

Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak in the EU

Fundamental Rights Implications

Country: Slovenia

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1. Measures taken by government/public authorities

As with many countries around the world, the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus completely transformed the public life in Slovenia. The first Covid-19 case was confirmed on 4 March 2020.¹ Since then the authorities have been stepping up measures to contain the spread of the virus, and currently measures are practically adopted on a daily basis. An epidemic was declared in Slovenia on Thursday, 12 March 2020.² Consequently, on 13 March 2020 the National Plan on the Protection and Relief in the Event of Epidemic or Pandemic Infectious Diseases in Humans (*Državni načrt zaščite in reševanja ob pojavu epidemije oziroma pandemije nalezljive bolezni pri ljudeh*) was put in motion.³ The Civil Protection of the Republic of Slovenia (*Civilna zaščita Republike Slovenije*) was activated to support coordinating measures to control and contain the spread of the Covid-19. On 13 March 2020, the new government took office, and on 14 March 2020 it set up a Crisis staff unit for the containment and control of the COVID-19 epidemic (*Krizni štab za zajezitev in obvladovanje epidemije COVID-19*).⁴ The government abolished the Crisis staff unit on 24 March, as the transition period has ended and the ministries can fully perform their duties.⁵

By 23 March, 2PM, 13,812 tests on Covid-19 were applied in Slovenia, there were 442 confirmed Covid-19 cases,⁶ and three persons have died.⁷ In the past weeks, tests were firstly applied to persons with acute respiratory infection who were in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case, or who travelled to or reside in areas where the virus has occurred, and later on to individuals from the general population with acute respiratory infection who are hospitalised or could be hospitalised in the near future, as well as on healthcare workers and residents of elderly homes and social care institutions with the same symptoms.⁸ Currently, tests are carried out on individuals who have mild symptoms and are above 60 years of age, or have underlying medical conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes), or have immunodeficiency. As regards other persons with mild symptoms, testing is carried out based on the assessment of personal doctor or paediatrician. Testing is encouraged, particularly in cases when partners/parents of such a person belong to at-risk group, or when such a person is employed at specific workplace (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes for elderly).⁹ Testing for payment is not available in Slovenia.¹⁰

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¹ For more information, please see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov. All hyperlinks were accessed on 2 April 2020.

² Government of the Republic of Slovenia (2020), '[Slovenia declares coronavirus epidemic](#)', public release, 12 March 2020.

³ For more information, see the webpage of the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (*Uprava Republike Slovenije za zaščito in reševanje*) on www.sos112.si/slo/page.php?src=os121.htm.

⁴ Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Health (2020), '[The Republic of Slovenia's crisis unit on concrete measures to contain the epidemic](#)', public release, 14 March 2020.

⁵ For more information, see the government webpage on www.gov.si/novice/2020-03-24-6-redna-seja-vlade-republike-slovenije/.

⁶ For more information, please see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov.

⁷ Ministrstvo za zdravje (2020), '[Aktivnosti ministrstva za zdravje glede COVID -19](#)', public release, 23 March 2020.

⁸ Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute for public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/definicija_za_prijavo_in_spremljanje_novega_koronavirusa_16_3_2020_usklajeno_poslano_beovic.pdf.

⁹ Ministrstvo za zdravje (2020), '[Ministrstvo za zdravje z vrsto ukrepov v boju proti COVID-19](#)', public release, 22 March 2020.

¹⁰ For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sl/koronavirus-pogosta-vprasanja-in-odgovori#ali-se-lahko-testiram-na-koronavirus%3F.

The National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*, NIJZ) produced instructions targeting various groups, including individuals (in)directly affected by the infection. Patients with confirmed infection who do not need hospital care shall stay at home until recovery, try to self-isolate as much as possible and should observe practical advice (e.g. regarding proper respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, washing hands, washing laundry, airing out the room).¹¹ Instructions for individuals with acute respiratory infection (with suspicion of the Covid-19 infection) who are not admitted to hospital received similar instructions. They are required to self-isolate until the end of illness, and at least 14 days after the onset of symptoms.¹² There are also instructions for individuals who were in close contact with an infected person, including family members of infected persons. They are advised, for example, to avoid all non-essential contacts with other people and, if possible, to try to self-isolate for 14 days.¹³ Based on the Communicable Diseases Act (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*),¹⁴ and upon proposal of the NIJZ, the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) issued 180 decisions on quarantine as of 20 March, restricting the movement of persons concerned.¹⁵

To inform the public on how to prevent the infection and about measures adopted to contain the spread of the Covid-19, the government set up a dedicated official webpage.¹⁶ It is regularly updated with information about the relevant developments, events, government measures, recommendations for citizens, FAQs, etc.. It, among other things, includes a link to the Legal-information system of the Republic of Slovenia (*Pravno-informacijski sistem Republike Slovenije*, PISRS), an online database with the national legislation to which a dedicated webpage including all adopted regulation to counter the Covid-19 crisis has been added.¹⁷ Basic information is also available in Hungarian and Italian, languages of the national minorities,¹⁸ while more comprehensive information is also available in English.¹⁹ The authorities hold press conferences on a daily basis and a Slovenian sign language interpreter is always present. Press conferences are streamed live via internet on GOV.SI Portal, national public broadcaster RTV Slovenia's MMC portal and on Chanel 3 of TV Slovenia. Information is also available via government Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram account.²⁰ A call centre, operational from 8AM to 8PM, has also been established. The government and the NIJZ also delivered to all Slovenian households a leaflet with basic information on the Covid-19, instructions on how to prevent infection and how to act in case of infection. The leaflets are also available in Hungarian and Italian.

An additional major source of information in Slovenian language is the website of the National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ). It includes essential information about the Covid-19 and a series of guidelines and instructions targeting general public as well as different actors (e.g. specific

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¹¹ Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on

www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/navodila_za_bolnika_v_domaci_oskrbi_koronavirus.pdf.

¹² Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/navodila_za_osebe_s_sumom_na_covid-19_doma_kratka_za_splet.pdf.

¹³ Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/sars-cov-2_obvestilo_za_kontakte_5_18.03.2020.pdf.

¹⁴ Slovenia, [Communicable Diseases Act](#) (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*), 16 November 1995, and subsequent modifications.

¹⁵ Ministrstvo za zdravje (2020), '[Ministrstvo za zdravje z vrsto ukrepov v boju proti COVID-19](#)', public release, 22 March 2020.

