

Governance of COVID-19

MONTENEGRO

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Characteristics of the governance system

- Montenegro is a parliamentary democracy
- Legislative power is in the hands of unicameral Parliament (Skupština) which has 81 members elected for four years.
- The Parliament elects the Government
 - After the election, the president gives the mandate to the leader of the party-coalition that won the most votes to propose the Government
 - The Government needs to receive support of the Parliament in order to be elected
 - The size of the Government is not fixed, currently there are 12 ministers
 - In the past the Government usually served the whole four year term
- President who is directly elected is the head of the state. The mandate of the president is five years.

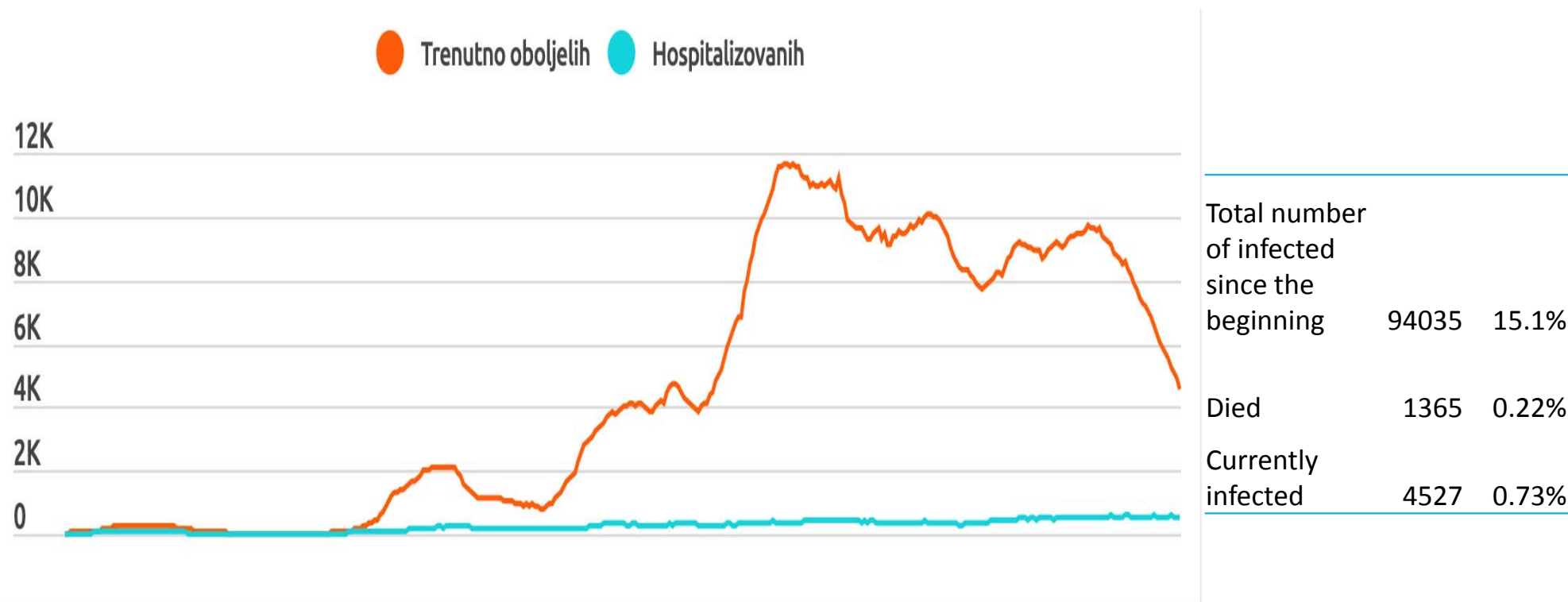
Governance of the health care system

- The Ministry of Health is responsible for governing the health care system and developing health policy.
- There is an obligatory health insurance that covers most of the population, including unemployed people if they are registered with the Employment Agency, migrants, asylum seekers.
- Local governments are not included in the health care system. The system is nationally governed.

COVID-19 pandemic

- Overview of the evolution of the pandemic in your country
 - 1st phase of the pandemic
 - The first case was confirmed on 17 March 2020, making it the last European country to register a case of SARS-CoV-2
 - 24 May 2020, 68 days after the first case was recorded in Montenegro, it became the first corona-free country in Europe
 - 2nd wave of the pandemic
 - highest level of the infection rate: 25 November 2020 - 11678, following the funeral of the leader of Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro (October 31 2020)

