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### *How COVID-19 impact in the Balkan area?*

Since December 2019, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus has impacted more than 1 million people worldwide. Starting on January 31, 2020, Italy is experiencing the severe consequences of the new pandemics called COVID-19, due to a novel Coronavirus currently known as SARS-CoV2.

After one month, the first cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Balkans but, in most cases, the data are fragmentary and require a long time for their confirmation (1).

The performance indicators are not stable, considering that the overall number of people affected by Covid-19 varies from 561 in Bosnia Herzegovina to 126 in Kosovo.

The trend is increasing in Kosovo and Macedonia, while Bosnia and Montenegro have not passed the 10% growth phase yet.

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The reported data derives from those taken into consideration by the various sections of the Albanian Academy of Sciences, each of which follows the progression of the spread of COVID-19 pandemics and its consequences, based on their respective areas of research.

During the past week, the Healthcare Commission and the Department of Information Technology focused attention on the fact that this period would be decisive for evaluating the expected progression of the pandemic.

According to data for dissemination and treatment of pandemics, as well as its consequences, it is estimated that the peak of the infection and the transition to the beginning of the descent of the infection curve will arrive in Albania early.

In Albania 361 confirmed cases (285 during the last two weeks) and 21 deaths have been recorded (April, 6<sup>th</sup> 2020) (1).

The spread of the pandemic in Albania has had a moderate pace, which can be considered from the possible positive aspects.

From an increase of 18-19% per day, which was up to March 26, the rate has currently dropped to 7% per day.

The diagnostic tests were performed according to the WHO guideline; cases of close contacts and family contacts were carefully monitored, obtaining positive tests in 60-70% of the cases.

The high percentage of positivity is attributable to this approach, which was followed by the rapid isolation of local outbreaks.

This reduction is due to the timely adoption of social limitation measures, including the shutdown since March 12 and closed national

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borders since March 16, and their observance with citizens only allowed to leave their homes between 5.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.

The recovery rate in our country is also one of the most positive, reaching up to 29% of the infected total, comparable to Germany and Denmark, with 28 and 31% respectively.

In the meantime, this indicator in Italy is at 16.6% and in most other countries it is below 10%.

These indicators of the viral spread and of the therapy allow to hypothesize the arrival of the peak within two weeks and of the transition from the beginning stage to that of the decline. These rates allow you to monitor the situation and make the situation in the national health system sustainable.

The indicators also show that accurate and successful treatment are given to the patients. But the relatively large number of deaths is an appeal for the identification and treatment of serious cases in a timely and careful manner.

However, the activity of tracking and testing the contacts shows that the number of positive cases is low in absolute value, although in reality these results can be considered as relative; as a consequence, it seems that the mortality rate is higher.

If the early limitations of the interpersonal relationships and the near complete lockdown have limited the widespread of the infection and the number of related deaths, Albania has suffered a financial lack of more than 2 billion of euro due to the stop of foreign investments and touristic traffic (2).

The early recovery of the economic potential is now mandatory for Albania and its people if they want to continue to pursue the path of European integration and be able to play a key role between the Balkans and Europe.

For this reason and for the historical friendship with Italy, on 28 March 2020, Albania sent 30 doctors and nurses to Italy to support it in fighting the coronavirus infection (3).

Apparently, the extent of the support may seem negligible, but for Albania it was an important effort that was deeply appreciated not only by the Italians, but also by many international political observers.

This is also because the EU has not yet defined any support measures for member countries, with serious repercussions on those states that are suffering from a serious economic crisis.

## References

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