



Stockholm, 28 February 2020  
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**Attention: Members of the ECDC Management Board**

**Reference: Update of ECDC's activities related to the novel coronavirus outbreak, COVID-19**

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Dear colleagues,

With this letter, I would like to inform you about ECDC's involvement in the novel coronavirus outbreak, COVID-19, and the work of our Agency to support Member States and the European Commission with this rapidly evolving situation.

Following the first reports of cases of acute respiratory syndrome in the Chinese Wuhan municipality at the end of December 2019, Chinese authorities identified a novel coronavirus as the main causative agent. It is a new strain of coronavirus, previously not identified in humans. On 12 February 2020, the novel coronavirus was named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) while the disease associated with it is now referred to as COVID-19. Since the early days of 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak has rapidly evolved with several countries in Europe now also affected.

We daily update the case numbers world-wide and in Europe on our website <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>, so I will not go into these here. In the past few days, numbers increased in the EU, particularly in Italy, but also in other Member States.

On Wednesday, I came back from Italy where I met the Italian Minister for Health Roberto Speranza, the European Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, and the World Health Organization Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge to discuss the situation in Italy. Since Tuesday, a joint WHO-ECDC team (with two experienced ECDC experts) is in Italy to support the national and regional authorities in their efforts to control the outbreak.

ECDC has in the past days closely monitored the rapid increase of coronavirus cases in Italy and we are continuously assessing the impact that the clusters in Italy have on the overall risk for the EU/EEA countries. We plan to publish a new risk assessment on Monday.

In order to offer ECDC support in this outbreak, I am in regular and frequent contact with DG SANTE of the European Commission, and the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament. My colleagues and I have also been participating in the Health Security Committee meetings and the AF has met in one regular and one extraordinary meeting to advise how to adapt testing and surveillance to the evolving situation. On 13 February, I attended (through a video link) the EU Council meeting for Health Minister and updated them on the latest developments of COVID-19 and earlier this month, I informed the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament about ECDC's work on COVID-19 in connection with my annual exchange of views with the Committee. Naturally, we also work very closely with our colleagues at WHO and the other CDCs, in particular from China, the US, Canada and Africa.

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ECDC has raised its internal preparedness level to PHE Level 2 at the end of January, which means that staff at ECDC are working in shifts to ensure that we are monitoring developments closely, and prepping necessary guidance documents and support. Media requests have also reached unprecedented levels.

At ECDC, 60 experts are now dedicated to this outbreak and working in the various internal Public Health Event (PHE) teams.

ECDC is regularly producing and supporting with:

- Daily updates, maps and tables
- Risk assessments with options for response
- Guidance and material for EU Member States
- Support in preparedness actions regarding laboratory capacity and hospital preparedness
- Template leaflets for national authorities to translate and customise
- Briefings at ECDC for visiting National Ministers and Public Health Institutes, Ambassadors, and others.
- Communication activities and interviews to media

We have a dedicated ECDC website for COVID-19 where you will find all the latest guidance documents and threat assessments: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>

In light of the rapidly evolving situation, we have decided to update our risk assessment COVID-19 on a daily basis, and can be found on the ECDC website: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/current-risk-assessment-novel-coronavirus-situation>.

For those of you who are active on social media, ECDC is on a daily basis informing about the latest updates on Twitter and on Facebook. Should you wish to follow us, our accounts are:

On Twitter:

- [@ECDC\\_EU](https://twitter.com/ECDC_EU)
- [@ECDC\\_Outbreaks](https://twitter.com/ECDC_Outbreaks)

On Facebook:

- <https://www.facebook.com/ECDC.EU/>

There is also an [ECDC Threat Report App](#) that you can easily download on you smartphones (Apple or Android).

Finally, please also find here below a list with links and a selection of the guidance produced by ECDC on COVID-19. We are constantly assessing the need to update existing, or produce new, guidance in light of recent developments. Every Wednesday, a 'Weekly Digest' with ECDC's outputs will be sent out to stakeholders, and we will include the Management Board to our send list to keep you informed of our work.

#### ECDC outputs:

- Updated case definition for EU surveillance: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/case-definition-and-european-surveillance-human-infection-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- Public health management of persons, including health care workers, having had contact with COVID-19 cases in the European Union: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/public-health-management-persons-including-health-care-workers-having-had-contact>
- Dashboard- COVID-19 situation worldwide (interactive map): <https://gap.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/COVID-19.html>

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- Situation update worldwide, which includes data updated daily at 08:00 CET: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>
- Weekly Communicable Disease Threats Report for 16-22 February, week 8, which includes an update on 2019-nCoV: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/communicable-disease-threats-report-16-22-february-2020-week-8>
- Infographic on novel coronavirus including basic information about the virus, symptoms, prevention and transmission: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/infographic-novel-coronavirus>
- COVID-19 Micro learning for public health professionals: [https://eva.ecdc.europa.eu/totara/catalog/index.php?catalog\\_cat\\_browse=16005&orderby=y=text&itemstyle=narrow](https://eva.ecdc.europa.eu/totara/catalog/index.php?catalog_cat_browse=16005&orderby=y=text&itemstyle=narrow)

Best regards,



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