

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Monthly Bulletin

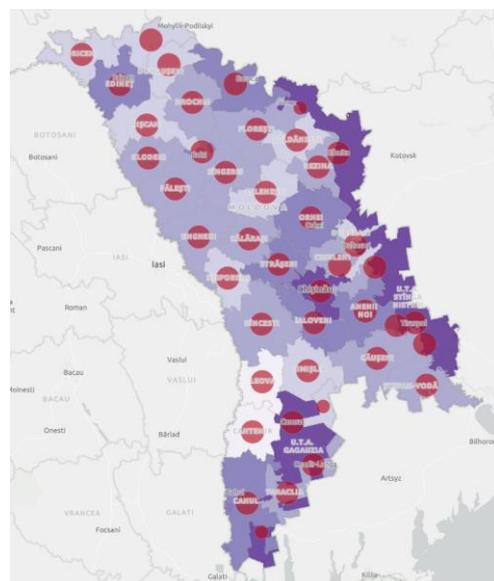
January 2021



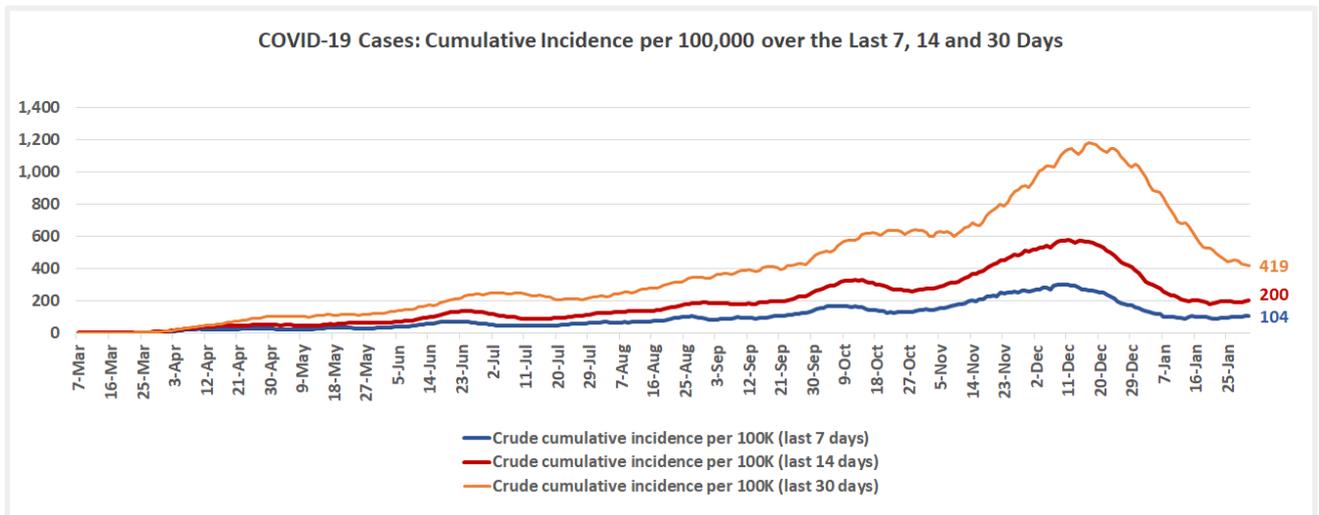
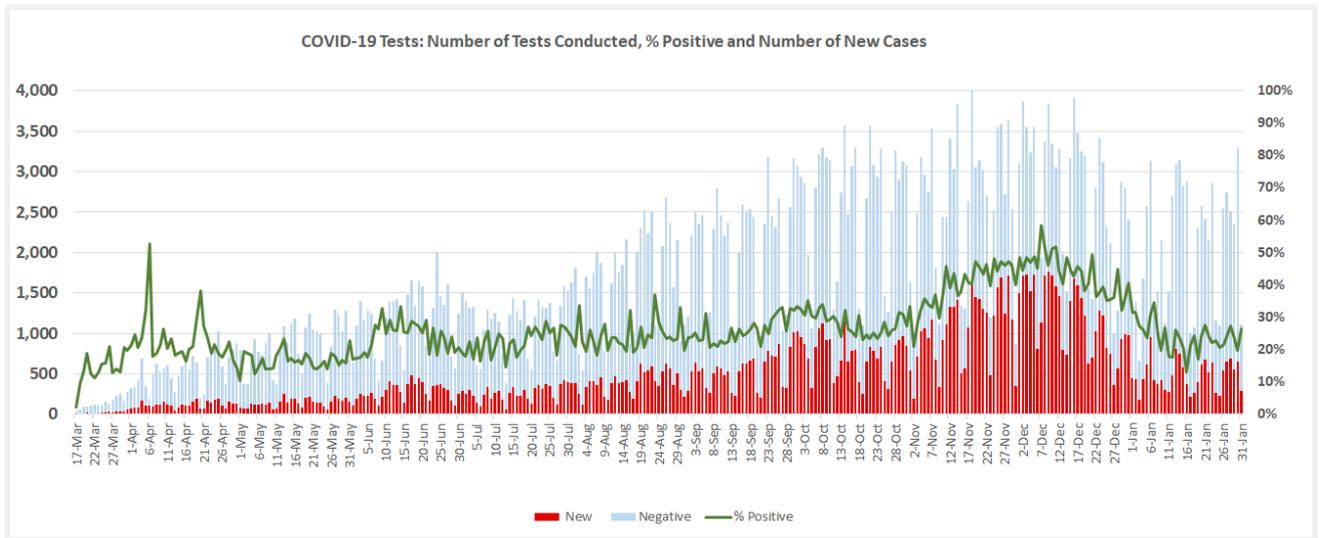
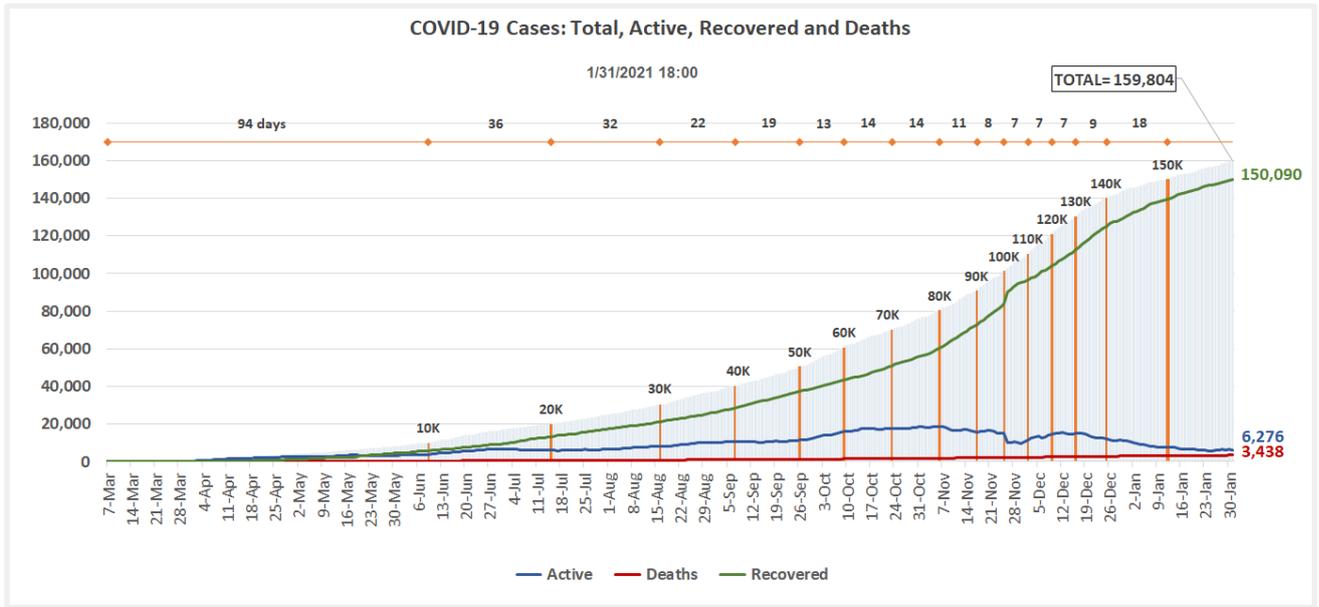