¹⁶ For more information, see the government webpage on www.gov.si/teme/koronavirus/.

¹⁷ For more information, see the PISRS database on www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/aktualno?jsessionid=Vc+R+amI5yNMOXn3c9nKpS9m.

¹⁸ For more information, see the government webpage on www.gov.si/hu/temak/koronavirus/ and www.gov.si/it/argomenti/coronavirus/.

¹⁹ For more information, see the government webpage on www.gov.si/en/topics/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/.

²⁰ For more information, see the government Facebook page on www.facebook.com/VladaRepublikeSlovenije/, Twitter account on <https://twitter.com/vladars>, and the Instagram account on www.instagram.com/gov.si/.

professional groups, including, for example, staff in the Asylum home and integration houses for persons with international protection, respectively, staff in social care institutions).²¹ The institute also produced basic information and instructions aimed at persons with visual impairments.²²

Major mainstream media dedicate considerable space to all the latest developments regarding the Covid-19 epidemic. Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia (*Radiotelevizija Slovenija*, RTVSLO), the national public broadcaster, offers its central news programme with Slovenian sign language interpretation. The national public broadcaster also provided information on Covid-19 and how to prevent infection in easy reading on its website.²³

As noted, on 12 March 2020, because of the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, Slovenia declared the Covid-19 epidemic on the basis of the Communicable Diseases Act,²⁴ and the recent period saw the adoption of a variety of measures particularly aimed at enforcing social distancing.

With the Ordinance on the prohibition of the provision of air services in the Republic of Slovenia (*Odlok o prepovedi opravljanja zračnih prevozov v Republiki Sloveniji*), the authorities banned international air traffic in the country on 17 March, lasting until 30 March for air transport in the EU, and until further notice for international air transport from and to non-EU countries. Exceptions from the ban include aircraft carrying out scheduled and charter air transport of cargo and/or post, the aircraft performing international ferry flights, and individual flights for humanitarian or medical purposes.²⁵

Arrangements at certain borders have also been changed. Since midnight, 18 March, border crossing points for local border traffic at the border with Croatia are shut down.²⁶ More comprehensive measures have applied at the border with Italy since 11 March, from 6PM. From midnight, 19 March, the applicable measures include the following: four checkpoints shall be set up, international railway and bus transport is suspended. Cargo transport is also suspended, with the exception of transportation of post, protective equipment, medical devices and humanitarian aid. Foreign citizens are permitted entry provided that they present evidence in English, Italian or Slovenian of a negative molecular laboratory test not older than three days, or, if lacking such a proof, their body temperature is below 37.5°C and they show no signs of a respiratory infection. Slovenian citizens and persons with permanent or temporary residence are granted entry. If their body temperature is above 37.5°C or if they show signs of a respiratory infection, they will receive information about the relevant instructions produced by the National Institute of Public Health. These measures do not apply to the Italian and Slovenian citizens who own land on both sides of the border and are involved in agricultural work.²⁷

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²¹ For more information, see the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health on www.nijz.si/.

²² Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sl/navodila-za-slepe-v-casu-sirjenja-okuzbe-s-covid-19.

²³ For more information, see the Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia webpage on www.rtvsllo.si/dostopno/o-koronavirusu-v-lahkem-branju/517035?fbclid=IwAR3fD9dtzj7PWAleQCAM7UBoEsu-JLg3wjzWzxZ5WBBDtkoEU3rywTjL94vE.

²⁴ Slovenia, [Communicable Diseases Act](#) (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*), 16 November 1995, and subsequent modifications; Slovenia, [Order on the declaration of the contagious disease SARS-Cov-2 \(COVID-19\) epidemic in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odredba o razglasitvi epidemije nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) na območju Republike Slovenije*), 12 March 2020.

²⁵ Slovenia, [Ordinance on the prohibition of the provision of air services in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o prepovedi opravljanja zračnih prevozov v Republiki Sloveniji*), 16 March 2020.

²⁶ Slovenia, [Ordinance on the temporary suspension of the operation of border crossings for local border traffic at the border with the Republic of Croatia](#) (*Odlok očasnem prenehanju obratovanja mejnih prehodov za obmejni promet na meji z Republiko Hrvaško*), 17 March 2020.

²⁷ Slovenia, [Ordinance determining conditions of entry into the Republic of Slovenia from the Italian Republic to contain and control the spread of communicable disease](#) (*Odlok o določitvi pogojev vstopa v Republiko Slovenijo iz Italijanske republike zaradi zajeitve in obvladovanja nalezljive bolezni*), 18 March 2020.

Similar measures have also been adopted in relation to the border with Austria, but bus transport and cargo transport, however, have not been suspended.²⁸

The authorities also adopted specific measures to restrict social interactions in the country. Since midnight, 20 March 2020, movement and assembly of people in public places and public surfaces, and access to such places are prohibited. Movement, accessing and staying in public places, subject to maintaining a safe distance to other persons, are only allowed for individuals in specified situations (e.g. going to work, providing care and assistance to persons needing support, accessing pharmacies, food shops, health and sanitation services, accessing services for persons with disabilities, accessing emergency services, accessing banks and post offices, accessing public parks and other walking areas). For the same reasons, and subject to safe distance, access is allowed for groups of immediate family members, of persons in shared households, and groups of up to five co-workers who share personal means of transportation for commuting to work or to perform tasks in the ranks of Civil Protection. This prohibition shall be in force until the reasons for it cease to exist, as determined by the government with an order. Violation of this prohibition carries a fine from EUR 70 to 400.²⁹

As of 16 March, public passenger bus and railway transport, including transport with cable cars and funiculars, is suspended. Taxi transportation is allowed if the driver prior to the entry of a new passenger arranges for proper disinfection of the parts of the vehicle that are in regular physical contact with the passenger.³⁰

As of 16 March 2020, education institutions at all levels, including student dormitories, are almost completely closed. The exceptions include education institution set up for work with children with emotional and behavioural issues, and dormitories in the case of secondary school students, including foreign students, who are prevented to return to the place of their permanent residence because of the current security situation, unaccompanied children with international protection or those seeking asylum, university students with permanent residence in student dormitories, student families, and foreign university students and visiting professors who cannot return to places of their permanent residence because of the existing security situation. This prohibition shall remain in force until the reasons for it cease to exist, as determined by the government by an order published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uradni list Republike Slovenije*).³¹ No organised care for children is allowed, and the Slovenian PM asked local authorities to arrange for individual care of children at their homes, in particular for emergency care of children of workers indispensable for the basic functioning of society in the current situation (e.g. healthcare workers, workers in communication and energy sectors, workers in communal services, police officers).³² Of the two largest municipalities in Slovenia, the Municipality of Maribor announced that no emergency care

²⁸ Slovenia, [Ordinance determining conditions of entry into the Republic of Slovenia from the Republic of Austria to contain and control the spread of communicable disease](#) (*Odlok o določitvi pogojev vstopa v Republiko Slovenijo iz Republike Avstrije zaradi zaježitve in obvladovanja nalezljive bolezni*), 24 March 2020.

