

Two-thirds of Slovaks tested for virus, 1% positive

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Two-thirds of Slovakia's population of 5.4 million people were tested for coronavirus over the weekend as part of a controversial nationwide programme, officials said on Monday.

Antigen tests were carried out on 3.625 million people—of whom 38,359 people, or 1.06 percent, were found to be positive.

"We have made a great leap forward," Prime Minister Igor Matovic told reporters.

"But we should not think that because of this one percent, now all is fine. It is not," he added.

"In reality up to two percent of our inhabitants might be infected. It is not at all a good situation."

Antigen tests give far quicker results than PCR tests, which involve nasal swabs that have to be sent to a laboratory, but they are less reliable.

Another round of tests has been scheduled for this coming weekend.

Participation is not mandatory but anyone who is not able to produce a negative [test](#) certificate if stopped by police could get a heavy fine.

Anyone who tests positive has to go immediately into quarantine for 10 days.

Slovakia wants to be one of the first countries in the world to test its entire [population](#).

Smaller countries like Luxembourg have already done so, as have some Chinese cities with larger populations than Slovakia such as Wuhan, where the virus is believed to have originated from.

The government has hinted that virus restrictions could be eased once testing is complete, or reinforced if the programme is not carried out in full.

Like other countries, Slovakia has seen a sharp rise in [coronavirus](#) cases in recent weeks, although it is still below the EU average.

On Monday, it reported 1,883 new cases, bringing the tally to 61,829.

A total of 219 people have died from the [virus](#).

The programme has come under criticism for being poorly thought through however.

The Slovak Association of General Practitioners said the high concentration of people at testing sites was "at odds with the recommendations of infectious disease experts".

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