



*AFEW International's*  
**COVID-19 situation report in the six countries of  
the Eastern Partnership**

Prepared for the COVID-19 Solidarity Programme



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## Introduction

In the framework of the EU COVID-19 Solidarity Programme for Eastern Partnership, *AFEW International*, People in Need (PIN) and Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) joined forces to propose a set of interventions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute towards longer-term socio-economic resilience of vulnerable groups.

One of the activities in this project is the collection of information on the epidemiology of COVID-19, the measures taken by local governments to contain the epidemic and information on access to health services. This report doesn't give conclusions or recommendations for the next steps; the report functions as an information resource as support for the development of (new) interventions.

This report gives an overview of the period 1 January – 31 March 2021, the third quarter of the implementation period of the project. Such a report will be produced for every quarter of the project duration.

For this report the following sources are used:

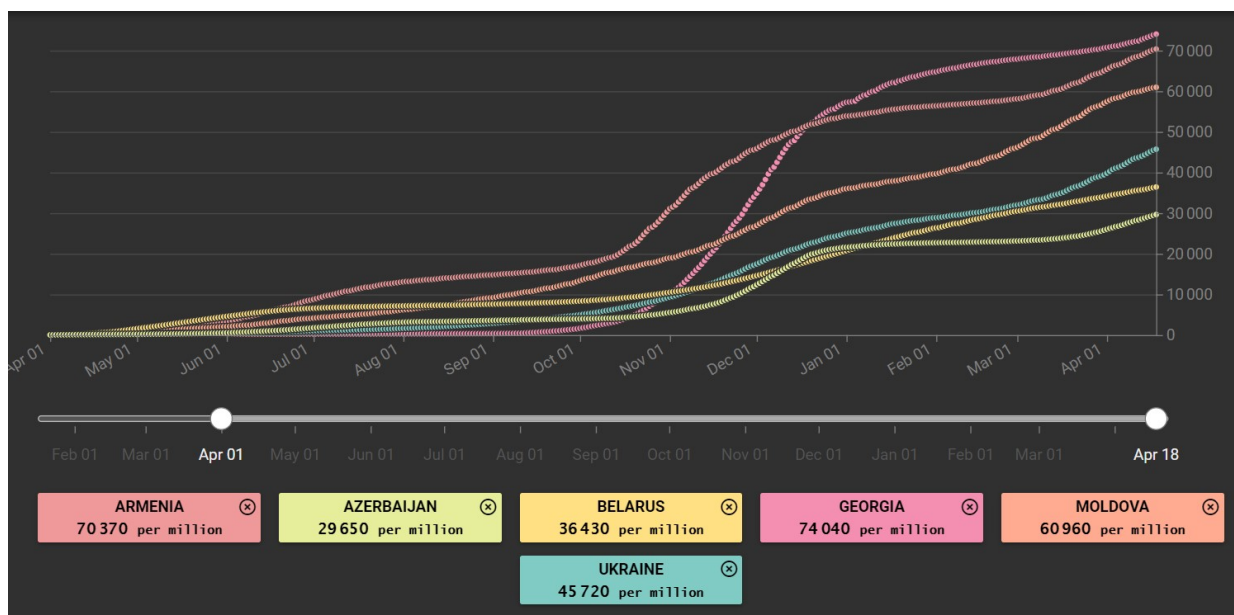
- WHO Health System Response Monitor (HSRM);
- Official sources on the coronavirus situation in the countries;
- Reports on the COVID-19 situation prepared by the UNICEF, UN, OECD, International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR);
- Global news agencies;
- Local independent media.



## Regional overview

**Regional highlight:** Central and Eastern Europe region is now facing a third wave of coronavirus pandemic. In the South Caucasus, both **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** have in the past several weeks seen steep third-wave rises in their coronavirus infection numbers. The World Bank [noted](#) Azerbaijan was able to get its vaccination programme off to an early start, while Armenia at the beginning of April received the first batch of AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine, amounting to 24,000 doses, under the COVAX facility. **Georgia** is presently [deciding](#) whether to return to tight measures to address a growing spike in its coronavirus cases. Georgia by March 26 had received 29,500 Pfizer vaccine doses and 43,200 AstraZeneca shots, while it had ordered 100,000 Sinovac doses from China. **Moldova** [announced a state of emergency](#) on March 31. Acting Prime Minister Aureliu Ciocoi said the state of emergency was necessary and warned that there are two patients for each bed in Moldova's COVID-19 hospitals. A third wave of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic has also started in **Ukraine**, which saw as many as 18,132 coronavirus cases [confirmed last week](#) – twice the level of the peak in the first wave – and many areas of the country is now in the “red zone”. The total number of **Belarus’** coronavirus (COVID-19) cases [has exceeded](#) 320,000, with the country counting as many as 995 more new coronavirus cases in one day, the health ministry reported on March 29.

