



UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



COVID-19
RESPONSE

A Special Covid-19 Response Newsletter

• Issue No 8 • March, 2021

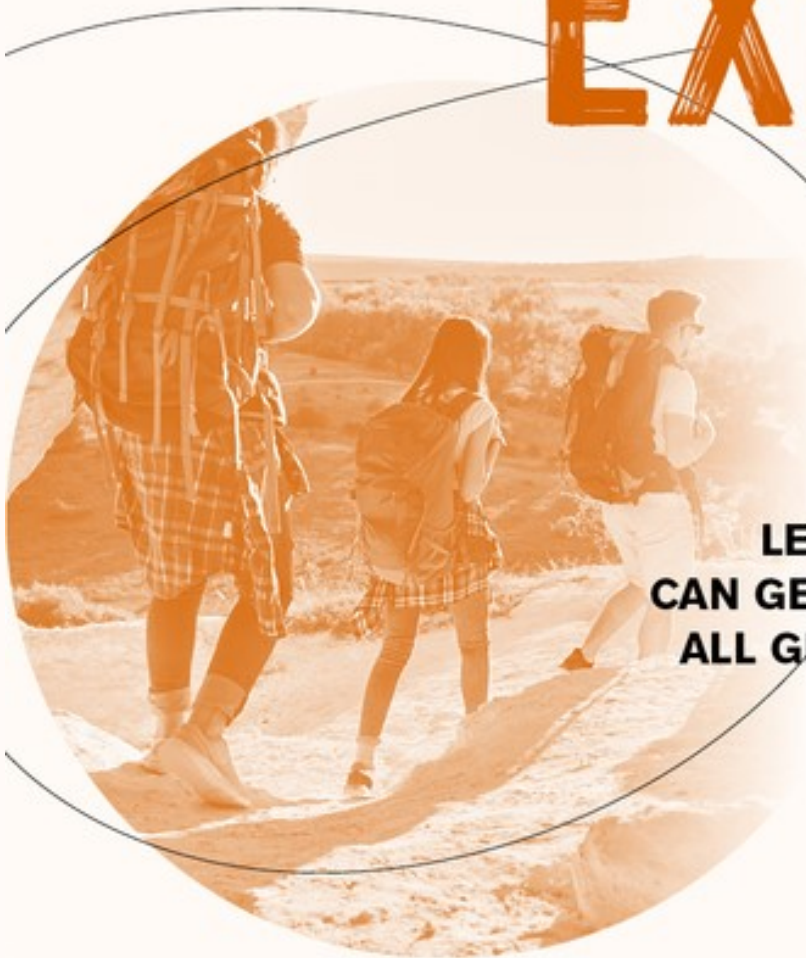
WE WILL

EXPLORE

AGAIN

**LET'S MAKE SURE EVERYONE
CAN GET THE VACCINE SO WE CAN
ALL GET BACK TO WHAT WE LOVE**

**#ONLY
TOGETHER**



The first 38,400 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Albania on March 12th through COVAX - the UN led global facility established to secure fair and equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for every country in the world. The UN Resident Coordinator Fiona McCluney, UNICEF Representative Roberto De Bernardi and WHO Albania Representative, Gerald Rockenschaub joined Minister of Health and Social Protection Ogerta Manastirliu to welcome the shipment at 'Mother Teresa' International Airport in Tirana. More [here](#).



Arrival of the first 38,400 AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccines in Albania

Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, WHO Representative and Head of Country Office in Albania had a number of interviews in Albanian media to help disperse doubts about COVID-19 vaccine safety. He also drew attention to the new #COVID variants and highlighted the importance of maintaining strong and effective public health safety measures, such as physical distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene. Watch interviews for [Report TV](#) and [MCN](#), [EuroNews Albania](#), [Vision Plus](#), [Klan TV](#) and [Top Channel](#).



Dr Gerald Rockenschaub of WHO Albania presenting at the Public Health Conference:

During a presentation in the auspices of the 7-th International Public Health Conference "Integration of Public Health services into Primary Health Care" in Tirana, organized with support of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, Dr. Rockenschaub commended and acknowledged the substantial work of frontline health workers, "without whom we wouldn't have been able to address this pandemic and its consequences in the Albanian context, but also globally" he said.



UNICEF continued support to the University of Medicine to strengthen capacities of health personnel in infection prevention and control. The MOHSP approved two sets of IPC standard protocols for family medicine and neonatology.

Lead national experts in infectious disease, pediatrics and neonatology conducted 38 on-line accredited training sessions during the month of March reaching around 700 health professionals.

