outbreak due to shifts in consumers' behavior, such as increased precautionary savings. While lifting of restrictions will stimulate the economic recovery, the consumer services involving social contact are expected to face a slower recovery than other sectors that can more easily accommodate social distancing. *Source: World Economic Prospects (May 2020)*
- According to the NBM, the amount of cash transfers through Moldova's banking system during April'20 (US\$ 92.06m) declined by 11.5% compared to similar period 2019. Traditionally, the largest share of transfers is from the EU (52%) followed by the CIS (13.8%) and the rest of the world (34.2%). In terms of currency structure, the largest share obviously pertains to transfers in Euro (58.1%) having increased by 4% compared to 2019, the transfers in US dollars constitute 40% witnessing a decline of 1.2%, while transfers in Russian rouble accounted only 1.9% having reduced by 2.8% Overall, during January – April 2020 the amount of total banking transfers to natural persons in Moldova accounted for US\$ 368.37m which is 3% less than similar period 2019 (US\$ 379.75m). *Source: NBM (May 2020)*
- The NBS data on retail trade for Q1'20 suggests that as a result of Covid-19 retail trade (excluding trade of motor vehicles and motorcycles) increased with 9,9% (in comparable prices) versus a similar period in 2019. In Q1'20 retail trade with motor vehicles and motorcycles showed decline by 13.1% (in current prices) compared to the same period 2019. In the same period of time, turnover of services rendered to the population declined by 1.3% (in comparable prices) compared to Q1'19. The increase in retail trade was on the account of increased sales in food, alcohol & tobacco products, household goods and electronic equipment. With exception of health and social assistance services, as well as household appliances repairs, all types of service provision to the population substantially reduced. Only during March'20 the turnover in the service sector declined by 21.2% (in comparable prices) versus February'20 and by 20% if compared to March 2019. With introduction of Covid-19 related emergency situation in March 2020, during this month the amount of B2B services went down by 6.8% (in current prices) compared to February'20, while if compared to March 2019, this decline is more pronounced (-11.4%).
- As per NBS, the insurance market witnessed also a modest decline during Q1'20. The gross premiums charged by insurance companies constituted 339,5 million lei, decreasing by 1,1% compared to the corresponding period of previous year. At the same time, insurance damages and compensations paid in January-March 2020 amounted 187.2 million lei having decreased by 9.5% compared to the corresponding period of 2019. *Source: NBS (May 2020)*
- On May 27, 2020 the Chisinau Mayorality took a decision to provide social assistance to several categories of population. The funding for these measures will be allocated from the municipal budget:
 1. The Municipal Committee on determination of social assistance to certain categories of population approved a decision on allocation of 700 MDL cash benefits for 8,000 children from vulnerable families for school supplies ahead of new school year 2020-2021. The total cost of this measure is 5.6 mln MDL. In addition, one time allowance will be allocated to 78 orphan children (or temporarily left without parental support and those institutionalised): 5,000 MDL per child for 20 pre-school children; 3,000 MDL per child for 46 children graduating gymnasium and 5,000 MDL per child for 12 school graduates. The total cost of this measure amounts 298,000 MDL.
 2. The Mayorality approved allocation of 500 MDL cash benefit to 78 blood donors. The cost of this measure reaches 36,000 MDL.

Aid Coordination

Current status of assessed needs vs procured equipment to equip the health system in Moldova.



(Needs were identified for 2 and 3 months depending on the institution covering the months. Additional needs for equipment will be required after July 2020, e.g. need for PPEs for the continuation of the response and prevention of a second wave in fall-winter.)



Development Partners who are supporting the Covid-19 response are invited to share information about their bilateral support with the Center asistentacovid19@gov.md. The UN will continue to work in close cooperation with the Center in order to avoid duplication of efforts. Focal person in RCO: laura.fiorotto@un.org and christine.petre@un.org

WHO Partnership Platform <https://covid-19-response.org/> All partners are invited to participate so that contributions can be mapped and the requirements kept up to date.