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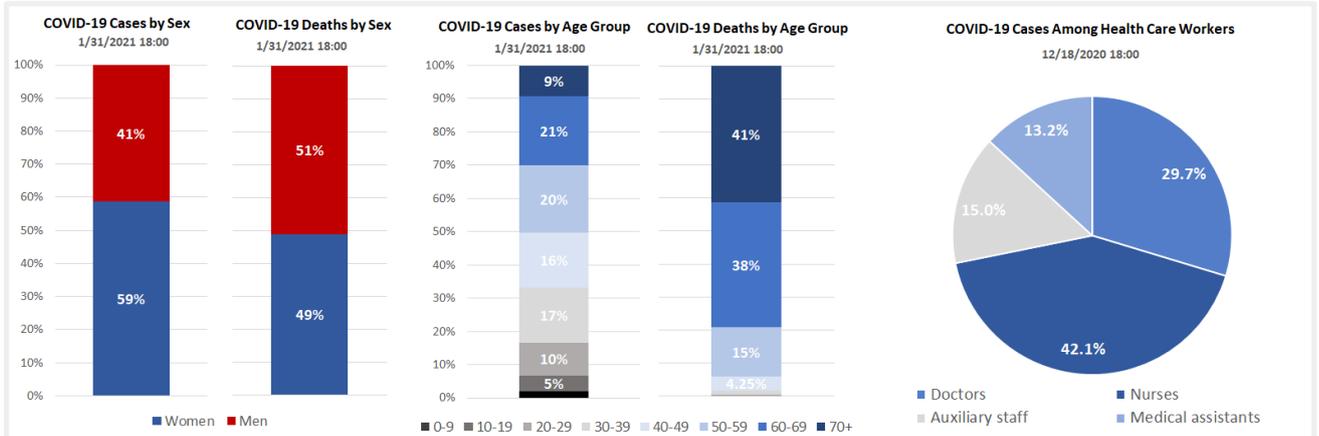
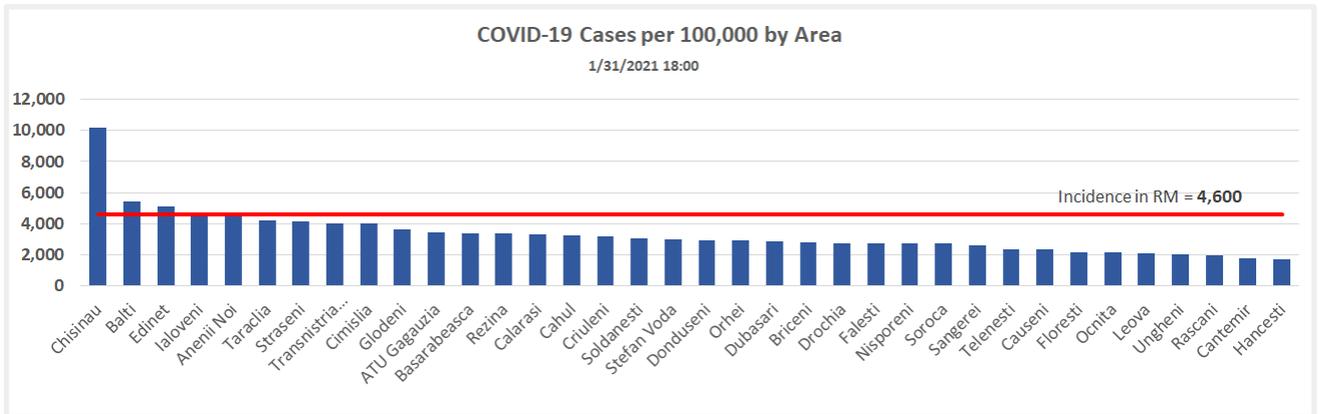
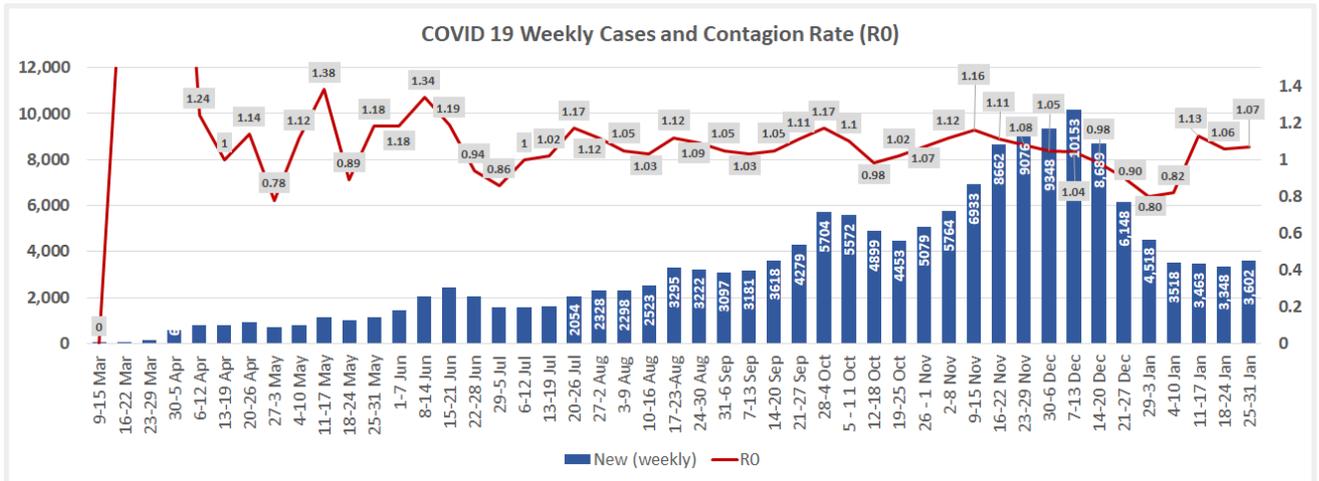
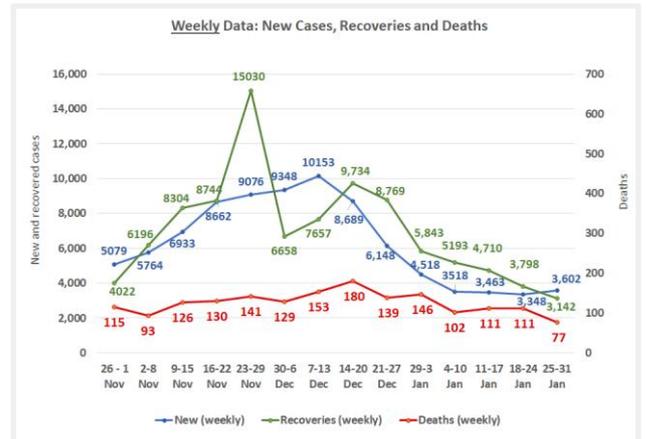
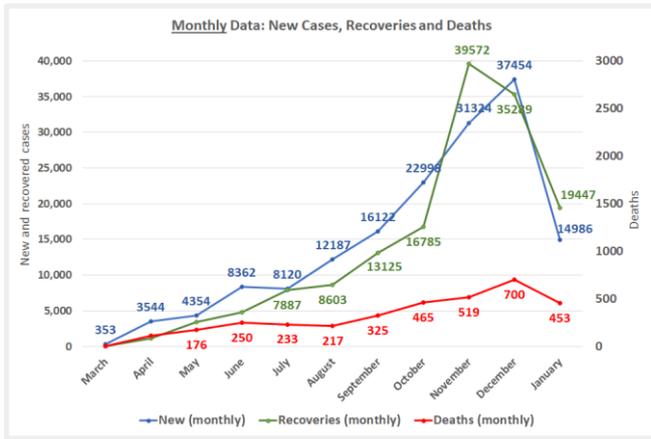
1 COVID-19 Epi and Health situation update