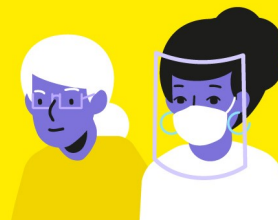
The trained health personnel will continue to be supported in the coming weeks, through supervision and remote coaching to ensure sustainable change in behaviors and practices.

UNICEF is also working with the Institute of Public Health and the Operator of Health Services to facilitate the communication of the vaccination campaign already in place. Part of support during March was printing of vaccination cards, communication materials and other documents required in the process of COVID-19 vaccination.

Who should get the COVID-19 vaccine first?

Prioritising these groups will save more lives and reduce the burden on health services:

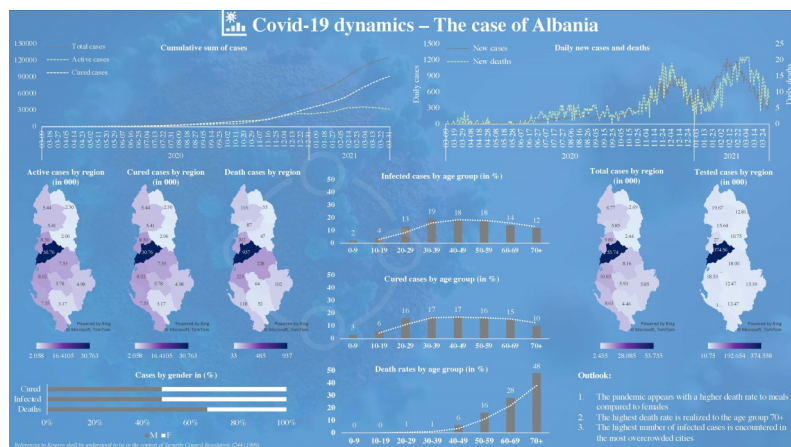
- Frontline health and care workers
- People at high risk due to existing health conditions
- Older adults



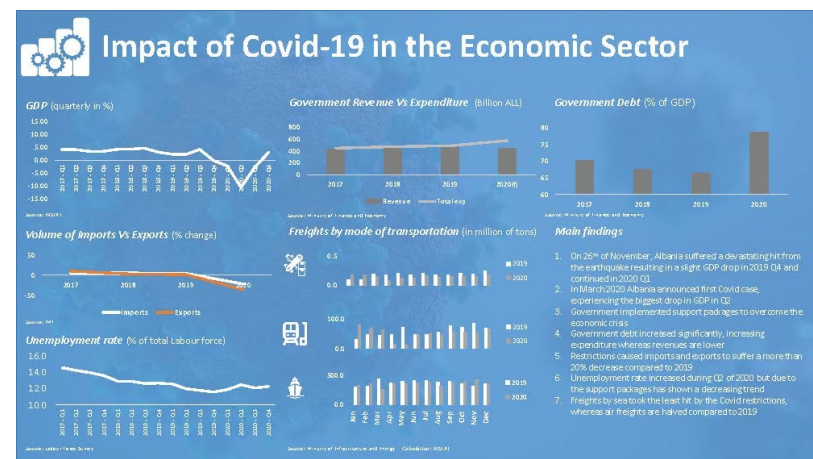
Source: WHO

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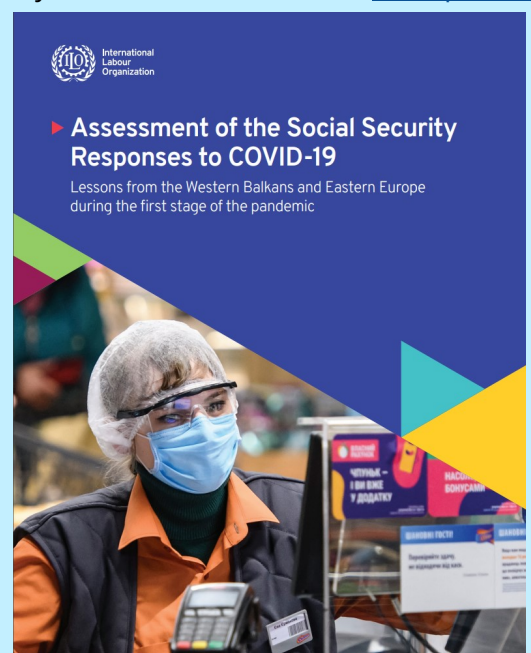
COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of statistics and reliable data and the UN is supporting INSTAT over in reviewing data on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic in the country.



