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First fatal coronavirus case in Poland confirmed

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A 57-year-old woman infected with coronavirus was reported dead on Thursday.

The news was reported by the Deputy Mayor of the western city of Poznań Jędrzej Solarski.

The 57-year-old woman was the first person in the Wielkopolskie province confirmed with having contracted the SARS-Cov-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease. The woman was hospitalised at the Józef Struś Specialised City Hospital in Poznań.

The fatal casualty was reported having suffered from other health issues as well. Her condition was reported to be critical from the outset. She was reported having suffered from very severe pneumonia. She was breathing using a respiratory and was kept in a pharmacological coma.

Poznań authorities said they had identified all the people who had contact with two other individuals remaining at the Poznań hospital whose infection had been confirmed.

49 coronavirus cases confirmed in Poland

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Poland rose to 49, the Health Ministry reported on Thursday.

On Thursday, Poland's Health Ministry first reported 13 new cases on coronavirus raising the number of total cases in Poland to 44. At 09:30, however, 3 new cases were reported increasing the total number to 47. Around 13:30 the number of confirmed coronavirus cases was increased by two, totalling to 49. Due to the death of one of the infected individuals, the number of people in Poland confirmed with having contracted the virus amounts to 48.

Two cases were reported in Rzeszów and one in Poznań.

Lab tests confirmed COVID-19 in the cases of two individuals in the Mazowieckie province (Warsaw), four in the Lubelskie province (Lublin), three in the Lower Silesia province (Wrocław, Oleśnica), three in the Silesia province (Sosnowiec, Chorzów, Zawiercie) and one in the Łódzkie province (Łódź), the ministry reported.

The first case of coronavirus infection in Poland was reported on March 4, with the patient hospitalised in the western city of Zielona Góra. Other infected people have been hospitalised in Wrocław, south-western Poland, Warsaw, Racibórz and Kraków, southern Poland, and Ostróda and Szczecin, northern Poland.

Health Minister Łukasz Szumowski advised against panic behaviours, adding that “emotional reactions do not protect us at all. Quite the contrary, panic makes us more exposed [to the coronavirus]. Storming shops results in a higher likelihood of becoming infected. Let’s be rational. Poland is a food products-rich country. No one will run short of anything.”

The minister also recalled that local authorities were obliged to deliver products to quarantined individuals.

He also recalled that video medical appointments were available. "We do not have to go to clinics, we can conduct the visit via phone... Let's benefit from this method as it does not expose us nor the medical personnel to the risk of contracting the virus," the minister said.

Govt and local authorities discussed coronavirus threat

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki held a meeting on Wednesday with province prefects and the mayors of major cities to discuss the threat of the spreading coronavirus.

"We all agreed that protecting the Polish economy, public health and securing the normal functioning of state institutions are the priority. We will react as we go and inform the public about further steps", the PM said, stressing that social unity is paramount in the face of the coronavirus threat.

Mateusz Morawiecki said that on average once a week, he would consult with local government officials via videoconference on the matter. He added that during Wednesday's talks, the PM and his ministers had informed local government officials about the latest decisions concerning the closure of educational establishments and the ban on mass gatherings.

The head of the Prime Minister's Office, Michał Dworczyk, said that during the meeting, "many questions were raised, but also suggestions, propositions, some of them far-reaching on the part of city mayors, including the proposal of closing all borders, as happened in Israel," which, Mr Dworczyk said, was way too far-reaching.

Among the other issues discussed were the decisions the provincial prefects would have to take, such as imposing a duty on

district councils to secure people in quarantine. Help for the elderly was also on the agenda.

"Here a large role will be played by the municipal services, including the City Guard, but police help is also essential here, as well as aid from the Territorial Defence Force and operational army, which has been assigned to that task by the Ministry of Defence," Michał Dworczyk said.

He added that to date, the government has made over PLN 470 mln (EUR 108.8 mln) available for the fight against coronavirus.

"Further funds for that goal will be earmarked and made available in the future," Mr Dworczyk said.

The new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus causes a disease called COVID-19. Its symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches and fatigue. It is suspected that coronavirus infection, which can lead to life-threatening pneumonia, first occurred in China at the end of 2019 at a market in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province.

source: PAP, TVP