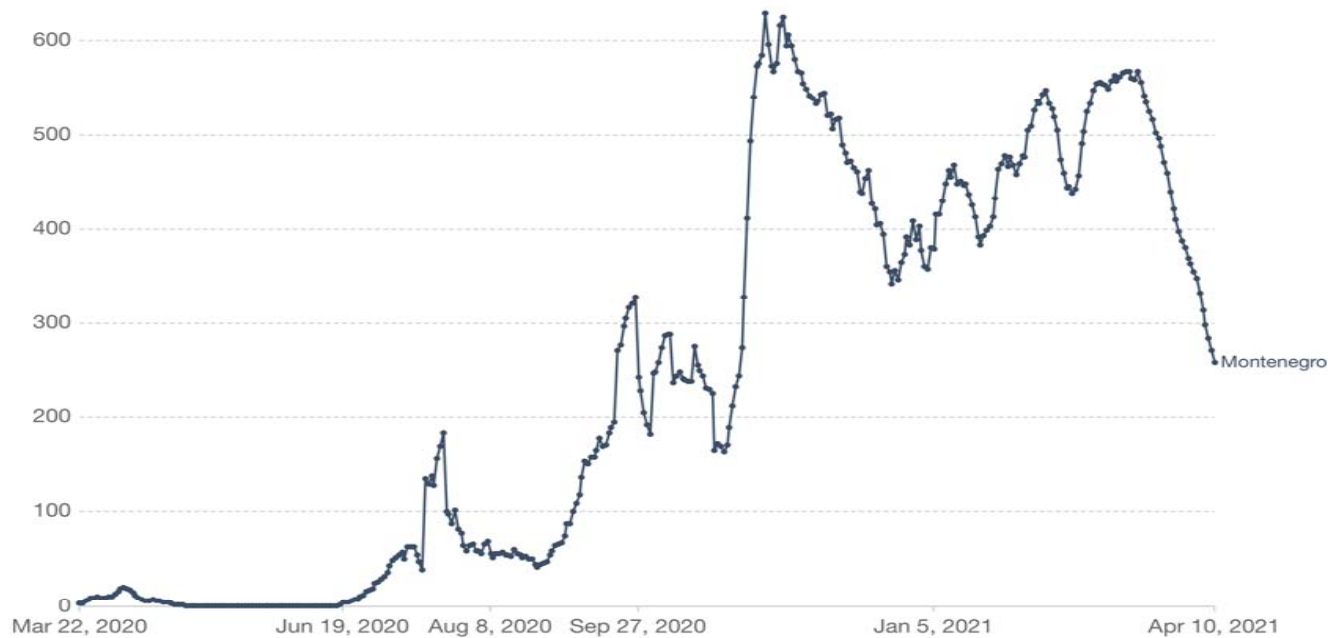
COVID-19 pandemic



COVID-19 pandemic

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Total number of infected since the beginning	94035	15.1%
Died	1365	0.22%
Currently infected	4527	0.73%

COVID-19 pandemic

Clerical protests by Serbian Orthodox Church 2018 – August 2020.



Response: Patriotic gathering, September, 2020.



Governance of COVID-19

- Two periods – “old” and “new” government
- Change of Government as a “big deal” since it is the first Government without DPS since 1990
- The previous Government – beginning of pandemic till December 2020:
 - National Coordination Body (15 “other political positions” – 7 “health professionals”)
 - Institute for Public Health (mainly professional) - **more active and visible**
 - Twitter campaign #ostanidoma (stay at home)
- The new Government – ongoing
 - Independent professional body (5 “other political positions” – 2 “health professionals”)
 - Institute for Public Health (mainly professional) - less active and visible
- The “first wave” more restrictive than the second
- Exceptions for religious ceremonies in the second period - people protest

Governance of COVID-19

- EU support during pandemic – approximately 53 million EUR
- Different donations - UN, China...
 - Medical supplies, masks, respirators
- Tough decisions regarding the economy
 - since the country depends on tourism, hospitality and services
 - health vs. economy debate – protests of tourism and hospitality workers
- Opening borders as political or economic question?
 - People from the region can enter without PCR test - decision of the new Government

COVID-19 measures

- Key instruments used to curb the pandemic
 - Spring 2020: closing everything except essential business, work at home, curfew, no movement among cities, closing borders
 - Fall 2020: less restrictive when it comes to closing businesses, less people working at home, no movement among cities, open borders
- Human rights issues in relation to the COVID-19 measures
 - Publishing the names of people in self-isolation as a human rights violation
 - Help to the victims of gender based violence (raise of domestic and gender based violence)
 - Institutions not ready for different regime of work
 - Selectiveness – attempts by both Governments to use the health crises to restrict the right to protest by the “others”

COVID-19 and education

- Education institutions were mainly closed. There were some brief or partial opening in the second wave, but most times they remained closed.
- Universities are recommended to remain switched to online distance learning mode. Not an order - just strong recommendation.
- Distance learning is used
 - A significant percentage of households with children and adolescents of school age do not have computers/ laptops (21%) or tablets (51%) connected to the internet that can be used for distance learning
 - Also, children report learning less via distance learning
 - Social aspects of education are missing (UNDP, Rapid Social Impact Assessment, April 2020)