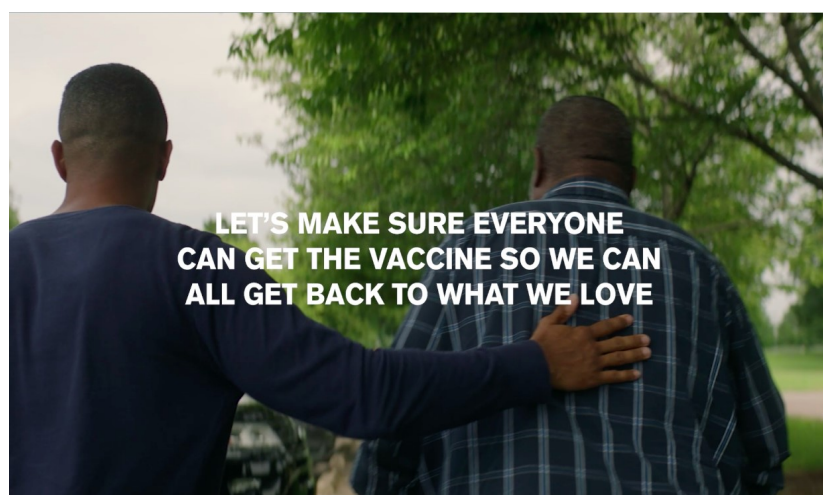
As part of the **UN Development Account** project managed by **UNECE** two consultants analyzed Covid-19 dynamics and the impact on various economic, trade and social indicators. Highlights of the study show that the quarterly GDP dropped the most in the second quarter of 2020 (-10.6%), but started then bouncing back and positive growth was recorded in the last quarter of 2020 (2.9%). Read [all details here](#).



The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the world of work. Widespread workplace closures due to the lockdown have resulted in significant loss of labour income through higher levels of inactivity and unemployment. In this context, the **International Labor Organization (ILO)** carried out the assessment of the social security responses to COVID-19 in selected countries in Central and Eastern Europe including Albania. The objective of this report is to comparatively review the national social security measures taken between March and June 2020, in response to COVID-19 crisis, analyze their effectiveness and long-term consequences, and discuss future challenges in improving the social security system. The report looks primarily at cash benefits aiming at the working age population and their family members. Download the [full report here](#).



The **ILO in Albania** is supporting vulnerable women who have been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. Recently, thanks to Sweden funding, the ILO is implementing a cash transfer programme for women who were laid-off by textile, clothing, leather and footwear companies benefiting more than 250 women above 50 years of age, facing difficulties in reintegrating into the labour market. [Read More](#).





UNHCR organized a roundtable with partners Caritas and People's Advocate to discuss protection monitoring at borders, including improved identification and referral of persons with specific needs, also in the Covid-19 situation.

UNHCR and its partner RMSA continue to closely monitor the secondary, socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 emergency on refugees and asylum-seekers. Many are now back at work (some with different employers/industries) following successful coaching and support.

UNHCR partners continue to provide regular services, including food and non food items at border reception facilities (Caritas), and case management and counselling to refugees, asylum-seekers and those at risk of statelessness (RMSA/Tirana Legal Aid Society). RMSA's part-time doctor continues to provide advice and monitor suspected cases of COVID-19 among above

UNFPA has continued to provide support to young key populations and vulnerable youth groups like drug users and young prisoners, focusing on rapid tests of HIV, Hep B, Hep C and Sifiliz, in service providing centers and through mobile teams, accompanied with mental health support sessions in times of Covid19 benefiting at least 50 staff and target groups of partner NGOs Aksion Plus and Stop AIDS.

Injecting drug users are the most at risk group for receiving and transmitting HIV infection, mainly through the exchange of syringes / needles with their injecting and sexual partners. They are also exposed to Covid-19, not only because their immune system is affected by drug use and abuse, but also by engaging in unhealthy behaviors.