²⁹ Slovenia, [Ordinance on a temporary general prohibition of movement and assembly of people in public places and surfaces in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni splošni prepovedi gibanja in zbiranja ljudi na javnih mestih in površinah v Republiki Sloveniji*), 19 March 2020, in conj. with Slovenia, [Communicable Diseases Act](#) (*Zakon o nalezljivih boleznih*), 16 November 1995, and subsequent modifications.

³⁰ Slovenia, [Ordinance on the temporary prohibition of and restrictions on public transport of passengers in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni prepovedi in omejitvah javnega prevoza potnikov v Republiki Sloveniji*), 14 March 2020.

³¹ Slovenia, [Ordinance on the temporary prohibition of gatherings in education institution, universities and independent higher education institutions](#) (*Odlok o začasni prepovedi zbiranja ljudi v zavodih s področja vzgoje in izobraževanja ter univerzah in samostojnih visokošolskih zavodih*), 15 March 2020, and subsequent modifications.

³² Predsednik Vlade Republike Slovenije (2020), '[Predsednik vlade Janez Janša: Župane in županje naprošamo k aktivnemu ravnanju pri uveljavljanju nujnih ukrepov za zaježitev širitve koronavirusa](#)', public release, 15 March 2020.

would be organised,³³ while the Municipality of Ljubljana reported that it would organise such care at the home of the applicant (parent of the child) or at the home of a volunteer. The measure applies to pre-school children and pupils from grades 1 to 5, but only children whose parents work in organisations deemed necessary for the functioning of society and the state in emergency situations are entitled to this kind of childcare. Children have to already attend a Ljubljana kindergarten or school and both their parents must work in the same shift.³⁴

After the closure of schools, distance education has been introduced via e-mails, social media and the Slovenian education network (*Slovensko izobraževalno omrežje*, SIO), an online platform with textbooks and other teaching materials and tools. Online seminars are available for teachers with no prior experience as well as those who are more adept at using distance education tools channels.³⁵ The Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*) warned about the importance of securing equal access to education for all children, noting that there were more than 3,500 households with children without internet access in Slovenia. The Advocate highlighted the case of schools which regularly provided instructions to such children via regular mail as an example to be replicated by other schools.³⁶ Children in multiple children families also faced obstacles in accessing distance education, as not every child in such families had their own computers.³⁷ For some children living in poverty, the school hot meal was the only hot meal of the day. It was reported that after the closure of schools hot meals were delivered to their homes, but that this was not necessarily the case in all parts of the country.³⁸ The Human Rights Ombudsman (*Varuh človekovih pravic*) also highlighted that not all children enjoyed equal opportunities when it came to distance education. They urged that the most vulnerable be taken care of during distance education and that adopted measures had to take into consideration the best interests of the child in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ombudsman also warned that, generally, special attention should be paid when devising the measures to counter the spread of the virus, as these might to a larger extent affect socially excluded vulnerable groups.³⁹

While it is suggested, as, for example, in the government document on the rights and obligations in the situation of the virus outbreak,⁴⁰ that those working parents who cannot arrange care for their children may in such a situation invoke the provision on force majeure from the Employment Relationships Act (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*),⁴¹ this is not necessarily a straightforward proposition. For example, the president of a major national trade union noted that such an arrangement should be firstly negotiated with employers, namely it should be necessary to answer the question of what happens if a worker asks for an absence and their request is denied. The trade unionist further noted that workers were only entitled to half of their salaries in such situations, a considerable decline in income which particularly affects households with children as these have more needs compared to

³³ Mestna občina Maribor (2020), '[V Mariboru v času izrednih razmer ne bomo organizirali nujnega varstva otrok](#)', public release, 13 March 2020.

³⁴ Mestna občina Ljubljana (2020), '[Varstvo otrok na domu – prostovoljci](#)', public release, 16 March 2020.

³⁵ For more information, see the SIO webpage on <https://sio.si/>.

³⁶ Zagovornik načela enakosti (2020), '[Zagovornik načela enakosti: Enake možnosti v času koronavirusa so še posebej pomembne v izobraževanju](#)', public release, 19 March 2020.

³⁷ T. K. B., M. Z. (2020), '[Veččlanske družine imajo težave pri učenju na daljavo](#)', MMC RTVSLO, 17 March 2020.

³⁸ Kristan, T. (2020), '[Za topel obrok za socialno ogrožene otroke marsikje ni poskrbljeno](#)', 24ur.com, 21 March 2020. (news video item)

³⁹ Varuh človekovih pravic (2020), '[Varuh Svetina: "V času šolanja na daljavo je treba poskrbeti za najšibkeje"](#)', public release, 27 March 2020.

⁴⁰ Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti (2020), [Uveljavljanje pravic in obveznosti iz delovnega razmerja v času posebnih okoliščin zaradi zmanjšanja širjenja koronavirusa SARS-CoV-2, Verzija 1.1](#), Ljubljana, Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti.