*Graph 1,2. Total confirmed COVID-19 cases per population ratio since the start of the active phase of the pandemic (April 1, 2020) in the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as of 19.04.2021<sup>1</sup>*



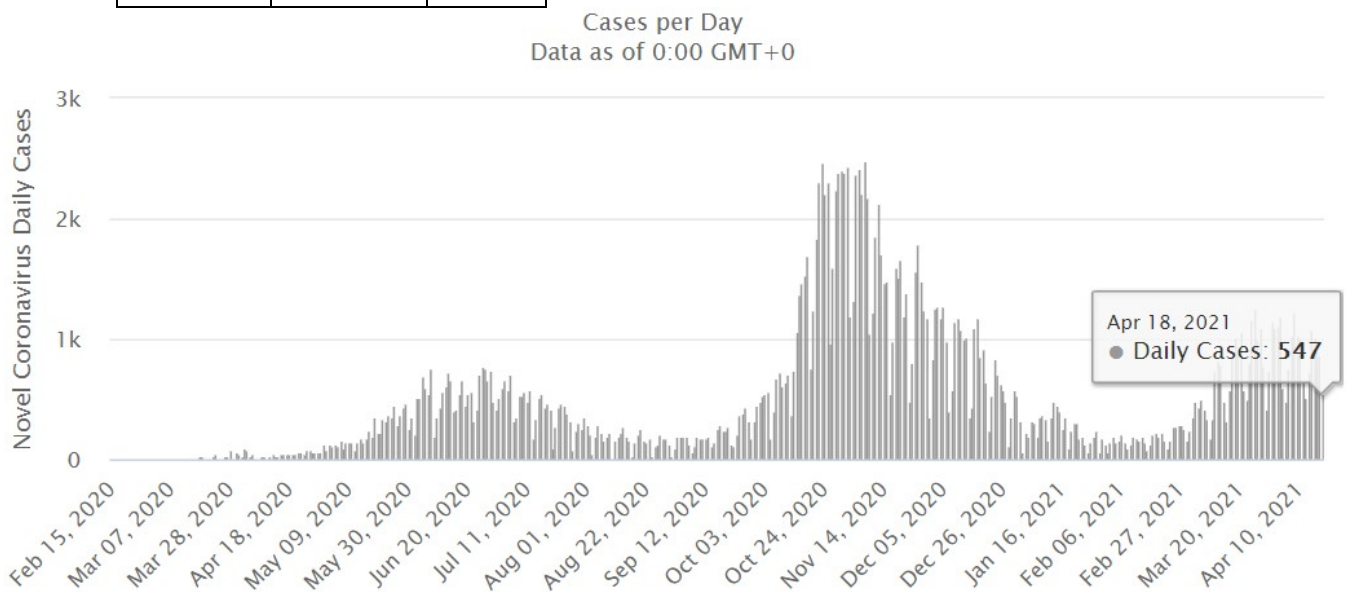
<sup>1</sup> Sciences Po Medialab Coronavirus Country Comparator. <https://boogheta.github.io/coronavirus-countries/> accessed 19-04-2021. COVID-19 Solidarity Programme, COVID-19 situation report in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership

## Situation report Armenia

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
208,818	189,017	3,895



Graph 3. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Armenia<sup>2</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

— In March in Armenia, there has been [an increase](#) in coronavirus infections. On March 23, the intensive care units were full and dozens of patients with coronavirus symptoms had to wait for their turn to be hospitalized. The Health Ministry [said](#) on March 23 that 24 people had died from COVID-19 within the previous 24 hours, while the number of new coronavirus cases was over 800. This is the same or even higher rate that Armenia had in the fall when the second wave of the pandemic was observed globally.

— As of 19 April, the effective reproduction rate [stands at](#) 0.93.

— The situation with coronavirus infection in Armenia remains tense but can [be considered stable](#). However, the daily number of registered cases remains high - from 800 to 1000. "This is a serious indicator for Armenia, because of this, the health care institutions are overloaded," said Romella Abovyan, head of the department for the prevention of non-communicable diseases of the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the Ministry of Health of Armenia. According to her, there is a problem in the country with the placement of patients in medical centers, there are no free beds.

