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# Greece confirms first coronavirus case, a woman back from Milan

*Reuters Editorial*

3-4 minutes

ATHENS (Reuters) - A Greek woman who recently returned home from northern Italy became Greece's first coronavirus case and is being closely monitored, while authorities have ordered the closing of one school in Thessaloniki, the health ministry said on Wednesday.



View of the entrance of the AHEPA hospital, where the first

confirmed coronavirus case is being treated, in Thessaloniki, Greece, February 26, 2020. REUTERS/Alexandros Avramidis

No further information was immediately available on the previous movements of the 38-year-old woman, though Greek media said she had returned to Greece from Milan by air on Feb. 23.

Greece has not introduced any travel restrictions to Italy, which is the country in Europe most affected by the outbreak with more than 370 cases and 12 deaths reported.

“She is in good health and is being monitored by a team of exceptional colleagues in Thessaloniki,” health ministry representative Sotiris Tsiodras told a news briefing.

Authorities are in the process of identifying people the woman has come into contact with, he said, adding that those who have been in close proximity would be placed in isolation.

A health ministry official said 10-15 people the patient had been in touch with had already been quarantined.

“We are tracing the people who came in contact with her. Also the airline and, as protocol says, with passengers who were at a specified proximity and crew members,” Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias told reporters.

He also canceled all leave for staff at his ministry and at all state-run hospitals nationwide until further notice.

The Health and Education ministries ordered the “precautionary” closing of one school in Thessaloniki, where the woman is hospitalized, for a day, without providing further details.

Coronavirus is believed to have originated in a market selling wildlife in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year and has infected

about 80,000 people and killed more than 2,700, the vast majority in China.

It causes respiratory symptoms similar to a cold or flu and like other respiratory infections, it spreads between people in droplets from coughs and sneezes.

On Tuesday, authorities in Athens unveiled a contingency plan which includes school closures, bans on public gatherings and suspension of all means of public transport in the event of a health emergency.

“The first case of coronavirus has been confirmed in our country. It was something we expected and we are absolutely prepared,” Kikilias said.

Greece, which has 11 million people but attracts more than 30 million foreign tourists annually, has identified 13 hospitals across the country for treating infected patients.

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