

Country Updates

In the Russian Federation a Presidential Decree was issued to regulate the legal status of foreign nationals for an interim period of three months.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is urging the Belarusian government to introduce measures to ensure physical distancing in order to slow down the spread of the coronavirus in the country.

Georgia's President has signed a decree to extend a state of emergency until May 22. She said that the initial month's state of emergency had brought the spread of COVID-19 under control.

In Serbia, some small businesses and markets including car mechanics, shoemakers, dry cleaners, bookshops, and other services have reopened. Shopping malls, cafes, restaurants, schools, and kindergartens remain closed.

Latest Trends

Since the last sitrep, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the SEECA region rose by 68 per cent to 190,493 cases (from 113,515). The number of deaths increased from 1,985 deaths reported a week ago to 3,406

Turkey still has the highest number of cases (90,980), followed by the Russian Federation (52,763), Israel (13,883), Serbia (6,630) and Belarus (6,264), replacing Ukraine as fifth most affected. The number of cases reported by Russia increased by 150 per cent overnight. Turkey's rate of increase in cases over one week has gone down from 126 per cent to 65 per cent today.

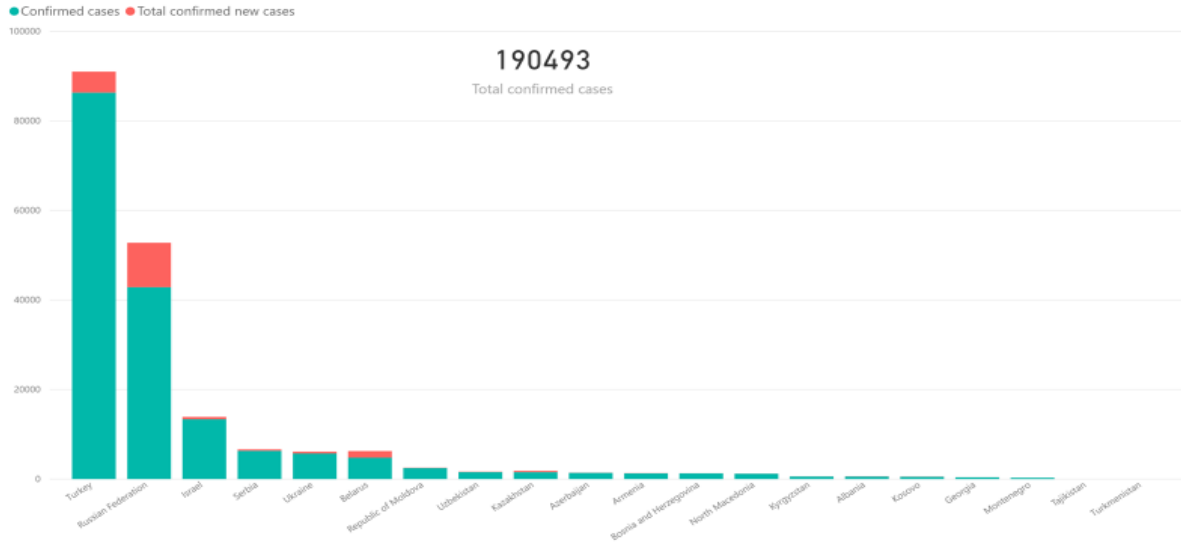
The highest number of deaths have been in Turkey (2,140), Russian Federation (456), Israel (181), Ukraine (161) and Serbia (125). The per cent increase over the past week remains high in the Russian Federation (168 per cent), compared to Belarus (76 per cent), Turkey (65 per cent), Israel (65 per cent) and Serbia (47 per cent).

In Austria, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases rose by only 0.5 per cent from 14,043 to 14,783 within the past week.

COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in SEECA Region & Austria		
	Cases	Deaths
SEECA Region	190,493	3,406
Austria	14,783	470
Total	205,276	3,876