### Measures to contain the epidemic

<sup>2</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/armenia/> accessed 19-04-2021.

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— The national quarantine in Armenia in place from 11 September 2020 to 11 January 2021, [was extended to](#) 11 July 2021. Although the situation remains serious, as there have been some improvements, some changes in the measures and restrictions have been made:

- Non-citizens of Armenia may also cross the border to enter Armenia through land border crossing points if upon entering the territory of Armenia they present a negative PCR COVID-19 test result certificate. The test must be taken a maximum of 72 hours prior to crossing the border. Otherwise, the person will be obliged to take a test at the checkpoint and self-isolate until a negative PCR test is obtained (previously, this requirement was only present at air border checkpoints).
- All the restrictions on holding public events are removed, including restrictions on the number of participants (previously 60 participants) and restrictions for organizing events indoors.

#### *Education*

— From 10 February 2021, some children [were allowed to return to preschool facilities](#) where:

- parents were not able to work remotely
- parents were registered as disabled
- there are more than three children in the household
- one or both parents are serving in the military
- the child has special educational needs
- the child is from a socially disadvantaged household

— On 6 March the Ministry [clarified](#) the situation regarding preschool facilities and the rules of admission of children have been eased, the physical distancing requirement has been set at 1 metre instead of 1.5 metres, and the maximum number of children in a group has increased from 18 to 20.

#### *Vaccination*

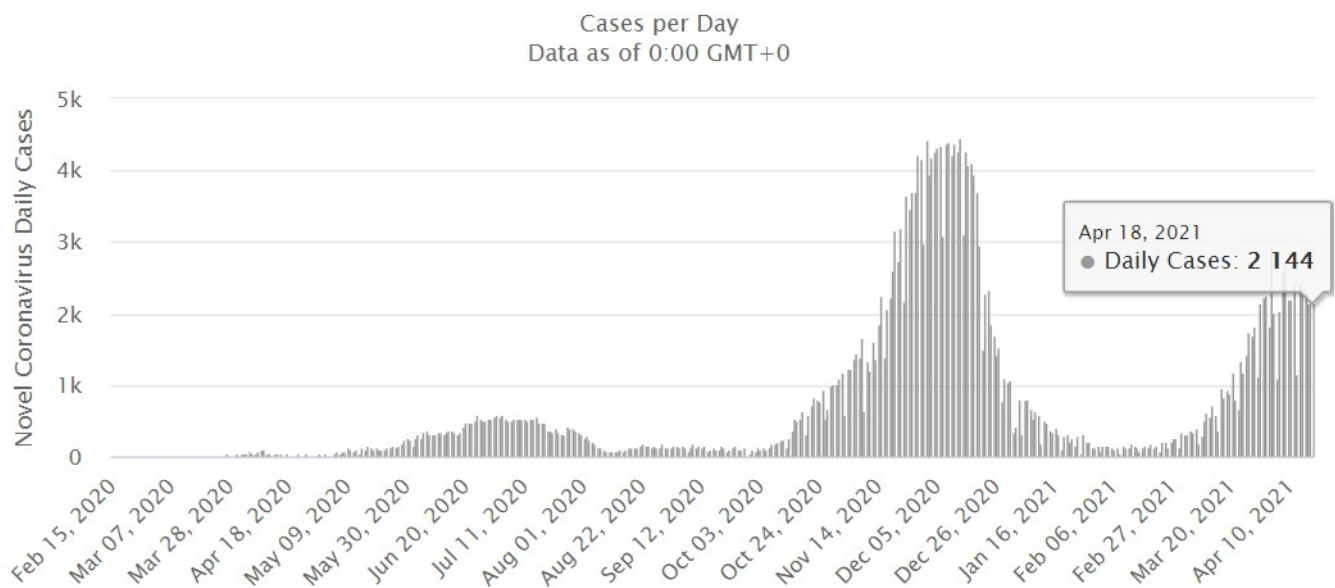
— Vaccination against coronavirus infection [has begun](#) in Armenia. Since April 13, residents of Yerevan are able to get vaccinated and from April 14 vaccination became available in the regions. Now the country is distributing vaccines to clinics. 24,000 doses of the Anglo-Swedish AstraZeneca vaccine and 15,000 doses of the Russian Sputnik V have already been delivered to Armenia.