Response of UN System in Moldova

Procurement support and equipment

- As part of the USAID Covid-19 project, UNICEF supported procurement and distribution of sanitary/hygienic supplies to major Perinatal care centers (maternity hospitals). Supplies have been distributed to the Institute of Mother and Child, Municipal Hospital Nr.1, as well as district Hospitals in Causeni, Hancesti and Orhei. Further deliveries are scheduled for Soroca and Cahul.
- UNICEF donated a batch of basic necessities worth a total of 45,378 lei to mothers with children residing in penitentiary institutions, as well as to children in conflict with the law in detention facilities. The products are donated under the program, funded by USAID.
- UNICEF finalized the procurement of hygiene supplies for all 1,300 Primary Health Care Centres in the country, as part of the USAID supported project. Delivery of supplies to PHC institutions is scheduled to start in early June.
- UNICEF, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, developed the list of materials for the educational packages to be offered to most disadvantaged children in support of learning and the procurement of packages to be distributed to pre-primary and primary school children with disabilities through the district Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Services, was initiated.

Assessment and Data

- Work on use of big data for Covid-19 response is in progress. UNDP will soon release a closed dashboard for use by Government and key stakeholders with the visualization of six specialized services.

Health

- Five more doctors from the left bank but working in the medical institutions on the right bank are temporarily accommodated in the settlements on the right bank of Dniester/Nistru. In total, 26 doctors have joined this programme. The doctor's accommodation costs are funded with the support of the European Union, offered through the Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

Migration

- IOM rapid field assessment on Covid-19 impact on Moldovan migrants' wellbeing: approaching migrants' vulnerabilities, expectations, and coping strategies. IOM recently conducted a survey among Moldovan migrants to assess how they have been affected by Covid-19.
 - This survey found that half of the migrants have stopped virtually all remittances, which will impact Moldova's GDP and increase the level of poverty. IOM estimates that up to 150,000 Moldovans are likely to return this year, which will significantly increase unemployment in the country in the short term. Returns are likely to continue beyond 2020 reaching circa 350,000 given the volatility of migration created due to Covid-19, although it is to mention that a third of migrants claimed they will re-emigrate once restrictions were lifted.
 - However, the survey also found that relatively few, around 9%, said they would need social assistance, and around 24% of the returnees would be able to invest in businesses and 47% said they would be coming back with skills and were ready to integrate into the Moldovan job markets. In terms of

(re)integration services and needs, IOM staff has identified that 26% of migrants will look for financial support and consulting for (re)launching their business, 24% of citizens will need career orientation services, 15% will search for means to update their education, and only 8% will have to be assisted with financial, humanitarian and logistic help in the first period of their return.

- The study has reached 1,186 Moldovan migrants, through online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, covering the 10 main host countries- Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom, Poland, Russian Federation, and Israel. IOM is to present and discuss these findings in detail, with the relevant institutions within the Government of Moldova in the first week of June, with the scope to support, set-up, and implement evidence-based Covid-19 emergency response action plans and socio-economic strategies for returning migrants.

Socio-Economic Support

- Two initiatives are being started by UNDP and European Space Agency on evaluating the situation in agriculture and air pollution; analysis to complement the SEIA led by UNDP.
- About 100 employees of the National Employment Agency and its territorial subdivisions were trained by UNDP to use online tools for both internal meetings, but also public events.
- The Socio-Economic Task force was held on 27 May with the participation of the Minister of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, who shared Ministry's position on the Covid-19 challenges, impact and plans and IOM, who presented the rapid diaspora assessment (for the period of 17 April – 17 May).

Education and youth

- UNFPA, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, continues the implementation of the psychological assistance program for youth in the context of Covid-19 - "[My choice is to be OK](#)". The programme is live streamed two times per week on the Facebook page of the Ministry. Two new sessions were organized "[Times are changing: how do students adapt to the transitions in their life \(admission to high school or college\)?](#)" and "[How to better prioritize?](#)"
- UNICEF contextualized and shared for use with U-report Moldova a global UNICEF consolidated chatbot on COVID-19.

