

COVID-19: overview of the OSCE participating States' responses

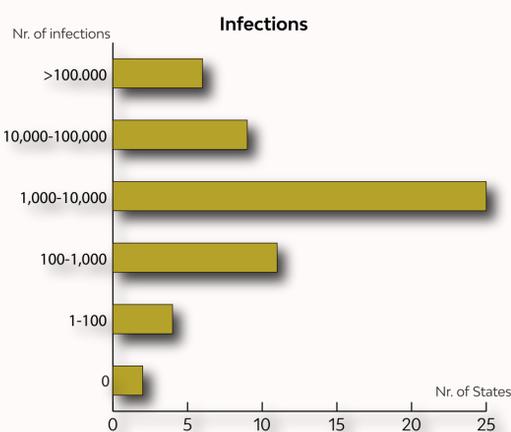
Economic support measures

As the inter-parliamentary forum of the largest regional security organization in the world, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe serves 323 members from 57 participating States in their multilateral efforts to promote lasting security for over a billion citizens across three continents.

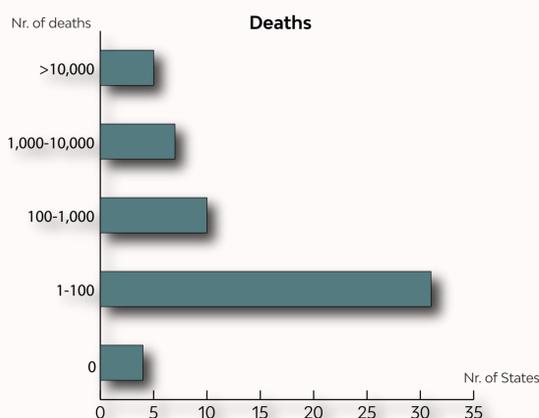
The present overview is the result of an OSCE PA initiative to map the OSCE participating States' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

GLOBAL WEEKLY TRENDS

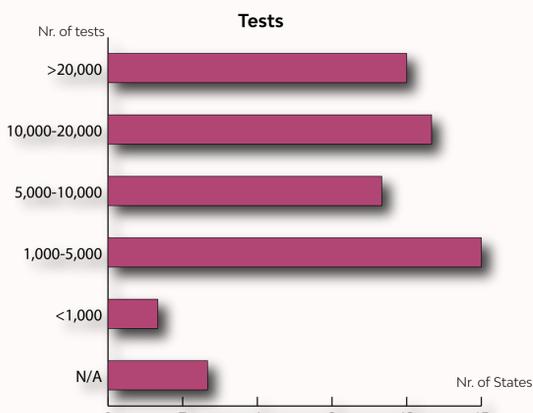
Since last week, **the overall number of infections and deaths in the OSCE region has increased** from approx. 1.27 to 1.81 million (42,5%) and from 84.000 to 130.000 (55%) respectively, which confirms the growing trend of the pandemic. In parallel, **OSCE participating States** (hereinafter States) **have expanded their testing capacity**.



The number of States having reported more than 1,000 infections has increased by 14% (8) in one week and by 24.5% (14) since the first week of April, now accounting for 40 out of the 57 States. There are now 15 States (13 last week) that have surpassed the 10,000 infections threshold, out of which 6 (i.e. USA, Spain, Italy, France, Germany and UK) have reported more than 100,000 cases each, for a total of approx. 1,400,000 infections combined. This figure accounts for 77% of the overall number of infections in the OSCE area. 2 States (i.e. Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) continue to report no infections.



There are now 12 States (21%) who have reported more than 1,000 COVID-19-related deaths, with an increase of 8.5% (5) since last week. When combined, the deaths recorded in the 5 States with more than 10,000 victims (USA, Spain, Italy, France and UK) amount to approx. 107,000, constituting approx. 82% of the overall victims recorded in the OSCE region - an increase of 53% from last week. 4 States (7%) continue to report no deaths (i.e. Holy See, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan).



Testing rates have also significantly increased since last week, with 63% (36) of States having conducted more than 5,000 tests per million inhabitants, an increase of 12% (7). Correspondingly, the number of States testing less than 5,000 persons per million inhabitants has decreased to 17 (30%) from 23 (40%) since last week. The States which have tested more than 20,000 inhabitants per million have grown from 5 to 12 (or 21% of the total), with Andorra, Cyprus, Germany, Estonia, Portugal, San Marino and Switzerland joining the 5 States already mentioned last week. Finally, in 4 cases (7%) no data was found.

IN FOCUS: ECONOMIC SUPPORT MEASURES

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge with global economic repercussions.

55 states (96%) have introduced various kinds of nationwide counter-measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

While the calculation of the aggregated amount of these economic packages is a daunting task, current estimates indicate that States in the OSCE region are investing, on average, approx. 7% of their respective GDPs in supporting the economy.



7 % of GDP

A Labour support measures

Measures introduced to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic vary significantly across the OSCE region, both in terms of amounts invested, and in terms of beneficiaries. Notably, 47 States (82%) have targeted workers and the labour sector through employment and income protection schemes, emergency assistance for the self-employed, flexible working arrangements, sick leave pay, unemployment support and tax reliefs/suspensions.

82 %
of States

B Business support measures

84% of States (48) have also directed their support towards businesses and enterprises, for instance through single-payment grants, loans at prime interest rates, financial guarantees for companies' bank loans, rent reductions, postponement of bankruptcy and financial executory proceedings, deferral of contribution payments to public security systems and tax reliefs/suspensions.

84 %
of States

C Emergency support measures for vulnerable individuals

In addition, 27 States (47%) introduced emergency support measures for the most vulnerable individuals in their society. Such measures range from one-time financial allowances for low-income families, pensioners and homeless persons, to suspended repayment and interest on student loans, and from distribution of food packages to those in need to the suspension/relief of utility bills' payments and mortgages.

47 %
of States

D Macroeconomic measures

Moreover, the vast majority of States (89%) have introduced monetary easing policies (i.e. lowering interest rates and deposit ratios to make credit more easily available) and/or macro-financial measures to respond to the ongoing crisis, such as guarantees to commercial banks for the extension of corporate loans, export guarantees, temporary liquidity measures, reducing the counter-cyclical bank capital buffer and introducing asset purchase programs of private and public sector securities.

89 %
of States

E Other measures

Finally, 29 States (51%) have introduced a variety of other measures to cushion the adverse impact of COVID-19 on people and businesses. For instance, while some have provided bonus payments to healthcare workers and supported hospitals through emergency equipment, a number of States have decided to lower the wages of appointed officials and redirect those assets to fight the pandemic. Notably, some have granted funds to sports and cultural associations to partially offset the economic consequences of existing public gathering restrictions.

51 %
of States

To reinforce national efforts, the European Union (EU) has also adopted a range of measures to support the economic recovery of its members, including:

- Mobilization of the non utilized EU cohesion policy funds through the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (€37 billion) and expansion of the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF);
- Launching of an Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP), consisting of private and public sector securities purchase by the ECB (€750 billion);
- Adoption of a €540 billion package to support EU Member States, businesses and workers through the European Stability Mechanism, the European Investment Bank and the Creation of the Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE).