## Situation report Azerbaijan

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
300,666	264,403	4,140



Graph 4. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Azerbaijan<sup>3</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

— At the beginning of April (03.04.2021), Azerbaijan [registered the record daily number](#) of coronavirus cases since the beginning of the year.

### Measures to contain the epidemic

— On March 19, Azerbaijan [extended](#) nationwide COVID-19 restrictions until June 1. Previously, the restrictions were scheduled to end on April 1, but they have been extended in light of the increasing number of infections.

— Land borders remain closed, and most passenger flights are suspended. Some limited flights are operating with select destinations for citizens and legal residents, their immediate families, and individuals with work or study permits. All travelers entering or leaving Azerbaijan must present proof of having tested negative for COVID-19 within the previous 48 hours and arrivals may be required to quarantine for 14 days at government-operated facilities. All other arrivals will still need to self-isolate for 14 days, though they can end self-isolation after six days on confirmation of a further negative test result. Border restrictions do not apply to freight traffic.

— Nonessential businesses and services, including catering establishments, are permitted to operate in accordance with strict hygiene and social distancing mandates. Protective face coverings and social distancing are mandatory at

<sup>3</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/azerbaijan> accessed 19-04-2021.

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all times in enclosed or crowded public spaces; public gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited nationwide. Public transport is suspended at weekends for the duration of the special quarantine regime.

#### *Education*

— Since Monday, April 5, secondary schools in the cities of Baku, Ganja, Sheki and Sumgait, as well as in the Absheron region, [have switched to distance learning](#) due to an increase in the level of coronavirus infection. This decision was made by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan. It is not yet clear when schools will resume normal work. This decision does not apply to higher and preschool educational institutions.

— As for universities, now full-time training [is carried out](#) only in those specialities that require the direct presence of students in the classroom (engineers, doctors, etc.).

— Since early March, Azerbaijan [has been vaccinating](#) teachers of secondary schools over 50 years old.

#### *Vaccination*

— Some 27,542 people [were vaccinated](#) against coronavirus (COVID-19) in Azerbaijan on April 16. The first dose of the vaccine was injected to 22,034 citizens, and the second one to 5,508 citizens per day. In total, up until now, 1,299,323 citizens have been vaccinated, of whom the first dose of the vaccine was received by 859,338 people, and the second - by 439,985 people. The COVID-19 vaccination in Azerbaijan was launched on January 18, 2021. The Chinese-made CoronaVac vaccine is used for immunization in Azerbaijan, which is voluntary and funded by the government. It should include two doses to complete the vaccination and receive a vaccination passport.

— Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani government [plans to use](#) more Covid-19 vaccine options in addition to CoronaVac. South Korea will deliver 84,000 doses of Vaxzevria (formerly AstraZeneca) vaccine produced by a British-Swedish joint venture to Azerbaijan starting from April 5. Azerbaijan will get a total of 432,000 jabs of the Vaxzevria vaccine by the end of May. Delivery of the vaccine is carried out within the COVAX initiative joined by Azerbaijan.

