

## **UPDATE May 21:**

Number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Lithuania: 1594\*

Deaths: 61

Recovered: 1049

Number of tests performed yesterday: 7424

A total of samples tested in relation to the suspected coronavirus to date: 253 004

\*The number of confirmed infection cases. Until 28 April, information has been provided on positive laboratory test results rather than on positive cases (people).

The Office of the Government has held a video conference ‘COVID-19: Lithuania’s Response’, which was attended by representatives from more than 80 countries, including ambassadors accredited to Lithuania and residing in Lithuania, heads of diplomatic missions and consular posts, and of the representative offices of international organisations based in Lithuania. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Government were prompted to hold this video conference by the marked increase in the international interest in Lithuania’s best practices in combating the coronavirus, and particularly the efforts that helped the three Baltic states— Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—to early reopen their mutual borders.

‘Lithuania was one of the first countries to take steps against the virus, way before the pandemic was announced. Closure of the borders, restricted travelling, imposed lockdown, tight monitoring and management of the epidemiological situation in the country and wide-ranging testing —to name but a few measures that led to early easing of lockdown restrictions. Lithuania’s decisions have gained considerable publicity and approval: the Baltic Travel Bubble has in a way served as a model for other countries to follow, and the news about this initiative soon travelled all around the world. We are happy today to share our best practice with other countries and together get ready for a looming second wave of the virus’, said Lukas Savickas, First Deputy Chancellor of the Government.

The best practices as regards the fight against COVID-19 have been shared in the conference by Minister for Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius and Minister for Health Aurelijus Veryga. In their presentations, the ministers and the First Deputy Chancellor of the Government have covered

Lithuania's experience, challenges to human and public health, its economic situation and long-term development prospects beyond the crisis.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Linkevičius has pointed out the importance of co-operation between countries faced by emergency. Following the closure of the borders and banned flights, Lithuania kept close contacts with other countries, particularly on the repatriation of its citizens, and almost 500 citizens of other countries reached their homes on flights organised by Lithuania.

'I am now proud of the cooperation and coordinated actions between Lithuania and Estonia in facilitating the movement of the citizens and residents of the Baltic States across borders, tourism, economy, and communication through the so-called Travel Bubble. I very much hope that our example will inspire other countries to cooperate in a similar way', said Linas Linkevičius.

The presentation by Minister for Health Aurelijus Veryga has also attracted a great deal of attention. He pointed out Lithuania's leadership in Europe by number of tests per 100 thousand population, and by the lowest Covid-19 case and fatality rate in the world. A few countries have already approached the minister for closer bilateral cooperation on sharing experience and lessons learned.

In his presentation on Lithuania's economic response to the pandemic, the Deputy Chancellor Savickas has said that 'Lithuania sees this crisis not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity: first, the countries will seek to shorten and diversify supply chains; second, Lithuania has a chance to become one of the EU hubs for life sciences, research and industry; third, food supply chains will become shorter and thus add to greater sustainability; fourth and fifth, the economy will move faster to a digital and green economy.'

New technologies and innovative solutions have also been given a considerable attention, and several participants have commended the initiators for choosing videoconferencing as a good way to share information with neighbours and the international community. 'The crisis has revealed Lithuania's versatility and its capacity to mobilise its resources and resort to new measures in dealing with the daunting challenges across a vast array of the fields. Lithuania-made solution such as Act on Crisis, MEDO or Bankera, which actually help manage stress and enhance emotional well-being in the population and provide financial technology solutions for European SMEs badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our strong side that we are proud of', said the ministers and the Deputy Chancellor of the Government Lukas Savickas. According to the ambassadors, Lithuania is showing its leadership in the world also by holding virtual press briefings on relevant issues.

