Overview of the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 5th

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA)

1 As reported on 8 July 2020 by 13:00hrs
Contact: Dalila Sadinlija | UN Resident Coordinator Office | Communications and Advocacy | dalila.sadinlija@un.org
SITUATION OVERVIEW

The BiH Council of Ministers decision on State of Natural or Other Disaster (BiH’s equivalent of „State of Emergency”) remains in place. At the entity levels, however, the previously declared State of Emergency in the RS was terminated on 20 May, and the State of Natural Disaster in FBiH was, likewise, lifted on 29 May. Both the RS and the Federation entities now allow movement of all population categories with a mandatory requirement that everyone wear face masks in enclosed spaces/areas. Curfews have been lifted across the entire territory of BiH. BiH citizens entering into the country no longer need to observe self-isolation, while foreign citizens entering the country on business need to show a letter of invitation from a legal body/institution which is engaging that person, as well as certificate reflecting a negative COVID-19 test result that is not older than 48hours. Borders are open for citizens of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia as of 1 June; air travel resumed. Due to the recent rise in numbers of new cases across the region, stricter measures upon entry apply for anyone coming from BiH into Montenegro and Slovenia. BiH Council of Ministers Chairman noted that BiH will most likely not open its borders for EU citizens until a reciprocal decision is endorsed.

Decision to continue the closure of BiH borders caused strong reactions from the tourism agencies and workers, urging for an approach which would help save the sector. At the same time, more strict measures which limited the working hours of catering services, restaurants and coffee places caused the owners in both BiH entities to react with the note that they are already losing revenues. In some places like Sarajevo, owners of hospitality services organized legal representation to look into legalities of this measure.

Localized clusters continued to appear throughout BiH, raising the overall numbers of new cases to daily record highs in the past week (reaching a peak of 289 new cases on 4 July, albeit owing to a backlog of testing in some places), and unfortunately with a continued reporting on cases of death associated with Covid19. Closed facilities and group gatherings (including work places) still seem to be the most at-risk places for infection, however confirmed reports come from e.g. sports teams as well. While some cantons such as Sarajevo introduced stricter measures as of 6 July (for the following period of 14 days), the FBiH Ministry of Health is yet to hold a discussion on declaring the state of epidemics for this Entity.

Distribution of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 5th

(Credit: WHO Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sources: IPH FBiH, IPH RS, FMoH, MoCA)
Distribution of COVID-19 positive cases and trendline in Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 5th

Total number of tests performed by entities and Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 5th
The UN team continues with the weekly presentation of key findings with regards to the sectoral and cross-cutting assessments conducted. Following the joint presentation on the impact of Covid-19 to the BiH economic sector, including by the Associations of Employers from the FBiH and the RS entities, UNDP, UNESCO, ILO and EBRD on 3 July, this Thursday UN Women will present their Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To boost local economies and preserve jobs in the tourism sector, UNDP continues supporting growth of domestic tourism through Via Dinarica project implemented in partnership with USAID and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. At the end of June, Trebinje became one of the 20 Via Dinarica municipalities and cities countrywide dedicated to boosting local tourism sector which is strongly affected by the pandemic. Distribution of vital medical supplies and equipment continues as part of the UNDP-led purchase and delivery of planned 4.2 million items financed by the European Union, Governments of Norway, Switzerland and the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
The second wave of data collection was conducted in June within the Economic Pulse of Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP’s platform for insights into trends and the state of the private sector during and post COVID-19 crisis. The UNDP Accelerator Lab reached out to over 14,000 domestic companies with the aim to conduct a comparative analysis of the state of the private sector in June vs. April this year. The Economic Pulse data will be available to public by mid-July.

UNICEF donated 800 non-contact thermometers and over 1800 protective goggles to the FBiH and RS Institutes of Public Health for use in educational (primarily kindergartens) and health facilities (primarily maternity wards and pediatric units) as part of Infection, Prevention and Control activities mandated by the authorities. In order to reach those most vulnerable with WASH activities, UNICEF has established a partnership with two Roma NGOs who will support COVID-19 awareness raising activities, reaching the majority of Roma communities in the country. Awareness raising activities on WASH will be accompanied with the hygiene packages to be distributed to the families most in need. Through social media and partners in the authorities, UNICEF has shared the new Scientific Brief on Breastfeeding and COVID-19 reaching over 100,000 people with up-to-date information. UNICEF with its partner Save the Children in Una-Sana Canton and World Vision in Sarajevo Canton continues facilitating non-formal education in the Temporary Reception Centers, with 295 children participating in 58 non-formal educational workshops organized. All Child Friendly Spaces are operational.

UNFPA and NGO “Asocijacija XY” (in collaboration with Prezi) launched another (sixth and final) “Youth against COVID-19” video as part of the global campaign adjusted to current situation in BiH. The theme of the final video is “Youth, Gender and COVID-19.

Forestry and Water Management allocated the first part of planned support to women owners of agrobusinesses from the Sarajevo-Romanija region last week. This support is part of the partnership with UN Women and the RS Gender Center, with the financial support of Sweden. 200 packages of support to production of chicken meat have been distributed on three locations: in Sokolac, Pale and East Novo Sarajevo. As a result of this support, in the upcoming period the agrobusinesses owned by women will have a chance to recover after the COVID-19 pandemic. More support facilitated by the Ministry will follow in the upcoming period, dedicated to improving the position of women from rural areas.
Check the running list of United Nations resources at the UN in BiH website.