- The 30th of January 2021 marked the one year ‘anniversary’ of the WHO declaring the novel coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On 28th January, the world surpassed 100 million reported cases;
- The monthly number of new coronavirus cases dropped sharply in January, which saw a total of 14,986 new cases. This represents a 60% decrease compared to the number of new cases reported during the previous month. Weekly figures, nevertheless, show a more nuanced picture of the evolution of the pandemic in the country. For the most part of the month, the growth in coronavirus cases continued on the gradual downward trend that started in the middle of December. However, last week, saw an uptick in new cases, signaling a potential change in the situation;
- The total number of confirmed cases surpassed the 150,000-case mark in the middle of January and continued to grow at a moderate pace. The total number of confirmed cases is now approaching the 160,000-case mark. The exact figure stands at 159,804. It took 19 days to reach this figure since the milestone of 150,000 cases was passed, and it took nearly the same number of days to add the previous 10,000 new cases. This is significantly more compared to the only seven to eight days that it took to add each 10,000 new cases during the most acute phase of the pandemic, reflecting the slower growth in cases in the recent weeks;
- The total number of active cases decreased gradually from over 10,000 at the beginning of January to under 6,000 towards the end of the month and increased somewhat again to the current figure of 6,276 cases in the recent days. The current number of active cases represents 3.9% of the total number of registered cases;
- The percentage of coronavirus tests to return a positive result, which was 43.6%, on average, in December, decreased to an average of 23.9% in January;
- The overall crude cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 currently stands at 4,600. The crude cumulative incidence of cases for the last 30 days is 419, which is significantly lower compared to the same figure last month, reflecting the overall slow-down in the pandemic. The crude cumulative incidence of cases over the last seven days is 104 and over the last 14 days is 200, with both of these figures registering a slight increase over the past week, reflecting the recent uptick in cases mentioned above;