⁴¹ Slovenia, Employment relationships act (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications.

households without children.⁴² According to the Employment Relationships Act, in such cases workers are entitled to half of their salary, as if they were working, but not less than 70% of the minimum wage (currently EUR 940.58).⁴³

The complete ban on visits to retirement homes has also been in place, as the resident population is deemed particularly vulnerable in case of infection.⁴⁴ The Human Rights Ombudsman considered this issue on 17 March, noted that it was not competent for epidemiological assessments of adopted measures, and established that the medical profession saw the measure necessary, so it should be respected. The Ombudsman, however, highlighted that it was crucial that caregivers provided all necessary information about persons in care, and that the latter experienced the imposed limitations as little as possible.⁴⁵ The Silver Thread (*Srebrna nit*), a civil society organisation advocating the rights of the elderly, addressed a letter to the government and the general public warning that nursing homes were understaffed and could not ensure that staff working with infected persons did not provide care to persons who did not contract the infection. They called on the authorities to provide for additional healthcare and caregiver staff in these institutions.⁴⁶ While the Ministry of Health (*Ministrstvo za zdravje*) and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (*Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti*) are undertaking joint efforts to tackle this issue,⁴⁷ and an NGO is recruiting volunteers willing to provide help in nursing homes and other caretaking facilities,⁴⁸ the lack of trained staff and the lack of protective equipment in nursing homes remain pressing issues.⁴⁹

Public institutions, social services, non-governmental organisations, donors and others, is coordinating and supporting various activities on the national, regional and local levels with the aim of helping the most vulnerable groups of our society (elderly, chronic patients, disadvantaged families, people with disabilities ...). Different activities are underway: adequate care of elderly and chronic patients that are not able to go to the stores by themselves neither do they have relatives that can do that on their behalf, distribution of aid packages, distribution of personal protective equipment to the extent possible, psychosocial assistance and telephone conversations, coordination of volunteers and their monitoring etc.⁵⁰

As of 13 March, visits to prisons and a correctional home have been banned.⁵¹ The National Institute of Public Health produced instructions on how to prevent the spread of the infection in prisons and

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⁴² Knavs, N., Rus, U., Košak, K. (2020), '[Varovanje njihovih otrok bo starše stalo polovico plače](#)', 13 March 2020.

⁴³ Slovenia, Employment relationships act (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications. For more information on the minimum wage, see the government webpage on www.gov.si teme/minimalna-placa/.

⁴⁴ Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti (2020), '[Popolna prepoved obiskov v domovih za starejše](#)', public release, 6 March 2020.

⁴⁵ Information was provided by the Human Rights Ombudsman (Varuh človekovih pravic) upon request (email, 17 March 2020).

⁴⁶ Srebrna nit (2020), '[V Srebrni niti ne bomo dovolili, da starejši umirajo v prepričanju, da smo pozabili nanje](#)', public release, 19 March 2020.

⁴⁷ Ministrstvo za zdravje (2020), '[Ministrstvo za zdravje z vrsto ukrepov v boju protiv COVID-19](#)', public release, 22 March 2020.

⁴⁸ Slovenska filantropija (2020), 'Poziv prostovoljcem za pomoč v socialno varstvenih zavodih', public release, 31 March 2020.

⁴⁹ Srebrna nit (2020), '[Skrb za starejše v domovih - česa ne smemo dovoliti v času epidemije](#)', public letter, 30 March 2020.

⁵⁰ Uprava Republike Slovenije za zaščito in reševanje, Služba za podporo (2020), "Dnevno poročilo o aktivnostih zaščite, reševanja in pomoči, 27 March 2020.

⁵¹ Uprava Republike Slovenije za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij (2020), '[Obvestilo obiskovalcem zaprtih oseb v zavodih za prestajanje kazni zapora in prevzgojnem domu – dopolnilo](#)', public release, 13 March 2020.

correctional homes.⁵² The recently adopted Temporary Measures Relating to Judicial, Administrative and Public Law Matters for the Containment of the Spread of the Communicable Disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Act (*Zakon o začasnih ukrepih v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*) includes several provisions related to the enforcement of criminal sanctions. According to the act, summons to prison shall be halted and new procedures shall not be initiated. For preventing the spread of the disease, the law allows for transfer of inmates to other correctional facilities, suspension of imprisonment for up to one month, with possibility of extension. In cases where no security concerns exist, and under certain condition, an early release of prisoners six months before completion of the penalty is possible.⁵³ In the end of March and the beginning of April 2020, during its last visit to Slovenia, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) noted an improvement in Slovenian prison system as regards overcrowding but also established that ‘the official capacity in a number of prisons throughout the country was being exceeded at the time of the 2020 visit.’⁵⁴ The Human Rights Ombudsman, acting in the capacity of the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, also found that there were still issues with overcrowding in individual prisons.⁵⁵ Recently, it was reported that in case of infection in prisons there is a risk of rapid spread of the disease, since isolation measures cannot be introduced at all locations.⁵⁶ As of yet, one case of infection was confirmed in a worker with external company which carries out certain activities in a Slovenian prison. Related to this case, eight prisoners are currently in isolation but show now symptoms of the disease. By the time of submission of this deliverable, no Covid-19 cases were recorded among the prison population in Slovenia.⁵⁷

There is almost no information on persons seeking asylum or individuals with international protection in the public domain. Covid-19 cases among this population have not been reported by the time of writing of this deliverable. The National Institute of Public Health published instructions for the Asylum home and its branches, as well as Integration houses accommodating persons with international protection on how to deal with suspicions of Covid-19 infection.⁵⁸ As regards the Asylum home and its branches, there has been no restriction of movement imposed as of yet. There are fears among persons seeking asylum about such a measure. At present, in line with the regulation

⁵² Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute for public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sl/priporocila-za-preprecevanje-prenosa-okuzbe-z-novim-koronavirusom-sars-cov-2-covid-19-v-zavodih-za.

⁵³ Slovenia, Temporary measures relating to judicial, administrative and public law matters for the containment of the spread of the communicable disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Act (*Zakon o začasnih ukrepih v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 20 March 2020.

⁵⁴ Council of Europe, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2017), *Report to the Slovenian Government on the visit to Slovenia carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 28 March to 4 April 2017*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 20 September 2017, p. 18.

⁵⁵ Human Rights Ombudsman (2019), *The Report of the Human Rights Ombudsman on implementing the tasks of the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment for 2018*, Ljubljana, Human Rights Ombudsman, p. 14.

⁵⁶ Zupan, U. (2020), ‘[V zaporih nevarnost hitrega širjenja okužbe, na udaru tako obsojenci kot zaposleni](#)’, *24ur.com*, 17 March 2020.

⁵⁷ Zupan, U. (2020), ‘[Obsojenci zaskrbljeni in polni upanja, pravosodni policisti izčrpani](#)’, *24ur.com*, 24 March 2020.