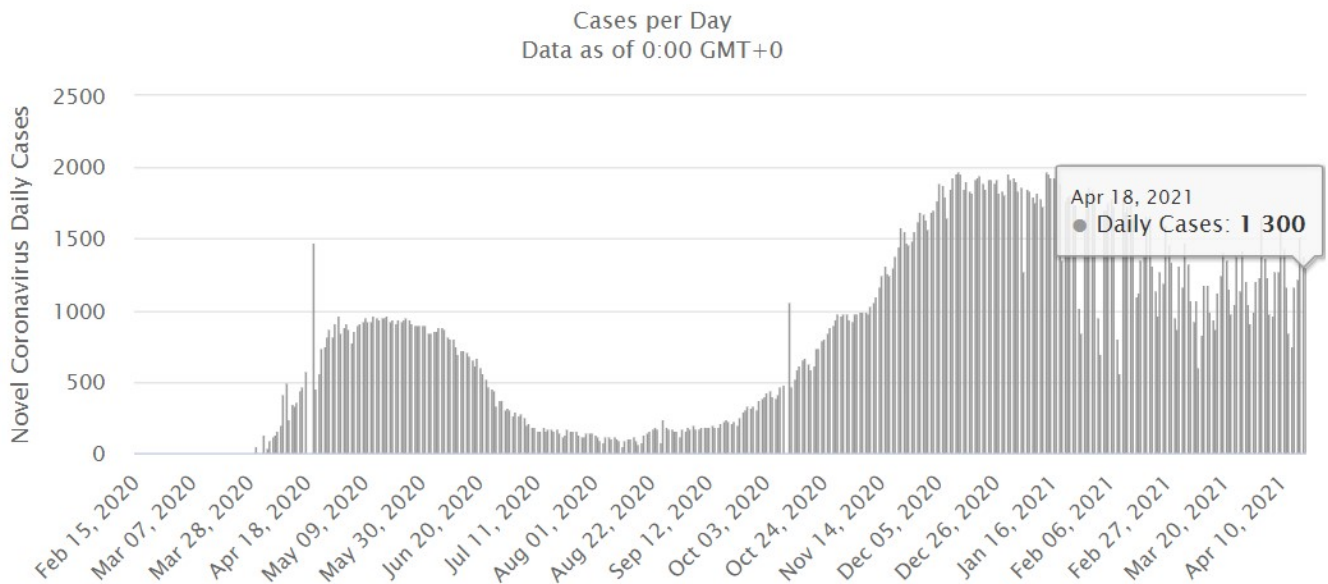


## Situation report Belarus

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
344,223	334,852	2,423



Graph 5. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Belarus<sup>4</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

— On April 13 2021, the Ministry of Health [announced](#) the beginning of the third wave of coronavirus: specialists in the regions and Minsk registered an increase in the incidence of COVID-19 infections.

— [According to](#) the Minister of Health of Belarus Dmitry Pinevich, currently, there are not as many infected people as it was in the fall. However, more people suffer from a more severe form of COVID-19. “The growth rate of the spring wave is somewhat lower than that of the autumn one, so we hope that the peak of the spring wave will not exceed the autumn peak”, - said Pinevich. According to him, in Minsk, when compared with the autumn figures, there are 50% fewer hospitalizations, in the regions this figure is slightly lower.

### Measures to contain the epidemic

— Wearing a protection mask is obligatory in all public spaces.

### Vaccination

—As of 19 April, 175 000 Belarusians [have been vaccinated](#) against coronavirus infection.

— Mass production of Russia’s Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine [began in Belarus](#). The production has been launched at the site of the Belmedpreparaty republican unitary enterprise.

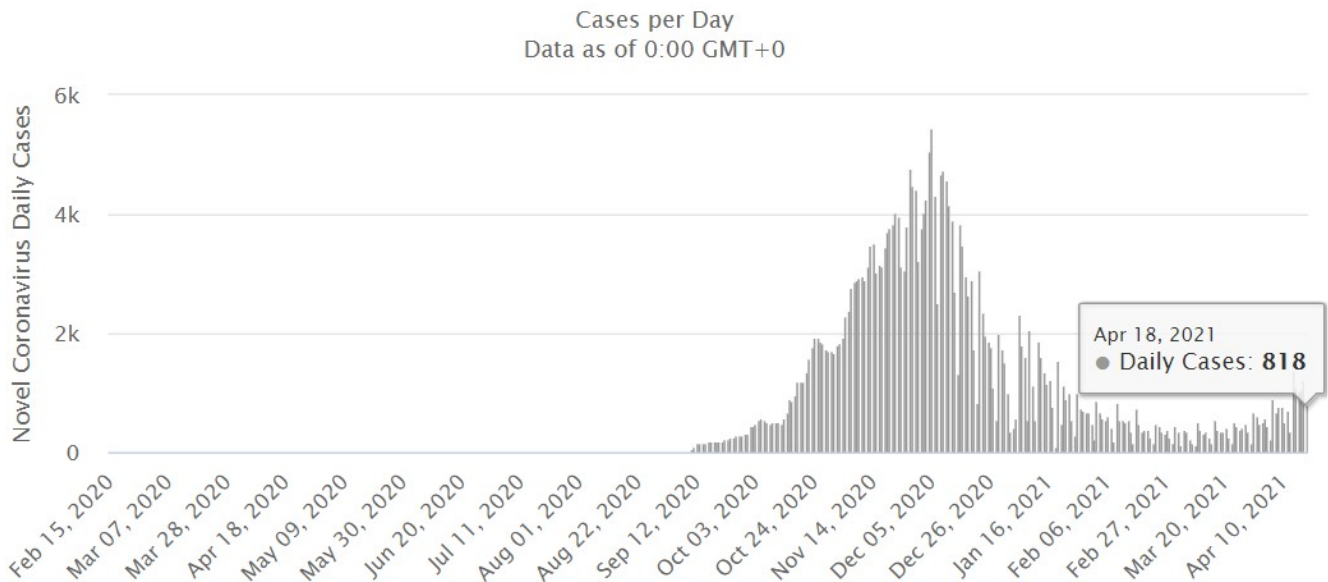
<sup>4</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/belarus> accessed 19-04-2021.