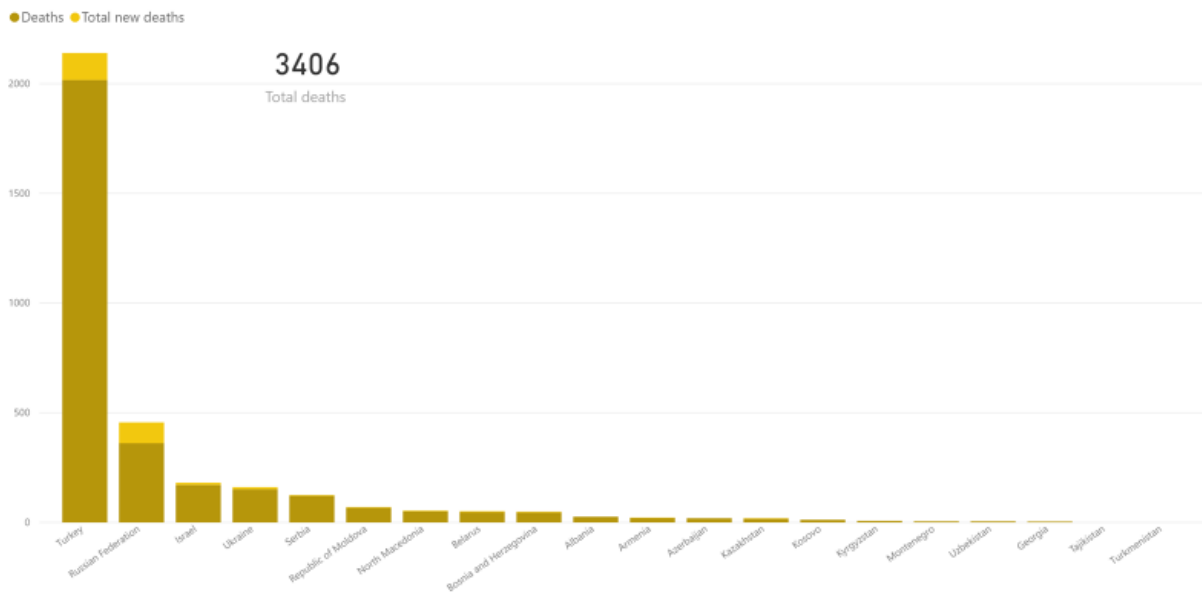
Total confirmed COVID-19 cases (including cases in the last 24 hours), SEECA Region



IOM response

- 24 concept notes/project proposals to address COVID-19 were developed in the SEECA region, totalling 23 million USD.
- Three sub-regional Appeals (Central Asia, Western Balkans, South Caucasus) and one national Appeal (Ukraine) have been developed.
- Five IOM missions in Central Asia and Eastern Europe are applying to the new COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund, in partnership with other UN Agencies, to address immediate needs and mid-term impacts due to the pandemic. The budget ceiling for each UN joint programme is 1,000,000 USD.
- The Regional Office has contributed plans and proposals to the new IOM Global Appeal which was launched last week. The appeal text can be downloaded from https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country_appeal/file/iom_covid19_appeal_15.04.2020.pdf

Total confirmed COVID-19 deaths (including deaths in the last 24 hours), SEECA Region





Country-specific responses

In Albania:

- In light of COVID-19, IOM Tirana moved its diaspora fundraising programme online, enabling one of its flagship programmes to continue.

In Armenia:

- IOM facilitated an online exchange of expertise between the Armenian diaspora based in the US with Armenian medical professionals in Armenia to learn about methods of treatment and real-life experiences in addressing COVID-19 in New York's hospitals.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- A local radio station and an association of psychologists supported by IOM are producing a radio show providing advice on how to cope with the COVID-19 crisis. The radio show will be aired three times a week for the next eight weeks.
- In the city of Tuzla, youth activists created online educational materials and games to help children with developmental disabilities and their families cope with restrictions of movement and home schooling.
- Several migrant reception centres are being expanded to host homeless migrants still in the streets. New arrivals are placed for 14 days in isolation areas, which have separate toilets, and, wherever possible, fenced green areas to allow migrants in isolation spend some time outside.

In Georgia:

- IOM Georgia is assessing the likely needs in the current and post-pandemic context, focusing on the re-integration and livelihood needs of returning Georgian migrants, as well as the needs of households and communities dependent on the now diminished flow of remittances from family members abroad.
- IOM Georgia is using its social media channels to provide updated multilingual information on COVID-19 and available services to over 4000 people and provides continuous online counselling services to stranded Georgian migrants.
- On 14 April, 22 Georgian nationals returned to Georgia from the Netherlands with the assistance of IOM and the Embassy of Georgia in the Netherlands. After quarantine, IOM Georgia will follow up on post arrival assistance.
- The Georgia continues to provide reintegration assistance to vulnerable returned migrants, concentrating on providing services and financial assistance to those most vulnerable and those with medical needs.
- The Mission is providing counselling and cash assistance to 20 vulnerable third country nationals in Georgia before voluntary return to their countries of origin can take place.

In Kazakhstan:

- 393 stranded migrants affected by COVID-19 were assisted with humanitarian assistance.
- A sub-regional assessment of the economic and social impact of the pandemic on the Central Asian states is under way.
- IOM Kazakhstan started to develop Displacement Tracking activities.
- An online training for NGO partners working with migrants affected by restrictions caused by the state of emergency was conducted, providing NGOs workers with information on how to use PPE.

In North Macedonia:

- IOM's cultural mediators are providing education and awareness-raising on COVID-19 prevention and protection in the languages spoken by migrants in the country.
- Medical teams in two Temporary Transit Centres are performing medical screening of each new arrival, as well as regular daily check of the body temperature of each client. Disinfection and epidemiological control have been intensified.
- PPE were provided to the personnel working in the reception sites for migrants and hygienic kits for migrants. They are also provided with protection services, including psychosocial counselling, and medical assistance.
- A special distance learning programme was launched for the child asylum seekers through IT equipment, tutors and mentorship, as well as translators in the relevant languages.