UNFPA continues to provide support to vulnerable youth groups

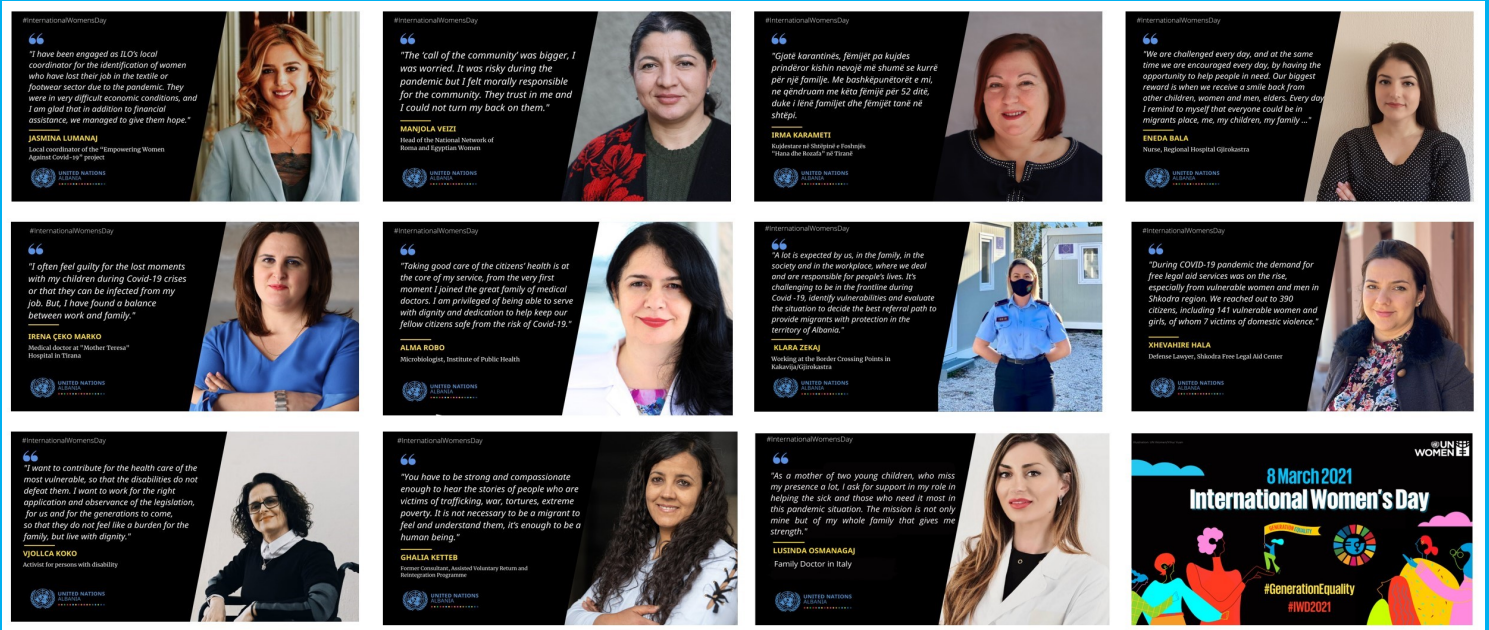
UNICEF has been supporting the continuation of the learning process throughout the pandemic situation, by strengthening of the online platform akademi.al with focus on the most vulnerable children, those affected by earthquake, children with disability, etc. So far 350.000 children and teachers are registered in the platform and 200.000 virtual classes have taken place so far. 7,000 video lessons are available in the platform and 1,000 videos for children with hearing difficulties are also made available.

In efforts to reduce the digital divide, **UNICEF** is supporting the Ministry of Education in expanding the lessons provided through the Albanian public TV, through the dedicated Programme "RTSH Shkolla". The programme intends to reach children who do not have access to devices and internet provision. More than 100.000 children are expected to be reached as part of this support which has just kicked off.

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES SAY COVID-19 HAS DRAMATICALLY WORSENERD THEIR LIVES

#ONLY TOGETHER

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS



Critical to preventing and mitigating the effects of COVID-19, is reliably communicating essential information to the public. Partnership with a large array of partners including the private sector play a vital role in spreading the message and minimizing the likelihood of transmission and impact on society. In this context, **UNDP** has partnered with One Telecommunications in Albania to spread the word and educate the public about this disease.

In the week prior to the International Women's Day the UN Agencies in Albania run a dedicated campaign aimed to listening the voices of our strong women who showed resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic.



UN Albania joined the new campaign 'Only Together' - a global communications and advocacy initiative aiming to advance fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines worldwide.



With the biggest vaccine rollout in history now underway, millions of doses are being delivered across the globe, including to some of the world's poorest countries, through the efforts of COVAX, the UN-led global vaccine equity mechanism. For more information [click here](#).

The joint Campaign features a [web portal](#), where citizens keep getting accurate information about the disease, and key messages aiming to shape their behavior to prevent the spread of the virus. All facts and information come from authoritative health sources, thus protecting the public from fake news. Part of the initiative are live online sessions with a pulmonologist, answering questions coming from the public about the disease, how to protect themselves. The pulmonologist replied to over 200 people over the past weekend only.

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Skenderbej Street, Gurten Building,
2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania
Tel: +355 (4) 2250205, 2250224
E-mail: registry.al@un.org