## Situation report Georgia

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
295,936	281,574	3,949



Graph 6. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Georgia<sup>5</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

— Head of the Georgian National Centre for Disease Control Amiran Gamkrelidze [said](#) on April 12 that as in many countries of the world the third wave of Covid-19 has started in Georgia as well. “The epidemiological situation in the world as well as in our country is gradually becoming more complicated. A third wave has started in many countries and we can say that it has started in Georgia as well. The number of new cases per 100,000 inhabitants per day has increased. Today we have about 17 cluster epidemic outbreaks in the country which is manageable, but this is the first sign that if we do not follow the recommendations if radical measures are not taken, it may start to spread universally”, Gamkrelidze said.

— As of April 19, 3.06 per cent of tested individuals had Covid-19 in the past 14 days. Georgian Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze [said](#) last week that if more than four per cent of tested individuals test positive for coronavirus in two consecutive weeks, the government of Georgia is likely to impose coronavirus restrictions, including lockdown.

### Measures to contain the epidemic

— Officials in Georgia [have issued orders to lift](#) most of their state's remaining COVID-19-related restrictions effective April 8. Under the new directives, residents with a higher risk of severe illness are no longer required to shelter in place within their residences. Moreover, Georgia's current regulation limiting the size of gatherings to 50 attendees are completely lifted.

<sup>5</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/georgia> accessed 19-04-2021.

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— Nevertheless, state authorities [continue to encourage](#) residents to wear protective facemasks while in public; local officials have the power to issue mask mandates if their jurisdiction experiences 100 or more COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants over a period of 14 days.

— Businesses [may operate](#), provided they comply with specific mandates to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including enhancing sanitation procedures, adhering to social distancing standards, and performing health screening on workers and customers.

#### *Education*

— On March 15, in-person studies [have resumed](#).

— On March 17, physical attendance of lectures and seminars in higher education institutions [has resumed](#).

#### *Vaccination*

— As of April 19, 20,622 people [have been vaccinated](#) in Georgia. About 1,200 people are vaccinated per day in Georgia.

— Georgia [started vaccination](#) on March 15 after 43,200 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine arrived in Tbilisi with the help of UNICEF. Later the country received additional 29,250 doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

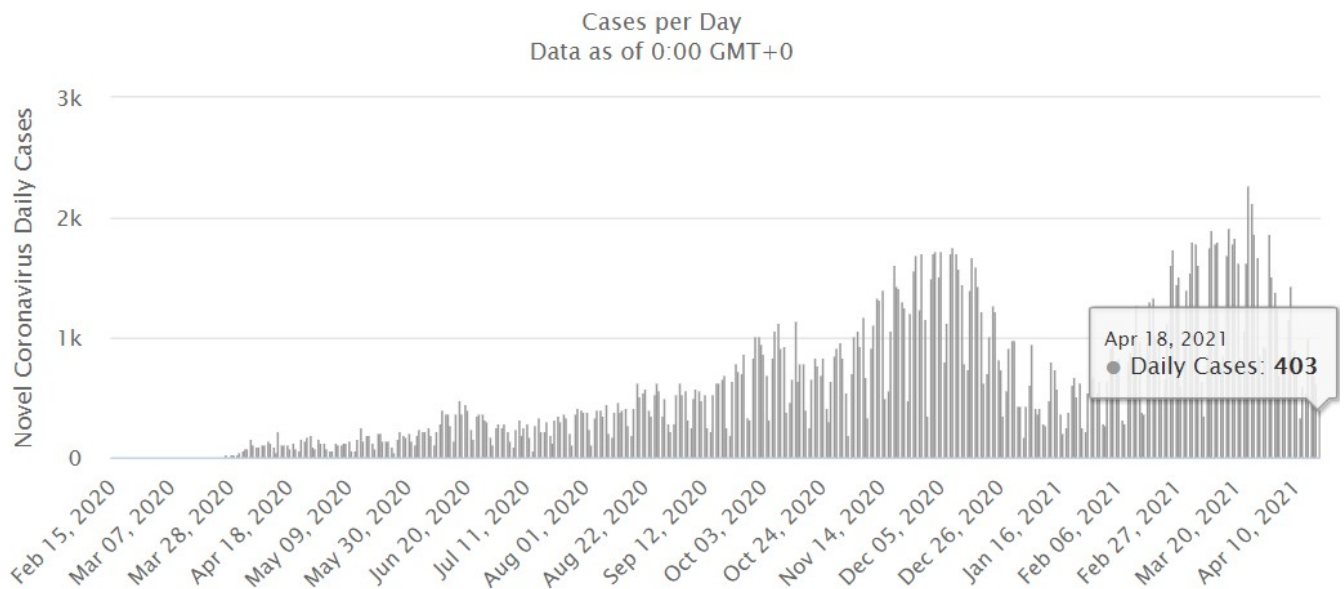
— Georgia [received](#) 100,000 doses of the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine in early April and the country has plans to purchase the Chinese Sinovac vaccine later this month.