COVID-19 and borders

- In the beginning total closure, in the second phase, opening international borders and closing borders among municipalities.
 - Accusations about electoral meddling from Serbia and Republic of Srpska – local elections in Niksic

COVID-19 and economies

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Montenegro had already faced economic slowdown in 2019, driven by the lower domestic demand
- Montenegro entered the COVID-19 crisis with the continued trend of the number of unemployed hovering slightly above 15%
- In the new circumstances, depending on the effects of the tourist season, the economic downturn in 2020 is estimated by the World Bank to be in the range of –5.6% to –8.9%
- The severity of the crisis was visible almost immediately. From the outbreak of the crisis to 30 April, the number of unemployed increased from 35,429 to 40,361, representing a current unemployment rate of 17.4% based on the National Employment Office's methodology.
- Additionally, MONSTAT is registering almost 16,000 fewer employed in April 2020 than in April 2019. This trend was corroborated by the MSME&E survey findings, which found that employment in MSME&Es decreased by 2.5 pp from March to April 2020.
- Government reaction:
 - Financial support to individuals and companies
 - Tax relieves and postponements
 - Preferential social insurance policies to support the resumption of work and production
 - Service optimization (special measures to protect fishermen, agriculture workers, etc.)
 - Reduction of costs ...
- Source: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE BUSINESS SECTOR AND THE GROWTH PROSPECTS OF THE MONTENEGRIN ECONOMY, UNDP, June 2020

COVID-19 and vaccination

- Vaccination delayed and started on February 20th 2021
 - Serbian donation of 2000 Sputnik V vaccines
 - Bilateral agreement with Russia - Sputnik V – 14.000 delivered
 - Bilateral agreement with China – Sinofarm – 30.000 delivered
 - Covax mechanism – Astra Zeneka - 24.000 delivered (84.000 approved)
- Two donations refused - Oleg Deripaska 100.000 and Petros Statis 50.000 – political or safety reasons? Official version - the vaccines could not be checked and "private donations unacceptable" – accusations of political motivations
- Issues with vaccination:
 - Public opinion poll – 51% wants to get vaccinated
 - However, registered for vaccination less than 15%
 - Fake news, lack of support among doctors

COVID-19 and vaccination

Daily COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people

Shown is the rolling 7-day average per 100 people in the total population. This is counted as a single dose, and may not equal the total number of people vaccinated, depending on the specific dose regime (e.g. people receive multiple doses).

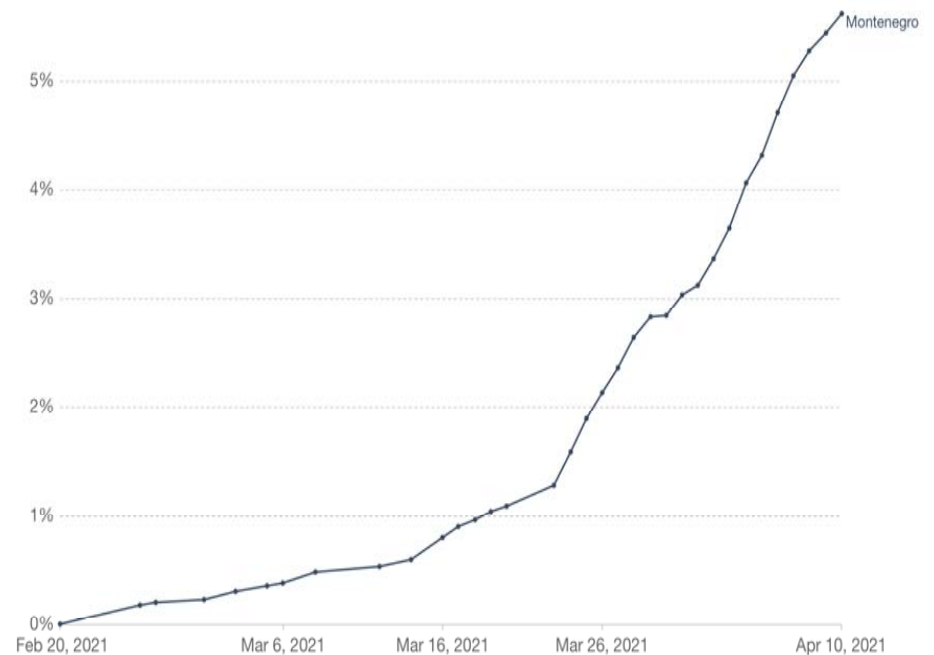


Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data - Last updated 11 April, 11:48 (London time)

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Share of people who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine

Share of the total population that received at least one vaccine dose. This may not equal the share that are fully vaccinated if the vaccine requires two doses.



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data - Last updated 11 April, 11:48 (London time)

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Conclusion: Lessons and prospects

- Service dependent economy as a systemic problems and vulnerability
- Trust in Government correlated with the change of Government
 - Would you say the situation in the past 12 months has...

