

Slovakia to test whole country for coronavirus

October 17 2020



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Slovak Prime Minister Igor Matovic said Saturday the eurozone member will test every resident ages 10 and up for the coronavirus, amid an uptick in infections.

"Testing will be free of charge," he told reporters in the country of 5.4 million people, without specifying whether it will be mandatory or voluntary.

"If we manage to pull this off, we can set an example for the entire world."

A pilot run in certain areas is scheduled for next weekend, while the main testing will take place in late October and early November.

The government declared a state of emergency earlier this month in response to a surge in infections and deaths. It also introduced new restrictions this week.

Secondary schools have switched to remote learning, all [mass events](#)—including church services—are banned, fitness centres and pools are closed, restaurants can only serve clients outdoors.

On Saturday, the [health ministry](#) reported nearly 2,000 new confirmed [coronavirus](#) cases, bringing the total to more than 28,000.

Eleven infected individuals also died, putting the total death toll at 82.

On Saturday, around 500 people gathered outside the government building in downtown Bratislava to protest the latest anti-virus restrictions, despite a ban on gatherings of more than six people.

With many ignoring the mandatory face mask requirement, the crowd chanted "shame on you" and "gestapo" and called on Matovic to resign.

Some protesters threw rocks and glass bottles at the riot police, who for their part deployed a [water cannon](#) and tear gas against the crowd, according to video streams of the rally.

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