

Slovakia confirms first coronavirus case, bans Italy flights

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Slovakia reported its first case of the novel coronavirus on Friday, after a man whose son visited Venice in COVID-19 hotspot Italy, tested positive.

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Authorities in Bratislava also slapped an indefinite ban on flights to and from Italy, starting on Monday.

"Today, a 52-year-old patient was confirmed to be infected," Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini told journalists Friday.

He said the man, who has not been named, has been hospitalised in Bratislava.

"The patient did not travel anywhere recently but his son returned from Venice a couple of weeks ago," Pellegrini added.

The patient's sample was tested twice, so there is no doubt about coronavirus, according to the prime minister.

"His son has not shown any signs of illness," Pellegrini said.

More than 300 samples of suspected infections tested negative in Slovakia as of Friday, local health authorities said.

Slovakia had been the only country in Central Europe without a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus.

Italy on Friday reported 49 more deaths from the new coronavirus, the highest single-day toll to date, bringing the total number of fatalities over the past two weeks there to 197, the highest toll outside China.

The virus has infected more than 100,000 people across 91 countries globally, killing 3,407, according to an AFP tally Friday.

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