

## **Ukraine**

As of 16:00, 24 March, there were 97 confirmed COVID cases in Ukraine, three persons have died with one case of recovery. It has spread to 11 regions of Ukraine, the most affected is Chernivtsi Oblast – 38 cases, 1 died, Kyiv city – 29 cases and Kyiv Oblast – 15 cases.

To restrict the further spread of coronavirus the Cabinet of Ministers declared states of emergency in Donetsk Oblast, Ternopil Oblast, Cherkasy Oblast, Kiev Oblast, Chernivtsi Oblast, Zhytomyr Oblast, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast and in the city of Kiev.

Quarantine measures were introduced throughout Ukraine: since 15 March schools and kindergartens have been closed, since 17 March bars, restaurants, cafes, all the shops except food ones and pharmacies have been closed, since 18 March all intercity and interregional transport including air, trains, busses have been suspended, as well as the metro in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro. People are urged to stay at home and businesses are urged to get workers to telework. Since 25 March city transport is accessible only for people working in essential businesses. All mass events are cancelled, including church services.

### **Shortage of tests and protective equipment**

There is a huge shortage of tests. They are only in two regions and all the samples from other regions are sent to Kyiv reference lab for testing. That is why in local hospitals doctors could not determine the type of the virus that caused pneumonia and therefore many cases could be unreported. Even in the capital tests are done only in case of symptoms of infection. According to the Kyiv mayor only 291 Kyivans were tested for coronavirus as of 20 March.

To address this problem, on 23 March the Government delivered the first lot of medical cargo from China including 250,000 coronavirus express-tests. Now they are distributed among regional labs. Also the government plans to produce tests in Ukraine and now is licensing and testing their production. There is also critical shortage of masks, disinfection agents, ventilators, personal protection equipment both for the population and for medical personnel.

Another problem is readiness of the hospitals to receive the large number of patients, adequate staffing, protection and motivation of health workers.

### **Additional payments to health workers and others in vital services**

On March 17, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a law amending certain legislation to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It provides that health care workers dealing with coronavirus outbreak will receive up to 200% allowances to their wages. Additional payments will also be made to certain categories of workers providing vital services

The law also establishes responsibility for violation of sanitary norms during the outbreak of coronavirus infection. In particular, it introduces administrative responsibility for the unauthorized breach of the quarantine by persons who are suspected to be infected with COVID-19.

In addition, it provides for the simplified procedure of public procurement of goods needed to combat coronavirus. In particular, medicines, medical devices and medical equipment intended to treat and prevent the spread of COVID-19 will be exempt from import duties and VAT. Retail prices for medical supplies and socially significant goods will be controlled by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The Law also introduced a set of legal provisions aimed at protecting the rights of individuals and legal entities during quarantine and restrictive measures, namely:

- the possibility of telework for employees, civil servants and employees of local self-government bodies and granting leave with their consent;
- the right of owners to change the opening hours of organisations and companies, in particular, regarding the reception and servicing of individuals and legal entities, by informing the population about this through websites and other communication means;
- no administrative liability for foreigners and stateless persons who violated visa regime because of the introduction of quarantine;
- quarantine was legally defined as a force majeure;
- a number of measures aimed at protecting the rights and interests of internally displaced persons,
- ban on the termination of housing subsidies, registering of the unemployed,
- ban of cutting utilities or forced eviction in case of failure to pay bills or rent;
- ban on inspections by the state supervision bodies in the sphere of economic activity.
- ban on the export from Ukraine of the goods of epidemiologic importance.
- lump sum of UAH 1000 will be paid in April to those pensioners whose pension is lower UAH 5000

### **Economic measures**

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine intends to create a stabilization fund of UAH 200 billion to support citizens and businesses, and has started negotiations with the international partners on the restructuring of the state debt.

In particular, Prime Minister of Ukraine Shmyhal said Ukraine was in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union, European Investment Bank (EIB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and had achieved a good progress.

### **Trade union demands**

The Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine urged the public authorities and employers to take all possible steps in order to:

- prevent dismissal of workers that have temporarily suspended/reduced their production activities and services in accordance with Government decisions, as well as to avoid any violation of workers' rights guaranteed by law and collective agreements in case of suspension of work;
- no worker, including informal sector workers, temporary or subcontracted workers, should suffer from wage loss or deterioration working conditions during quarantine;
- where possible, send the workers to telework from home, keeping their wages;
- at the request of the worker, to agree with him short working hours or paid leave, if necessary, to provide sick leave;
- trade unions' and workers' rights should be at the heart of the COVID response, they are important to reduce the risks and built confidence;
- necessary preventive and protective measures must be introduced at the workplaces in order to protect of the health of workers, especially those at the forefront of the fight with the epidemic outbreak

### **Travel**

On March 17 all scheduled international air traffic was suspended. All airports except Kyiv Boryspil were closed. In order to evacuate Ukrainians who were abroad the government called all those who wished to return to approach the Ukrainian consulate in the country to organise evacuation. Ukrainian company SkyUp Airlines offered tickets at discounted prices for non-scheduled flights from 17 cities in 14 countries for the return of Ukrainians from abroad. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is in talks with the governments of Germany, Czech Republic and Poland regarding the return of the Ukrainians by railway. The Ukrzaliznytsia joint-stock company brought Ukrainian citizens from Poland on eight trains from Przemyśl on March 20-22.