

Austria, Hungary get Chinese masks, gear to fight virus

March 23 2020

Austria and Hungary on Monday received masks and other protective gear from China to help in the battle against the new coronavirus pandemic.

Two Austrian Airlines planes from Xiamen in China arrived in Vienna carrying masks and other [protective gear](#) destined for Austria's western Tyrol province, as well as South Tyrol province in Italy, according to the carrier and the [defence ministry](#).

Authorities declined to say how many masks were being imported but local media quoted South Tyrol authorities as saying the shipment was part of an order placed by Italy for 1.5 million masks and 450,000 protective suits.

Hungary also received protective gear and coronavirus testing kits from China, Eastern Europe's largest budget carrier Wizz Air said.

One of its planes returned Monday loaded with nearly 11 tonnes of medical supplies, it said.

Hungary plans to keep cooperating with Wizz Air to fly in [medical supplies](#).

"At this difficult time, we are trying our best to contribute to the fight against the epidemic," Wizz Air head Jozsef Varadi said in a statement.

Austria and Hungary are among the latest countries to receive supplies from China, together with Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Greece and Italy.

Hungary, with its population of some 10 million, has reported 167 cases and seven deaths.

Nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban has however himself has said that this in underestimate.

Hungary has tripled its capacity to produce masks from 25,000 per day to 80,000 per day, according to Orban, besides buying [masks](#), protective gear and gloves.

Orban insists hospitals have sufficient capacity and has brought in economic measures such as tax exemptions to soften the blow of the virus.

Austria with its nearly nine million people has recorded more than 3,900 cases and 21 deaths.

Strict measures have been put in place in both countries to restrict people's movements and the spread of the virus.

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