⁵⁸ Information is available at the webpage of the National Institute for public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*) on www.nijz.si/sites/www.nijz.si/files/uploaded/akcijski_nacrt_koronavirus_0.1_z_glavo_in_integracija_13.3.2020.pdf.

in place, social workers with the Asylum home instruct asylum seekers when leaving premises to do this individually and not in groups.⁵⁹

As of 16 March, the offering and sale of goods and services directly to consumers is also banned, which effectively closed down a wide variety of operators. This, for example, includes accommodation services, catering services, wellness services, sports and recreational services, cinematographic services, cultural services and hairdressing services. Grocery shops, pharmacies, medical stores, gas stations, post offices, banks, and providers of delivery services are, for example, exempt from the ban.⁶⁰ Performing religious ceremonies is not allowed. Civil wedding ceremonies are also not carried out, as these do not belong to essential services provided by the Administrative units (*Upravne enote*).⁶¹

The Human Rights Ombudsman set up a webpage dedicated to the virus outbreak.⁶² It also issued a public release highlighting that the epidemic should be tackled in a manner that respects human rights and freedoms. According to the Ombudsman, it is expected from the authorities that when devising measures that could restrict the exercise of fundamental rights they do not only inform the public about the measures taken, but that they fully justify the urgency of the intervention and that they provide a more detailed explanations as to why a certain measure is necessary.⁶³

The Covid-19 outbreak and measures enforcing social distancing are having profound impact on the national economy. To ease the pressure on the economy, the government submitted a legislative package to the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*) for consideration. Among other things, the National Assembly adopted on 20 March the Intervention Measures in the Field of Wages and Social Contributions Act (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih na področju plač in prispevkov*).⁶⁴ The law is intended at employers who cannot provide work for at least 30 % of their workers and temporarily lay them off. The Employment Relationships Act stipulates that such workers are entitled to wage compensation in the amount of 80 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months.⁶⁵ According to the law, the government shall contribute 40 % towards full wage compensations. The measure applies to companies, cooperatives, as well as self-employed persons who employ workers.

Self-employed who do not employ any workers, and who are considered as particularly vulnerable among economic agents, were initially left out of the intervention measures. After their plight had been much publicised in the context of the Covid-19 crisis and social distancing measures,⁶⁶ they were

⁵⁹ Information was provided by the Slovene Philanthropy (*Slovenska filantropija*) upon request (email, 19 March 2020).

⁶⁰ Slovenia, [Ordinance on the temporary prohibition of the offering and sale of goods and services to consumers in the Republic of Slovenia](#) (*Odlok o začasni prepovedi ponujanja in prodajanja blaga in storitev potrošnikom v Republiki Sloveniji*), 15 March 2020, and subsequent modifications.

⁶¹ Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve (2020), '[Najpogostejša vprašanja in odgovori o odloku o začasni prepovedi zbiranja ljudi](#)', public release, 20 March 2020.

⁶² For more information, see the Human Rights Ombudsman's webpage on www.varuh-rs.si/epidemija-covid-19/.

⁶³ Varuh človekovih pravic (2020), '[Varuh za preprečevanje širjenja epidemije koronavirusa s spoštovanjem človekovih pravic](#)', public release, 19 March 2020.

⁶⁴ Slovenia, Intervention measures in the field of wages and social contributions act (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih na področju plač in prispevkov*), 20 March 2020.

⁶⁵ Slovenia, Employment relationships act (*Zakon o delovnih razmerjih*), 5 March 2013, and subsequent modifications.

⁶⁶ Sindikat Mladi plus (2020), '[Interventni zakon za vse! – Naj bodo ukrepi ob izbruhu novega koronavirusa v dobro vseh](#)', public release, 13 March 2020; Dnevnik (2020), '[Več tisoč ljudi vlado poziva na pomoč samozaposlenim zaradi koronavirusa](#)', 16 March 2020; Božič, K. (2020), '[Samozaposleni in ukrepi zaradi koronavirusa: "O odlogu plačil nočem niti razmišljati"](#)', *Večer*, 17 March 2020.

eventually included in the mentioned law during the parliamentary procedure.⁶⁷ According to adopted law, they shall be allowed to defer payment of social contributions due in April, May and June 2020 until 31 March 2022. This measure, however, was considered largely insufficient even before its adoption.⁶⁸ As regards sickness allowances, self-employed are only entitled to these benefits from the first day of sickness leave if requested to self-isolate by the doctor.⁶⁹

The National Assembly also adopted the Intervention Measure of Deferring Payment of Borrowers' Liabilities Act (*Zakon o interventnem ukrepu odloga plačila obveznosti kreditojemalcev*). According to the law, to prevent serious economic damage and financial instability, companies, cooperatives, societies, institutions, natural persons employing other persons and self-employed with a registered office or permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia, heads of agricultural holdings and citizens of the Republic of Slovenia with a permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia, can ask bank to defer payment of their liabilities for 12 months. A borrower which is not considered a large company under the Companies Act (*Zakon o gospodarskih družbah*), and is engaged in a business activity temporarily banned by a government or municipal decree is automatically entitled to deferral.⁷⁰

Apart from the already adopted legislation by the National Assembly, the government submitted to the parliament for consideration comprehensive bill aimed at assisting the population and the economy (so-called anti-corona law).. This law should modify the intervention legislation mentioned in the preceding sections, and should address some of the worrying issues mentioned above. It should be applicable at least until the end of May. Among other things, it should provide for a basic monthly income for affected self-employed in the amount of 350 EUR in March, and 700 EUR in April and May, respectively. Their social contributions due in April and May should be covered from the state budget. Temporarily laid off workers with affected employers should be entitled to wage compensation in the amount of 80 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months, but not less than the national minimum wage and not more than the average national wage. Workers who are not at work due to force majeure, including workers who care for their children after the schools were shut down, and are thus absent from work, should be equalised with temporarily laid off workers as regards wage compensation (i.e. receiving 80 % of their average monthly wage for full-time work during the past three months, instead of 50 %, while this amount should be at least the national minimum wage, but no more than the average wage in the country. Wage compensations and social contributions for these workers should be covered from the state budget. Private sector employers which operate normally should be exempt from pension and disability contributions due in April in May, but should pay their workers a crisis allowance in the amount of 200 EUR. These measures should also apply to civil society organisations. One-off solidarity payment in the amount from 130 to 300 EUR should be earmarked to pensioners with lower pensions. Social allowances recipients and full-time students, respectively, are also entitled to one-off solidarity payment in the amount of 150 EUR. All sickness benefits, apart from those arising from workplace injuries, should be fully covered from the first day of a worker's absence by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (*Zavod za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije, ZZZS*).⁷¹ As of 25

⁶⁷ Slovenia, Intervention measures in the field of wages and social contributions act (*Zakon o interventnih ukrepih na področju plač in prispevkov*), 20 March 2020.