- The number of deaths increased by 453 in January, which is 247 fatalities less compared to the previous month. Weekly figures reflect a similar slow-down in deaths. A total of 77 deaths were registered last week, which is 34 less compared to the previous week. After increasing to 2.1 at the end of December, the case fatality rate increased further to 2.2 towards the end of January. Currently, the total number of deaths stands at 3,438. The average age of patients who have died from the disease is 67.1. Overall, nearly 95% of all deaths have been reported in patients 50 years of age and older;
- Similar to the number of new cases, the number of patients who have recovered from the disease registered a significant decrease in January. A total of 19,447 recoveries were reported during the month. The figure is above the monthly number of new cases, which explains the decrease in the number of active cases mentioned previously. The total number of recoveries now stands at 150,090. This represents 93.9% of all cases;
- Weekly figures painted a similar picture until last week, with the weekly number of new cases and weekly number of recoveries both gradually declining for the most part of the month and the former staying below the latter. However, last week, while the number of recoveries continued to decline, the number of new cases registered a 7.6% increase compared to the previous week and exceeded the number of recoveries, contributing to an increase in the number of active cases;
- After registering some promising value below 1 at the beginning of January, the contagion rate (R0) increased again in the middle of the month. The overall contagion rate currently stands at 1.07. The rate is uneven across the country, with certain districts registering considerably higher rates than others. Cantemir and Ocnita currently have the highest contagion rate in the country, which stands at 1.5. At the same time, Leova, Rezina, Soroca, and Cahul have some of the lowest rates in the country that range between 0.7 and 0.9. The contagion rate in Chisinau stands at 1.08;
- In terms of geographical distribution, Chisinau, with 42% of all confirmed cases, remains the most affected area if the number of cases is considered. With 12% of all confirmed cases, the Transnistria region follows in the list of most affected areas. Balti, ATU Gagauzia and Ialoveni account for 3-4% of all cases each. The relative extent to which these areas have been affected by the pandemic has not changed in the recent months. All other areas currently have 2% or less of the total number of cases each. If the size of the population is considered, with over 10,000 cases per 100,000, Chisinau is the most affected area in the country. The capital city is followed by Balti and Edinet, which have surpassed the 5,000-case mark, as well as Ialoveni, which is gradually approaching the same milestone;
- More women have been infected with the virus than men since the beginning of the pandemic, 59% vs. 41%. However, the percentage of men who have died from the disease continued to be somewhat higher than that of women throughout the entire month of January, 51% vs. 49%. The case fatality rate among men has also consistently stayed above the case fatality rate among women. Currently, the case fatality rate among men is 2.7%, and the case fatality rate among women is 1.8%;
- Real time figures and graphs can be accessed [here](#) in Romanian and in Russian [here](#). This site has more than 2.24 million views to date.





1.1 Restrictions*

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

The MoHLSP updated [the List of countries with Red zone classification](#), that is in effect as of February 1, 2021. The travelers into Moldova from the Red zone countries need to self-isolate for a 14-days period.

2 General situation update

- The Extraordinary Public Health Commission approved the [National Vaccination Plan](#) on January 13, 2021;
- The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Social Protection issued a Report on Infection Response Measures for COVID-19 covering the period Jan-Dec2020. The report can be accessed [here](#);
- The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Social Protection [informs](#) that the first batch of 264 thousand anti-COVID-19 vaccine will arrive in Moldova by mid-February. The Ministry also informs it has all the necessary capacity for delivery and storage of the vaccine ensuring the necessary temperature in the whole chain of logistics.