## Situation report Republic of Moldova

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
245,897	231,235	5,571



Graph 7. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in the Republic of Moldova<sup>6</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

- The total number of COVID-19 cases in Moldova has continued to increase, albeit at a slower pace than in the previous two months, and as of April 18, the total number of cases reached 245,897.<sup>7</sup>
- The number of new cases has decreased over the last week and reached a 7-day average of 669 on April 18 compared to 876 for the preceding week.<sup>8</sup>
- The number of active cases in Moldova has continued to decrease in the past week. As of April 18, the number of active cases stood at 9,091.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/moldova> accessed 19-04-2021.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Moldova: Coronavirus Disease - COVID 19 - Weekly Situation Report No. 53 (19 April 2021). OCHA, 2021. [cited 2021 April 19]. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-weekly-situation-report-no-53-19-april-2021>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

— The 7-day average for the number of deaths decreased in Moldova in the last week and now stands at 26, which is 10 less compared to the same figure the week prior. The total number of deaths in the country is 5,571.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Measures to contain the epidemic*

— On March 21, authorities in Moldova have issued orders [extending the country's existing nationwide state of public health emergency](#) and associated measures, as well as imposing a number of new restrictions through at least May 30. Under the new directives, public institutions and private businesses are limited to operating with no more than 30 percent of their staff working on-site, with the remainder working remotely. Businesses found in violation of public health restrictions may be subject to closure for the duration of the state of emergency. Schools, with the exception of kindergartens, are operating on a distance-learning basis.

— Additionally, starting from April 3, a 23:00-05:00 [daily curfew](#) is in place in Chisinau and Balti; all persons must remain in their homes during curfew hours unless performing essential work or seeking medical attention. Moreover, the public is allowed to gather, in parks, playgrounds, or sports grounds nationwide.

— Generally, aside from the newly announced measures, most businesses in Moldova [are permitted](#) to operate provided they adhere to strict health and safety measures, though all public offices close at 16:00 daily, and bars and restaurants must close 20:00-07:00. Markets are permitted to operate 07:00-15:00; shopping malls must close by 18:00. Theaters, concert halls, and nightclubs remain closed until further notice. A maximum of three people are permitted to gather in public and most public events are prohibited. Persons over 63 years of age must remain in their accommodations except for essential purposes. Facemasks are mandatory in enclosed public spaces and on public transport. Public transport is operating at 50 percent capacity.

— In "red code" areas where infection rates are high, individuals [are allowed](#) to leave their homes only for essential purposes.

#### *Education*

— Schools, with the exception of kindergartens, [are operating](#) on a distance-learning basis until at least May 30.

#### *Vaccination*

— The Republic of Moldova [received](#) 14 400 doses of COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine on 4 March 2021, shipped via the COVAX Facility. The Republic of Moldova is the first country in the WHO European Region to receive vaccines as part of COVAX.

— Moldova [will buy](#) 400,000 doses of the Chinese Sinovac coronavirus vaccine, the health ministry said in a statement on April 16.