⁶⁸ Črešnar, M., Obrtno-podjetniška zbornica Slovenije (2020), '[Z ukrepi za pomoč gospodarstvu ne smemo zamuditi!](#)', public release, 19 March 2020.

⁶⁹ For more information, see the webpage of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (*Zavod za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije*) on www.zzs.si/ZZS/internet/zzs.nsf/webnovosti/157F1195E51ACDA4C1258520003DF8EF?OpenDocument.

⁷⁰ Slovenia, Intervention measure of deferring payment of borrowers' liabilities act (*Zakon o interventnem ukrepu odloga plačila obveznosti kreditojemalcev*), 20 March 2020.

⁷¹ Slovenia, The Draft Intervention measures to contain COVID-19 epidemic and to mitigate its consequences for citizens and economy act (*Predlog Zakona o interventnih ukrepih za zaježitev epidemije COVID-19 in omilitve njenih posledic za državljane in gospodarstvo*). P

March, certain temporary measures in implementing compulsory health insurance have been introduced.⁷²

The Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (*Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za delo*, IRSD) reported that it had received a number of complaints in recent days that many employers either failed to implement measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 or that such measures are partial and defective. The inspectorate also reported an increased number of complaints related to legal safety of workers. Based on these developments, the inspectorate shall provide for stricter supervision both as regards health protection and legal safety of workers.⁷³ Major association of trade unions in the country called on the government and employers to provide for health and safety at workplace for workers' rights.⁷⁴

Prices of protective equipment, in particular of protective face masks, saw a considerable rise, and the government froze the prices of protective and other medical equipment (face masks, surgical masks, protective clothing, protective gloves, portable oxygen systems, and intensive care ventilators) as of 14 March.⁷⁵ Market Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (*Tržni inšpektorat Republike Slovenije*, TIRS) also warned that unreasonable pricing of goods and services during the time of epidemic might constitute aggressive business practice (i.e. exploitation of an unfortunate event or circumstances which, by their seriousness, diminish the consumer's ability to make judgments, and the company is aware of this fact but still takes advantage of this situation in order to influence the consumer's decision) which is prohibited and carries penalty.⁷⁶

Healthcare institutions have been preparing for the possible acceptance of a larger number of infected patients, and provision of regular healthcare services has been restricted. Healthcare providers shall suspend preventive services, save for those necessary to prevent negative consequences for patients' health. Specialist examination and surgeries are also suspended, except for services marked as urgent or very swift, oncology services and treatment of pregnant women. Apart from urgent services, dental practitioners shall also suspend their services.⁷⁷

Based on the Courts Act (*Zakon o sodiščih*),⁷⁸ the President of the Supreme Court (*Vrhovno sodišče*) issued an order on the occurrence of a major extraordinary event halting all non-essential judicial proceedings. The measure shall apply until further notice, but not later than 16 May 2020.⁷⁹ By the law, the urgent matters shall be investigations and adjudication in criminal cases in which the defendant is deprived of liberty or his or her liberty is restricted, and in criminal cases concerning aliens who are not residents of the Republic of Slovenia; the procedure for interim decision; non-

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⁷² Slovenia, [Ordinance on temporary measures in implementing compulsory health insurance to contain and control the spread of COVID-19 epidemic](#) (*Odlok o začasnih ukrepih pri izvajanju obveznega zdravstvenega zavarovanja zaradi zajezitve in obvladovanja epidemije COVID-19*), 25 March 2020.

⁷³ Inšpektorat Republike Slovenije za delo (2020), '[Inšpektorat za delo napoveduje poostren nadzor](#)', 19 March 2020.

⁷⁴ For more information, see the webpage of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (*Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije*) on www.zsss.si/korona-virus/.

⁷⁵ Slovenia, [Regulation determining maximum prices for safety, protective and other medical equipment](#) (*Uredba o določitvi najvišjih cen varovalne, zaščitne in druge zdravstvene opreme*), 13 March 2020, and subsequent modifications.

⁷⁶ Tržni inšpektorat Republike Slovenije (2020), '[Zviševanje cen izdelkov in storitev v času epidemije](#)', 13 March 2020.

⁷⁷ Slovenia, [Ordinance on temporary measures in the field of healthcare to contain and control the COVID-19 epidemic](#) (*Odlok o začasnih ukrepih na področju zdravstvene dejavnosti zaradi zajezitve in obvladovanja epidemije COVID-19*), 20 March 2020.

⁷⁸ Slovenia, [Courts Act](#) (*Zakon o sodiščih*), 24 March 1994, and subsequent modifications.

⁷⁹ Slovenia, [Order on special measures due to the occurrence of the conditions referred to in the first paragraph of Article 83.a of the Courts act](#) (*Odredba o posebnih ukrepih zaradi nastanka pogojev iz prvega odstavka 83.a člena Zakona o sodiščih*), 13 March 2020.

contentious and executive matters as regards upbringing and childcare protection, as well as maintenance obligations arising from an act; non-contentious matters relating to the detention of persons in mental health organisations; protests of bills or cheques and actions on bills of exchange; disputes on the publication of a correction to published information; an inventory of a deceased's property; matters relating to compulsory settlement and bankruptcy; other matters provided by an act.⁸⁰ The recently adopted Temporary Measures Relating to Judicial, Administrative and Public Law Matters for the Containment of the Spread of the Communicable Disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Act (*Zakon o začasnih ukrepih v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*) allows for the possibility, if so decided by the President of the Supreme Court, that the following procedures, defined as urgent in the Courts Act, could be stopped: the procedure for interim decision; protests of bills or cheques and actions on bills of exchange; disputes on the publication of a correction to published information; an inventory of a deceased's property; matters relating to compulsory settlement and bankruptcy; other matters provided by an act.⁸¹ On 23 March 2020 the Ministry of Justice prepared answers to FAQ to increase the public awareness of the act.⁸²