2.1 Political update

- The President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu, conducted an official visit to Brussels on January 19. She met with the President of the European Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the European Commissioner for Budget and Administration, the Commissioner for Neighborhood and Expansion, the Commissioner for Justice, and other high-ranking officials. Among the topics covered in the discussion with the European officials were a faster access to Covid-19 vaccines for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, the need to provide the healthcare system with protective equipment, the importance of financial assistance in the coming years, the continued role of the Eastern Partnership for Moldova's, and the plight of small and medium-sized enterprises and farmers as a result of last year's pandemic and drought and the possibilities of additional assistance;
- The Constitutional Court ruled that the self-dissolution of parliament was impossible. The court specified there are only two clear reasons for the dissolution of the parliament: 1) if MPs cannot appoint a prime minister after two tries; 2) If MPs fail to adopt any laws for three months;
- The President held the first meeting of the new Supreme Security Council on January 26. In addition to the permanent members that include the prime minister, the speaker, the ministers of defense and internal affairs, the prosecutor general, the heads of the Information and Security Council, the National Bank, and the Parliamentary Commission for National Security, the Security Council now includes several presidential advisers, two parliamentary MPs from the PAS and DA parties, and a representative from civil society;
- The President nominated Natalia Gavrilita as her proposed candidate for Prime Minister. Ms. Gavrilita was the Minister of Finance in the former Sandu government. A vote is expected in Parliament after Ms Gavrilita presents her programme;
- The President met with the UN Resident Coordinator and the Representative of WHO in Moldova and discussed access to COVID 19 vaccines, as well as possible actions that could be taken in response to rising poverty levels due to the epidemic and the economic crisis.

2.2 Economic and social update

- The NBS issues data on the agricultural activity 2020, which highlights the decline in global agricultural activity by 27.1% compared to previous year. This was affected by crops production reduction (by 35.9%), amongst others due to unfavorable weather conditions, and a smaller decline in animal breeding (by 3.8%). The decline in the physical volume of cultivated crops was for corn (-63.4%), sunflower (-39.9%), wheat (-50.5%), fruits, nuts and berries (-21.2%), grapes (-27.6%) and vegetables (-22.2%). The share of crops in the agriculture decreased from 73% in 2019 to 64% in 2020, while the share of livestock production on contrary increased from 27% in 2019 to 36% in 2020. Further details can be found [here](#);
- According to the NBS, producers prices in December 2020 increased with 3.8% compared to 2019 and were with 0.7% higher than in November 2020. In particular, in December 2020 producers' prices in the processing/manufacturing industry grew by 5% versus 2019, the prices for extractives were higher by 0.9%, while prices for energy decreased with 10.7%;
- ILO has launched the seventh edition of the global [ILO Monitor on COVID-19 and the world of work](#). It confirms the massive impact that labor markets suffered in 2020. The latest figures show that 8.8% of global working hours were lost in 2020 (relative to the fourth quarter of 2019), equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. This is approximately four times greater than the number of global working hours lost during the 2009 global financial crisis. In the EU-27, 8.3% of working hours were lost in 2020, equivalent to 15 million full-time jobs. Working-hour losses were particularly high in Southern Europe (12.3%), driven by the losses in Italy and Spain. Employment losses were highest in the Americas, and lowest in Europe, where reduced working hours have been extensively supported by job retention schemes. People hope things will get better soon, yet the signs of recovery remain fragile, uneven and highly uncertain. To build back better, measures are needed that support incomes and promote investment throughout 2021 and beyond, as well as targeted measures to reach the hardest-hit groups and sectors.

2.3 Education system situation update

- After the winter vacation school children reverted to school on January 11, 2021. At the time no schools were on quarantine. The [situation changed and as of 29 January](#), one school and 140 classes were quarantined due to COVID-19. In total 194 school children, 154 teachers and 54 auxiliary staff were tested positive on COVID-19 and 2710 pupils, 83 teachers and 34 auxiliary staff were in self-isolation;
- In vocational education, 12 students, one teacher and 3 auxiliary staff were tested positive for COVID-19. Five groups of students were in self-isolation;
- in higher education institutions, one student, three teachers and one auxiliary staff were confirmed positive for COVID-19 and 2 teachers and 3 auxiliary staff were in self-isolation;
- Three kindergartens and 14 kindergarten groups are on quarantine. Six children, 51 educators and 67 auxiliary staff are confirmed positive for COVID-19. In total 496 children, 70 educators and 55 auxiliary staff are in self-isolation.