Gender

- On 27 May, Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Cristina Lesnic and Bureau of Reintegration hosted an online meeting (co-chaired by UN Women), with the High-Level Working Group on Implementation of the National Implementation Programme of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (NAP 1325) to discuss the challenges faced by institutions in implementation of the NAP 1325 in the context of Covid-19. Each institution highlighted the actions that have been undertaken during the pandemic – particularly on the progress made for NAP 1325, as well as key challenges, and plans for the six months. At the level of State Secretaries, the following ministries provided extensive overview on the UNSCR1325 – (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, MHLSP, Ministry of Justice, National Anticorruption center and head of departments of the Ministry of Foreign affairs and European integration, Customs Service, State Protection Service, State Intelligence service); A detailed report will be shared – which will include discussions points, and actions – for next steps.
- On 28 May, a [live, public session](#) *How do we cope with emotions day to day in the Covid-19 context*, attended by approx 130 participants was organized by UN Women, partnership with IFIS NGO and financed by Sweden

Human Rights

- On 22 May, OHCHR conducted an online webinar for 19 communicators of state authorities on human rights compliant communications, based on a guide produced by OHCHR. The webinar addressed among other issues how to ensure that communication takes into account the needs of vulnerable groups,

reaches everyone including marginalized groups, and does not reinforce or create any stigma/stereotypes/discrimination.

- OHCHR completed a 2-pager on Persons with Disabilities and Covid-19, as well as one on human rights compliant communications addressed to journalists and other media professionals. OHCHR also completed the transforming of two of its produced guidance documents, the ones on right to work and right to health, into an easy to read, easy to understand format, which will be shared with state institutions and NGOs working with persons with disabilities and groups of populations having difficulties reading.

Communications

- UNFPA launched a press release [“Pandemic unites generations”](#) resuming the intergenerational solidarity project. 15 young volunteers reached out by phone to more than 200 older, isolated persons providing them with communication and emotional support.
- New video was released in the context of My Choice is to be OK program, which provides psychological support to young people. [“How do we face rapid mood swings?”](#) The new topic in the 24 series was discussed with psychologist Daniela terzi-Barbarosie.
- UNICEF issued a [press release](#), a [video reportage](#) and a [photo gallery](#) following the distribution of supplies to major Perinatal care centers as part of the USAID-Covid-19 project. The press release was taken by 16 media outlets, including [IPN](#), [stiri](#), [enews](#), [hotnews](#), [point](#), [diez](#). On Facebook, the video reportage reached 260,000 and engaged 5,000 people.
- UNICEF office in Moldova, jointly with UNICEF Ukraine, hosted a [LIVE talk show](#) on parenting during covid-19 with Evgheny Komarovsky, a famous Ukrainian pediatrician, writer, and TV presenter, with an audience of 1m on Facebook and 8m on Instagram.
- UN Women launched a series of [social media messages](#) to inform businesses about the interlinkages between Covid-19 and gender inequalities as well as provide suggestions for possible business responses that are aligned with the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The messages will be promoted via social media channels, including in specialized communities, targeting businesses, CSOs and general public.
- UN Women has continued developing Covid-19 information material tailored for people with disabilities (in audio and in easy-read format) in Romanian and Russian. The material focuses on actions for maintaining mental health, developing harmonious relationships and overcoming tensions in families, especially during crisis situations. The UN will continue to disseminate these materials through various channels including on social media.
- UN Women Newsletter on Covid-19 response activities is available here: <https://bit.ly/2TCCgET>.
- UNDP published a success story about support offered by 35 Hometown Associations (created with UNDP-Switzerland support) during Covid-19 pandemic period: crowdfunding and collecting essential hygiene items, food supplies etc., in a total amount of \$30,000.