Order on temporary working hours of notary during epidemic of viral disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) (*Odredba o začasnem delovnem času notarjev v času trajanje epidemije virusne okužbe SARS-Co-2 (COVID-19)*) establishes new regime of working hours for notary with the aim of preventing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). On its website, the Chamber of Notaries of Slovenia (*Notarska zbornica Slovenije*) published a call for the users of notary services to respect preventive health measures to curb the Covid-19 disease epidemic.⁸³

2. Impact of the outbreak on certain national or ethnic communities

The police reported that they did not record any rise in criminal offences of public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance, or criminal offences with elements of violence since the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan. According to them, the developments related to the virus outbreak do not impact considerably on public safety and public order.⁸⁴

Instances of intolerance and hostility against foreign nationals and minority ethnic communities have not been reported by other actors. For example, the Slovene Philanthropy (*Slovenska filantropija*), an NGO working with migrants, had no information on such incidents by 18 March 2020.⁸⁵ Similarly, the mainstream media have not reported such incidents by the time of writing of this information.⁸⁶

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⁸⁰ Slovenia, [Courts Act](#) (*Zakon o sodiščih*), 24 March 1994, and subsequent modifications.

⁸¹ Slovenia, Temporary measures relating to judicial, administrative and public law matters for the containment of the spread of the communicable disease SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Act (*Zakon o začasnih ukrepih v zvezi s sodnimi, upravnimi in drugimi javnopravnimi zadevami za obvladovanje širjenja nalezljive bolezni SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)*), 20 March 2020.

⁸² For more information, see the webpage of the Ministry of Justice on www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MP/Koronavirus/Vprasanja_in_odgovori_23032020.pdf.

⁸³ Notarska zbornica Slovenije (2020), '[Nujno obvestilo za stranke notarskih pisarn – Koronavirus COVID-19](#)', public release, 23 March 2020.

⁸⁴ Information was provided by the General Police Directorate (*Generalna policijska uprava*) upon request (email, 19 March 2020).

⁸⁵ Information was provided by the Slovene Philanthropy (*Slovenska filantropija*) upon request (email, 19 March 2020).

⁸⁶ An overview of the online resources of the following media was carried out: national public broadcaster (rtvslo.si), major national commercial broadcaster (24ur.com), dailies Dnevnik (dnevnik.si), Delo (delo.si), Večer (vecer.com), weekly Mladina (mladina.si), online media Siol.net.

There were reports, however, of intolerance targeting infected persons and their relatives. Cases were reported of patients released from hospitals who could not return to their homes for fear of hostility and intolerance on the part of their neighbours.⁸⁷ The Human Rights Ombudsman and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, the national equality body, both warned against stigmatisation of and intolerance against individuals who contracted the infection. The Ombudsman also urged the authorities that, in addition to adopted guidelines on how to ensure the public health, develop guidelines preventing stigmatisation of sick individuals or those perceived sick.⁸⁸

The Advocate of the Principle of Equality received one complaint claiming discrimination related to Covid-19 outbreak by 17 March 2020. The complainant alleged that they were discriminated on the ground of nationality, namely their place of birth. The case is pending and more information on the particularities of this case is not available.⁸⁹

3. Impact on privacy and spread of disinformation

The Information Commissioner (*Informacijski pooblaščenec*) did not receive complaints alleging breach of data privacy related to Covid-19 outbreak by 16 March 2020.⁹⁰ It, however, received numerous questions concerning the personal data protection in the context of measures adopted to counter the spread of the virus, communication of data on sick persons and actions by individual organisations. The Commissioner highlighted in a public release that it is possible in the extraordinary situation such as one at hand to process personal data if this is necessary to protect the vital interests of the data subject, or third parties (the general public). It is up to medical professionals or the relevant authorities (e.g. the National Institute of Public Health (*Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje*, NIJZ)) to decide on this. Special consent of an individual is not required in such situations, but the competent authorities are obliged to make case-by-case assessments and determine what information is needed to protect people's vital interests. When planning measures, the professionals must always consider what personal information is necessary for the protection of vital interests, and what goals can be achieved without collecting personal data (e.g. urging via media or the internet those individuals who have been in a particular place for a certain period of time to comply with the instructions of the medical professionals).⁹¹

The Commissioner also publicly addressed inquiries by the educational institutions received before the schools were shut down about the mandatory provision of information when principals were notified of confirmed Covid-19 cases in their institutions. The Commissioner established that it is not disputable to inform all school employees who worked with a child, pupil, student or a fellow employee about the fact of the existence of an infection without additional information (e.g. name, gender, other information that makes an individual identifiable). The Commissioner further noted that special consent of an individual is not required in extraordinary situations. The school authorities, however, must provide in collaboration with medical professionals (i.e. NIJZ) for a case-by-case

⁸⁷ Information was provided by the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*) upon request (email, 17 March 2020).

⁸⁸ Varuh človekovih pravic (2020), '[Koronavirus - nedopustna stigmatizacija zaradi zdravstvenih okoliščin](#)', public release, 6 March 2020; Zagovornik načela enakosti (2020), '[Nestrpnost do ljudi, ki so zboleli za novo virusno boleznijo, je nesprejemljiva](#)', public release, 11 March 2020.

⁸⁹ Information was provided by the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (*Zagovornik načela enakosti*) upon request (email, 17 March 2020).

⁹⁰ Information was provided by the Information Commissioner (*Informacijski pooblaščenec*) upon request (email, 16 March 2020).

⁹¹ Informacijski pooblaščenec (2020), '[Odgovorno ravnanje vseh je ključno v času virusne krize](#)', public release, 12 March 2020.

assessment and determine what data is needed to protect people's vital interests either in relation to health and safety at work or to some other legal obligation.⁹²

On 23 March, the Information Commissioner issued a public release regarding its findings related to the provision of information on the temporary ban of public gatherings to mobile phone subscribers in Slovenia. Since 19 March, when subscribers received SMS messages, the Commissioner had been receiving inquiries regarding the lawfulness of this practice or complaints alleging unlawful processing of mobile phone subscribers' personal data. The Commissioner inspected the matter and ascertained that the messages, drafted by the Government Communication Office (*Urad vlade za komuniciranje*), were sent by operators, providers of mobile phone services, on the instruction of the government, but that no subscribers' personal data were provided to the government or any third party. It established that the General Data Protection Regulation sets out various provisions on which a data controller may rely, and does not prevent the processing of personal data necessary for achieving a lawful objective (e.g. the processing of personal data is lawful when necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest conferred on the controller).⁹³ However, the Commissioner made it clear that sector specific legislation regarding processing of personal data by operators, that is – the Electronic Communications Act (*Zakon o elektronskih komunikacijah*) also applied, as this act regulated the processing of personal data by operators, including as regards services of public mobile notifications and alarming. The Commissioner further clarified that it was the Agency for communication networks and services of the Republic of Slovenia (*Agencija za komunikacijska omrežja in storitve Republike Slovenije*) that had inspection powers regarding this sector specific legislation.⁹⁴

Official declarations concerning the use of personal data for surveillance or medical research, or reports on the publication of personal data by the media have not been publicised.