2.4 Gender and Human Rights

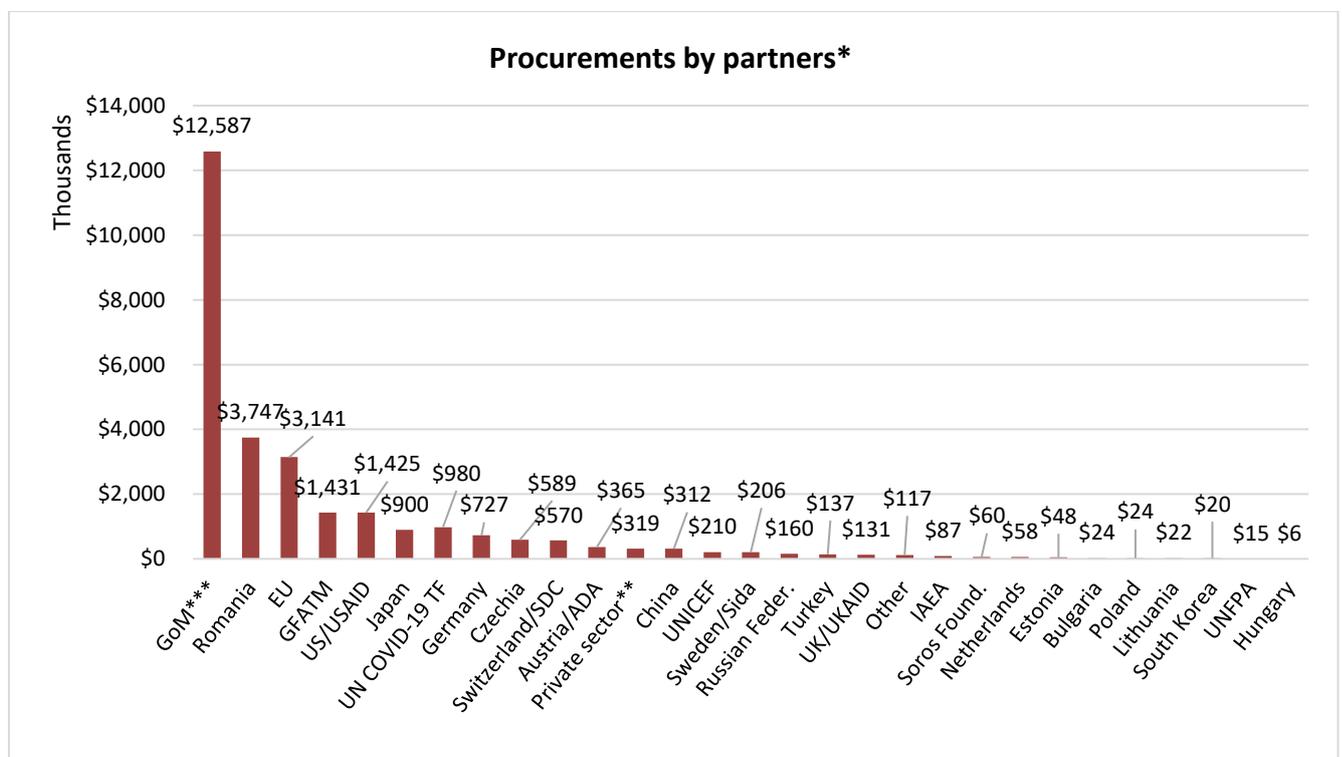
- On January 29, OHCHR concluded a UN Human Rights Media Academy conducted for media professionals in the Transnistria region. The programme lasted several months, including sessions on how COVID-19 had an impact on civil, political, economic and social rights. As a requirement to completing the academy participants had to publish a human rights compliant media piece.

2.5 Transnistria region

- On January 30, the de facto leader extended the current measures against Covid-19 until April. This means that until the beginning of April the mask regime, the social distance, fines for quarantine violation, special procedures for the internal boundary crossing and other protective measures will remain in force;
- The OSCE Special Representative for the Transnistrian Settlement Process, Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, in his capacity as the Special Representative of the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship, paid a working visit to the Republic of Moldova during January 26-28. He met with the chief negotiators and leadership from both banks, political parties on the right bank, and the relevant local representatives of the 5+2 Settlement Process. The Special Representative underlined for those he met the need for continued constructive dialogue to find pragmatic solutions to the outstanding issues of the “Berlin-plus” package and other current issues, such as freedom of movement, co-operation on health issues, banking, and human rights;
- The Healthcare working group meeting on the COVID-19 immunization for population from the both banks of the Nistru river was chaired by Mrs Tatiana Zatic, Secretary of State. The meeting conveyed on 22 January 2021 was facilitated by the WHO CO and OSCE Mission to Moldova. COVID-19 vaccination rollout was discussed during the meeting and included specific areas such as eligible groups of people, quantity and type of vaccine which will be delivered. COVID-19 surveillance, vaccines monitoring, including adverse events following immunization investigation and reporting as well as communication activities were addressed during the meeting.

2.6 Aid Coordination - data on procurements for COVID-19

Mapping of contributions to the Health System for COVID response in Moldova

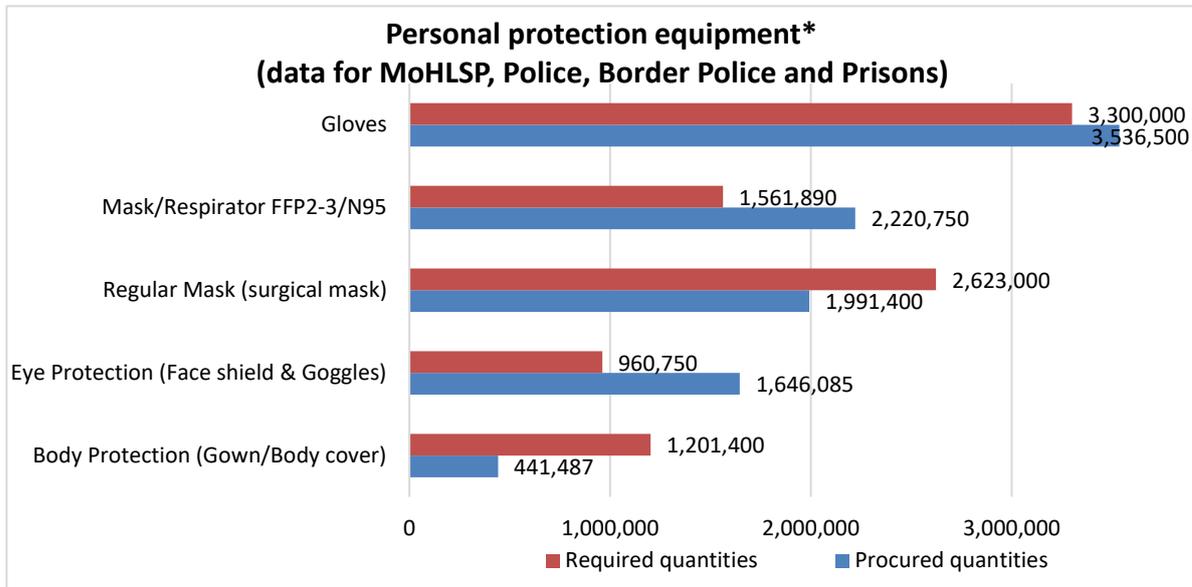


*Note - data only for contracted/procured PEEs, medical equipment and technical assistance COVID related. Committed and/or pledged contributions are not reflected. Data are captured from various sources, i.e. media and may not be accurate. The process of reflecting donors/contributions is ongoing, and data is updated once details of procured items are confirmed. For more information please send an email to veaceslav.palade@un.org and/or garami@who.int

