

Beat: Health

## Spain, half gas for the coronavirus

The country has confirmed 2,965 cases

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**USPA NEWS** - Although it is still far from the situation in Italy, the coronavirus crisis has already had a full impact in Spain. With 2,965 confirmed cases - most of them in the Madrid region - and 84 deaths, more and more Spanish regions are banning the holding of events with the participation of more than a thousand people; Museums, libraries and public centers are closed, and they call the population to stay at home and not have physical contacts. The objective is to contain the advance of the virus.

Spain has been slow to assume the coronavirus crisis, but when it has, it has acted with determination. Health is a competence assigned to the regions, which are in charge of implementing containment measures against the virus, but the Spanish Government, through its Ministry of Health, coordinates the actions and keeps the population informed on a daily basis. From the data it provides, it appears that, at six in the afternoon on Thursday, March 12, the number of those infected by the coronavirus amounts to 2,965, with a prevalence rate of 6.33 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Of these, 190 are admitted to the Intensive Care Units of hospitals, while 84 people have died.

The regions of Madrid - with 1,388 cases - and La Rioja - with 220 -, and the municipalities of Labastida and Vitoria - in the Basque Country, where 346 cases are registered - and Miranda de Ebro - in Castilla y León, where there are 92 cases confirmed - these are the areas where there is documentary evidence of community transmission of the virus. The situation at the moment is one of reinforced containment: in Madrid, La Rioja and some areas of the Basque Country, schools have been suspended their activities for fifteen days at all levels of education; Museums, libraries and public centers have been closed, and a campaign has been launched so that people with coronavirus symptoms stay home and not collapse hospital emergencies.

In addition, the Spanish Government has banned direct flights between Spain and Italy for two weeks and the retirement holiday program has been suspended, which allows seniors to enjoy a few days off at reduced prices every year. But the elderly are the group most at risk from coronavirus, since the disease attacks with greater virulence people with diminished defenses or previous pathologies, and for this reason the Government has suspended the vacations of retirees.

Suspensions affect all areas of life in Spain. The Spanish Football Federation and the League have suspended all competitions for two weeks, including those of the First and Second Division, and those of the Spanish National Team. Also in other sports. And congresses like the WomenNOW, which was to be held in Madrid from March 25 to 27 and were to be opened by former US First Lady Hillary Clinton, have also been suspended. The congress organization, which is trying to deepen the debate on equality between men and women, informed USPA News that it has been postponed.

Life in Spain has even been altered at domestic levels. La Rioja, which is the Spanish region with the highest incidence of coronavirus in relation to its number of inhabitants, welcomes Calle Laurel in its capital, Logroño, epicenter of wine and pinchos consumption in northern Spain. Several establishments on this street announced Thursday that they are closing for fifteen days to prevent the spread of the virus. The measures will have consequences for the economy not only of businesses but also of families. With the children at home for two weeks, many parents have had to request time off or telework to attend to them.

The Spanish Government is considering granting parents extra financial aid when caring for their children causes them to lose income. And it is proposed to offer businesses a postponement of the payment of taxes and other flexible measures of economic activity. Not surprisingly, the European Central Bank has warned that, if no action is taken, the coronavirus can cause an economic recession similar to that of 2008.

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