Slovenian media reported on the spread of disinformation about Covid-19 outbreak on social media. They reported on the spread of fake news (e.g. conspiracy theories) as well as ineffective, and occasionally dangerous, advice on how to prevent infection or cure the symptoms of disease, including on the largest Slovenian Facebook group dedicated to the virus outbreak.⁹⁵

The National Institute of Public Health warned particularly about the increased number of advertisements offering preventive substances as protection against infection, of offers of preventive check-ups and pages with tips of natural protection against the infection. The institute called on the public not to trust individuals and companies offering unproven products and services, and to follow advice and recommendations by health care professionals. It further advised individuals to report suspicious advertisements to competent authorities.⁹⁶

The Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (*Zdravstveni inšpektorat Republike Slovenije*, ZIRS) received four complaints concerning advertising of dietary supplements depicting these substances as having certain impact on the virus by 16 March 2020. The inspectorate is currently

⁹² Informacijski pooblaščenec (2020), '[Obveščanje v primeru pojava virusa med učenci, zaposlenimi v šolah in vrtcih](#)', public release, 17 March 2020.

⁹³ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, OJ 2016 L 119 (General Data Protection Regulation).

⁹⁴ Informacijski pooblaščenec (2020), 'Obveščanje državljanov o začasni prepovedi javnega zbiranja preko SMS sporočil', public release, 23 March 2020; Slovenia, Electronic Communications Act (*Zakon o elektronskih komunikacijah*), 20 December 2012, and subsequent modifications.

⁹⁵ Tomšič, M. (2020), '[Epidemija koronavirusa ni ena. Epidemiji sta dve.](#)', *Siol.net*, 17. March 2020. The Facebook group is accessible on www.facebook.com/groups/coronaslovenija/?epa=SEARCH_BOX.

⁹⁶ Information is available at the organisation's webpage dedicated to the monitoring of the virus outbreak on www.nijz.si/sl/pojav-novega-koronavirusa-2019-ncov.

working on these cases.⁹⁷ The Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices of the Republic of Slovenia (*Javna agencija Republike Slovenije za zdravila in medicinske pripomočke*, JAZMP) did not record advertising of medicinal products with marketing authorisation in the EU as being effective against Covid-19 by 17 March 2020. The Agency, however, notes an avalanche of imported protective equipment, namely protective masks, which were not manufactured for medical purposes or are of dubious quality, and is working closely with the customs authorities at the Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (*Finančna uprava Republike Slovenije*, FURS) to check the compliance of such goods with the legislation. All cases were pending by 17 March 2020.⁹⁸ The agency set up a dedicated webpage on its website where it publishes information regarding medicinal products and protective equipment in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak.⁹⁹

Following the virus outbreak, the Slovene Association of Journalists (*Društvo novinarjev Slovenije*, DNS) issued a public release urging the competent authorities and media outlets to provide conditions for safe work including the necessary protective equipment for journalists, cameramen, photojournalists and other media professionals. The association called on journalists to adhere to the ethical standards set out in the Code of ethics of Slovene journalists (*Kodeks novinarjev Slovenije*) when reporting. It also shared recommendations on reporting on Covid-19 and slowing the spread of misinformation produced by the First Draft non-profit (e.g. avoiding sensationalist language that could cause elevated levels of fear, directing readers to official sources of information, avoiding derogatory language), as well as recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO) (e.g. avoiding stigmatisation of individuals who contracted the disease, avoiding topics inducing fear, providing content with practical advice for the prevention of the infection or when to report to healthcare practitioners).¹⁰⁰

A news portal dedicated to investigative journalism and fact checking reviewed two news items linking migrants to Covid-19 infection, published on a news portal attached to a broadcaster. One news item, drawing from a tweet, linked the virus outbreak in Italy to a Pakistani migrant (so called 'patient zero') who allegedly refused to self-isolate and undergo testing when requested, and continued to cook and serve food in a restaurant. The second news item claimed that the Slovenian police apprehended seven irregular migrants who had fever and symptoms characteristic of Covid-19 infection. The fact checking portal, among other things, verified the first news item with the World Health Organization (WHO),¹⁰¹ and the second with the police,¹⁰² and established that both were inaccurate.

⁹⁷ Information was provided by the Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia (*Zdravstveni inšpektorat Republike Slovenije*) upon request (email, 16 March 2020).

⁹⁸ Information was provided by the Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices of the Republic of Slovenia (*Javna agencija Republike Slovenije za zdravila in medicinske pripomočke*) upon request (email, 17 March 2020).

⁹⁹ For more information, see the webpage of the Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices of the Republic of Slovenia on www.jazmp.si/arhiv-obvestil/koronavirus-sars-cov-2/.

¹⁰⁰ Društvo novinarjev Slovenije (2020), '[Društvo in novinarji v času virusa](#)', public release, 13 March 2020.

¹⁰¹ Bulatović, K., Bagnoli, L. (IRPI) (2020), '[Dostavljaavec hrane iz Pavie ni italijanski ničti pacient](#)', *Oštro*, 23 March 2020. The reviewed news item is as follows: Perš, L. (2020), '[Pacient številka nič v Italiji: To je pakistanski migrant, ki se ni izoliral in testiral na koronavirus](#)', *nova24tv.si*, 9 March 2020.

¹⁰² Simič, M. (2020), '[Skupina prijatih Pakistancev in Sircev ni bila okužena s koronavirusom](#)', *Oštro*, 18 March 2020. The reviewed news item is as follows: Šokić, I. (2020), '[Slovenska policija pri Ilirski Bistrici prijela 7 ilegalnih migrantov! Vsi imajo vročino in simptome, značilne za Covid-19!](#)', *nova24tv.si*, 16 March 2020.