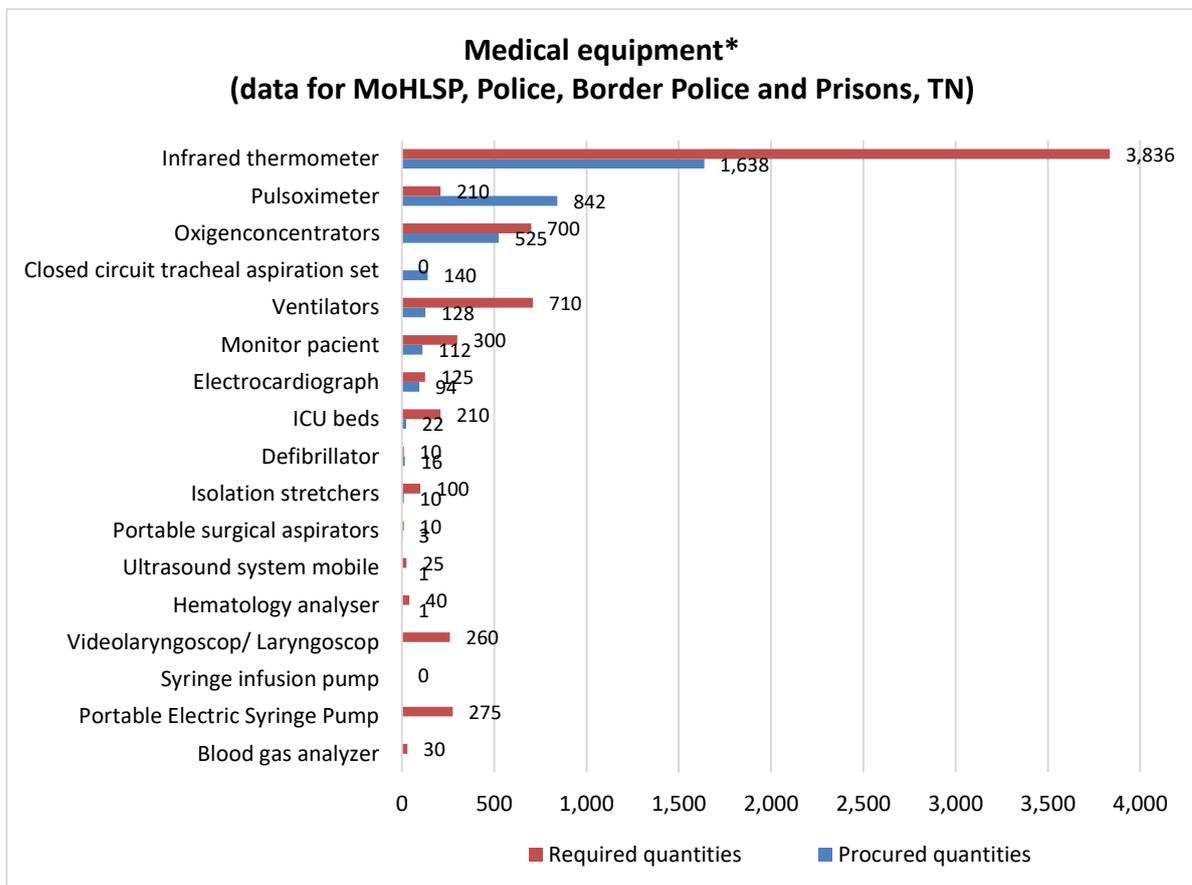
**** Private sector companies:** Endava, Orange Moldova, Lismedfarm SRL, Moldretail Grup SRL, Kaufland, Moldcell Moldova, Starnet SRL, Gedeon Rihter, Farmacia Familiei SRL, Svibmagtex SRL, Miso Textile SRL, Zernoff SRL, Aromcom SRL, Art Vest SRL, Dita Est Farm SRL, Tetis International Co SRL, Rihpangalfarma SRL, Sonaris Com

***** The procurements of the Government of RM include the materials and supplied procured from the WB loan:** Moldova Emergency COVID-19 Response Project

Development Partners are encouraged to share information about their bilateral support programmes. The UN will continue to work in close cooperation with the MoHLSP and others in order to avoid duplication of efforts. Focal person in RCO: laura.fiorotto@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.



*Note- Required quantities for PPEs are estimates of the needs for a three-month period



3 UN Social and Economic Response and Recovery Portfolio update

The UN Social and Economic Response and Recovery Plan and its associated programme portfolio can be accessed [here](#).

