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First Case Of Coronavirus Registered In Ukraine

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Lvivelektrotrans employees in protective coveralls disinfect a bus due to the Covid-19 outbreak in ... [+] European countries, Lviv, western Ukraine. - PHOTOGRAPH BY Ukrinform / Barcroft Studios / Future Publishing (Photo credit should read MARKIIAN LYSEIKO/ Ukrinform/Barcroft Media via Getty Images)

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The first case of COVID-19 infection was registered in the western Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi, the health ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

The victim is a man who traveled from Italy by plane to the Romania town of Suceava on February 26, and then on to Ukraine by car with his wife. The couple were screened for fever at the border, but displayed no symptoms and were allowed to travel home.

The man was hospitalized on February 29 after he developed fever and a dry cough, and the positive test results for COVID-19 arrived late on Monday, deputy health minister Viktor Lyashko said.

His wife still has no symptoms, but has now self-isolated at home.

The local authorities in Chernivtsi were alerted about the arrival of the virus on Tuesday.

“Today at about 10 o’clock we received an official confirmation from the Center for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine that a positive result was obtained at the stage of diagnosis at the National Virology Laboratory,” acting director of Chernivtsi Regional Laboratory Center of Ukraine’s Health Ministry Natalia Hopko said at a briefing on Tuesday.

The Chernivtsi regional administration said that now that the case was confirmed, they will start identifying people who were in contact with the infected man during his trip from Italy.

“We’re contacting the Romanian colleagues to get their help identifying adjoining seats in the plane where they [the couple] were sitting, and establish the contact people on board the plane,” Interfax-Ukraine news agency quoted head of the regional

administration Serhiy Osadchuk as saying.

Ukraine has been preparing for the potential arrival of the epidemic. The health ministry designated a hospital in each of the country's 24 regions to deal with infection, and seven more in the capital Kyiv.

Also, an Emergencies Services helicopter is equipped for transportation of the infected people. It's staffed with Ukrainian doctors who worked on West Africa's Ebola epidemic. Ukraine is ready to admit 2,500 patients to these hospitals, according to Lyashko.

Meanwhile, last week the border service started screening all people arriving to Ukraine for fever, and the health ministry set up a [specialized website](#) with up-to-date information on COVID-19.

Ukraine's low-cost airline SkyUp suspended flights to China early last month, and Hungarian low-cost airline WizzAir announced it will reduce the number of its flights to Italy, effective March 11.

Five Ukrainians have been diagnosed with coronavirus outside of Ukraine, one in Italy and four in Japan, according to the health ministry data.

Also, Ukraine [evacuated](#) 45 of its nationals and 27 foreigners from Wuhan last month, and placed them under quarantine in a police hospital in Poltava region, in central Ukraine.

None of the evacuees have displayed any symptoms of COVID-19. Their quarantine runs out on March 5.