In Turkey:

- IOM-supported centres in several cities Ankara provide counselling and referral services via phone, visuals, WhatsApp groups and social media. A full sitrep from IOM Turkey can be accessed [here](#)

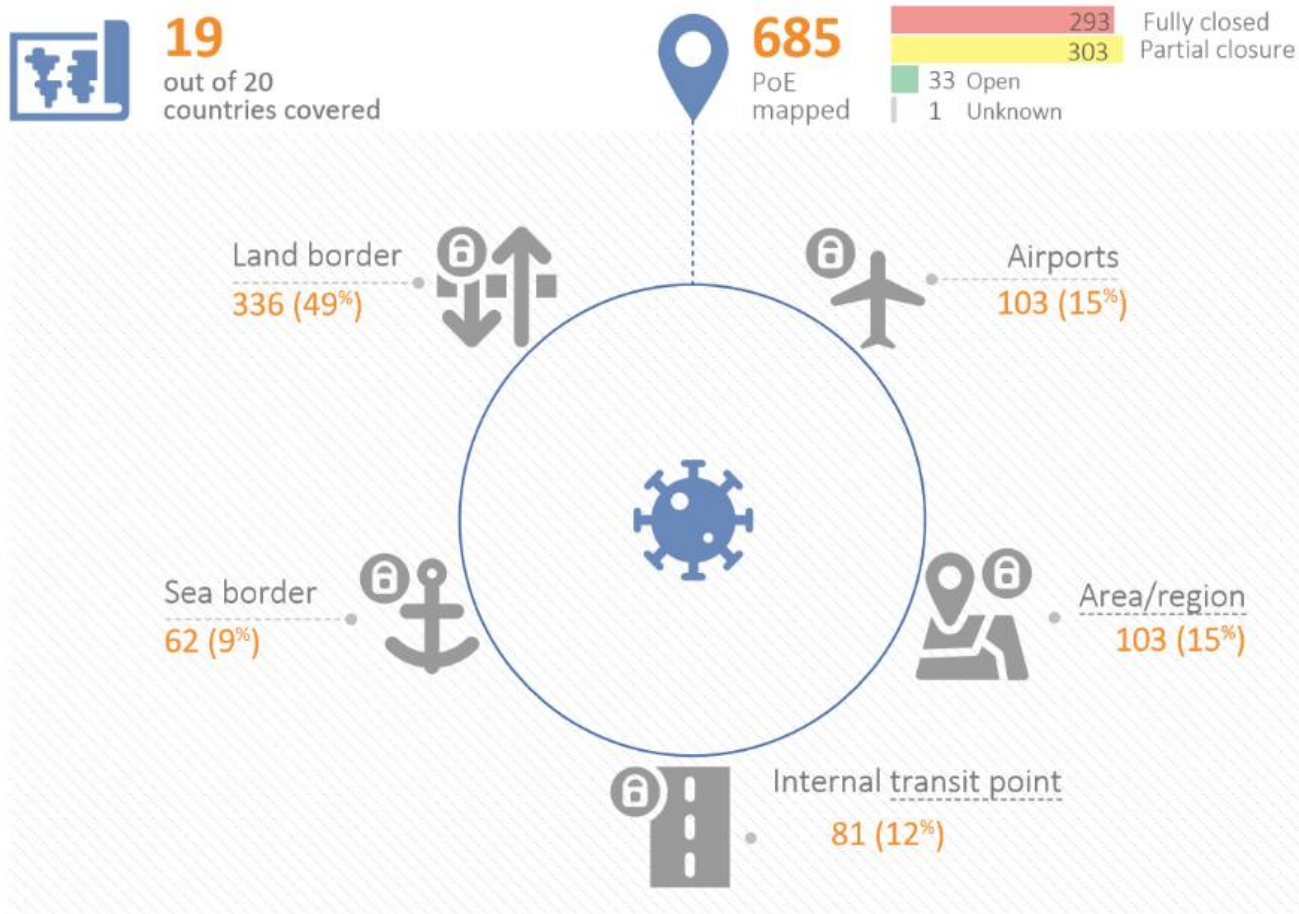
In Ukraine:

- IOM Ukraine has donated PPE to the State Border Guard Services for use at Points of Entry well as processing civilians crossing the entry-exit-checkpoints across the line of contact once re-opened.
- IOM Ukraine is providing financial assistance provided to micro-enterprises run by former victims of trafficking to cover essential needs such as food, medicine, hygiene and rent.

Challenges and needs

- Physical distancing in migrant reception centres remains a challenge, particularly in the Western Balkans.

Points of Entry mapping exercise - SEEECA Region



(Chart shows number of Points of Entry/Percentage of Total)

COVID-19 focal point at RO Vienna: Dr Jaime Calderon: jcalderon@iom.int

Project Development: H el ene Legoff, hlegoff@iom.int

Media and Communications: Joe Lowry, jlowry@iom.int