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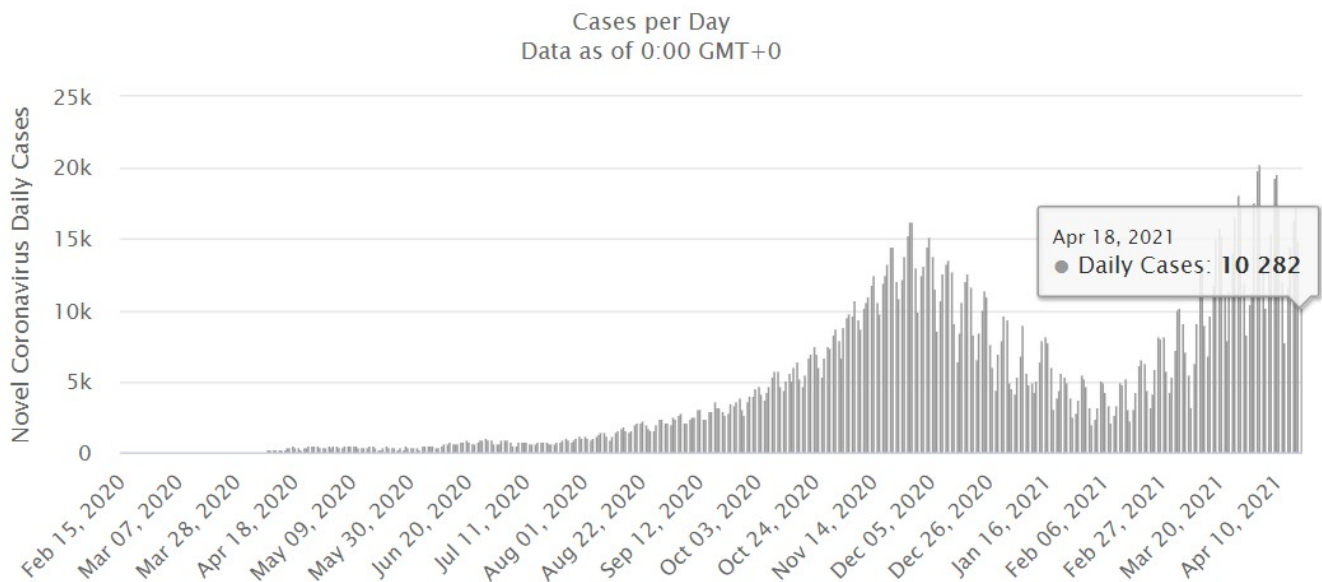
<sup>10</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Moldova: Coronavirus Disease - COVID 19 - Weekly Situation Report No. 53 (19 April 2021). OCHA, 2021. [cited 2021 April 19]. Available from: <https://reliefweb.int/report/moldova/moldova-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-weekly-situation-report-no-53-19-april-2021>.

## Situation report Ukraine

as of 19.04.2021



Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
1,953,016	1,487,677	40,000



Graph 8. Daily confirmed coronavirus cases in Ukraine<sup>11</sup>

### Cases of COVID-19

— Kyiv [has confirmed](#) 447 new coronavirus cases on April 18. The highest number of new cases were recorded in the following districts: Darnytskyi (147), Dniprovskyi (109) and Desnianskyi (42).

— An increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and the growth of lethal cases in Ukraine is associated with the circulation of new strains of the disease, [according to](#) Director-General of the Public Health Center Roman Rodyna. The circulation of a UK variant was recorded in 21 regions.

### Measures to contain the epidemic

— Kyiv will [remain on lockdown until April 30](#) as the daily number of new coronavirus cases and coronavirus-related deaths continues to climb. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said there was "no other choice, otherwise, the medical system would not be able to cope with a further rise in the number of patients, otherwise, there will be even more deaths."

— In March 2021, city authorities [closed](#) schools and kindergartens, theaters, and shopping centers, while cafes and restaurants were only allowed to provide takeaway food. Kyiv public transport is now operating on special passenger passes for those working for critical infrastructure enterprises.

### Education

<sup>11</sup> Worldometers. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/ukraine> accessed 19-04-2021.

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— On April 9, more than 4,800 schools in Ukraine have been transferred to distance learning due to a rise in coronavirus cases.

#### *Vaccination*

— As of April 18, 1,453 people were vaccinated against COVID-19 in Ukraine. In total, 450,647 people have been vaccinated since the beginning of the vaccination campaign.

— Ukraine began vaccinating the population against coronavirus on February 24.

— On February 23, a batch of 500,000 doses of the COVID-19 Covishield vaccine, developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca, arrived in Ukraine.

— The first batch of a COVID-19 vaccine from China's Sinovac Biotech vaccine was delivered in Ukraine on March 25, and its use began on April 13.

— On April 16, Ukraine received the first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.