3.1 Pillar 1: HEALTH FIRST: protecting health services and systems during the crisis

- UNICEF supported the cold chain assessment to inform the Government on the needs of cold chain equipment that requires to be purchased or renewed;
- UNICEF Regional Office and UNICEF Moldova supported strengthening capacities of national procurement professionals on generation of efficiencies in health procurement with focus on vaccines and pharmaceuticals through training-of-trainers. This exercise was part of GAVI post-transition support to countries graduated from GAVI support, but brought additional benefits in the context of COVID-19 to countries' endeavors in procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, immunization supplies, therapeutics and diagnostics;
- The National anti-COVID Vaccination Plan developed in accordance with guidance on developing national deployment and vaccination plans for anti-COVID-19 vaccines was developed with support of UNICEF and WHO and approved by MHLSP and the National Extraordinary Committee for Public Health;
- MoHLSP, supported by UNICEF and WHO, submitted the application for the first wave of distribution of vaccines (Pfizer vaccine) through COVAX platform as soon as available for AMC countries;
- The Influenza (ILI and ARI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection surveillance & virological surveillance implemented with WHO support allows to collect samples from the nine sentinel sites across the country. During last month, every week ~ 24 samples were collected and tested for influenza viruses, only SARS-CoV-2 viruses were identified. No other respiratory viruses were identified;
- Following an official request from the Moldovan authorities, [UNHCR procured and delivered personal protective equipment](#) for the border police staff working at the border crossing points. The PPEs will increase authorities' capacity to manage the current situation at the border and to better assist asylum-seekers in need of health care within the medical unit of the border police. The total value of the donated equipment is \$57,654.

3.2 Pillar 2: PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basic services

- UNDP led the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Taskforce during which the UN SERRP Pillar 2. Protecting People, with focus on vulnerable groups including women, poor households, older people and migrants, has been presented and widely discussed with development partners, Government representatives and UN Agencies;
- UNICEF and Child, Community, Family (CCF) Moldova NGO, continued their partnership in providing training for teachers and school managers to ensure prevention of infectious diseases in schools. To this end, UNICEF and CCF, in coordination with MECR and National Agency for Public Health (NAPH), rolled out training for schoolteachers and managers in the context of school reopening. Since mid-September, the training reached 10,033 participants: 8629 are teaching staff, 1207 are managerial staff/school administrators; and 197 participants represent residential institutions. Based on evaluation questionnaires (processed in December 2020), over 99 percent of participants considered the training content useful and very useful – out of these, 89% rated the information as being very useful;

- UNICEF continued its partnership with the National Center on Early Education and Family Information (CNETIF) in providing the nationwide training for teaching and nonteaching personnel at pre-primary level, regarding COVID-19 regulations, protocols for COVID-19 and infectious diseases prevention and control (IPC). The large-scale capacity building reached, as of end December 2020, circa 30,582 representatives of didactical and non-didactical staff (managers, educators, educators' assistants, medical assistants, catering personnel/cooks, cleaning personnel and Local Public Administration representatives). A mentoring process has been set up in order to support the local trainers with adjusting to the individual needs of the trainees and stimulate their active participation;
- Representatives of 14 local public authorities from Cahul and Ungheni districts benefited from a series of training workshops to increase digital skills on utilization the on-line communication platforms, conducted by UN Women in the "EVA" project funded by the European Union, to make them more efficient, transparent and more open in communicating with citizens and providing essential public services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

3.3 Pillar 3: ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector and workers

- ILO provided protection equipment to social partners, MHLSP and Labor Inspectorate, including sanitizers and ILO branded facemasks aiming to prevent and mitigate the risk of Covid-19. Protection equipment was disseminated to members of the Trade Union and Employers' Organization as well;
- A series of ILO guides and checklists on safe return to work and risk management during pandemic were translated into Romanian and are accessible on the ILO global and regional websites, as well as partners' websites. Printed versions were distributed to enterprises through the network of social partners;
- ILO partnered with the National Public Health Agency (NPHA) and supported the printing of the Risk Management Guide at the workplace during the Coronavirus pandemic. The guide will be distributed countrywide via the NPHA network;

3.4 Pillar 4: MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

- UNDP is preparing for the roll-out of the Digital Readiness Assessment for the identification of existing gaps and opportunities in support of digital transformation of the Government.

3.5 Pillar 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- NTR.

4 Communications and Advocacy

- WHO with SDC support is implementing the awareness campaign "Support for physical and psychological rehabilitation after COVID-19 related illness" aimed to support the rapid and effective recovery of patients (webinars, visuals, TV fillers);
- WHO provided support to the MoHLSP to compile messages for the next stage for RCCE with the messages – Virus doesn't disappear! (social media visuals);
- WHO with SDC support produced and disseminated video spots ([here](#) and [here](#)) on general COVID-19 prevention messages – handwashing and cough etiquette;
- WHO with EU support and in partnership with UNICEF provided support to the MoHLSP in drafting the communication strategy and plan for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out;

- WHO shared [new episodes](#) of the Science in 5 programme (Vaccines trials; Serological surveys) and a videographic about the Emergency Use Listing;
- UNICEF with financial support from USAID in cooperation with Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, WHO and National Center for Preschool Education and Family Information (CNETIF) supported the development of a Guide for parents of 3-7 year-old children "[How to organize education and care in the COVID-19 pandemic](#)". The Guide was published in Romanian and Russian Language and distributed among the partners' networks;
- UNICEF with financial support from USAID continues to support regular online talk show aLIVE. In January, the programme was dedicated to [Adolescent's mental health](#) in the times of pandemic. The guest speaker, Viorica Cojocaru, a Psychologist and Inclusive Education Specialist, gave advice to parents on how to support their children during difficult periods of their lives. The episode was streamed on UNICEF social media platforms, as well as on popular forums for parents "mama.md", and news portal point.md and stiri.md;
- UNICEF Moldova supported the development of a [song](#) dedicated to the superheroes of the year 2020 - health workers, police officers, teachers, and other frontline workers who provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemics. The song has been developed as part of the "Be Safe" communication campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection and WHO in Moldova, and released in the last week of December, reaching over 370K views, with over 4,7K engagements.