

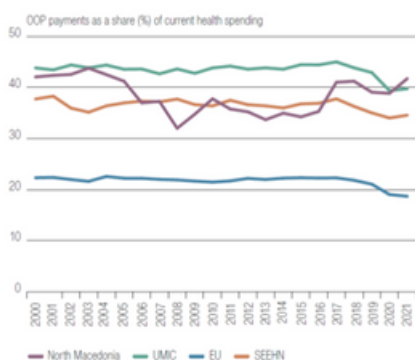
# Health Systems in Action

## NORTH MACEDONIA



- North Macedonia's health system provides a relatively comprehensive basic benefits package, with more than 90% of the population covered under the social health insurance scheme.
- Public spending on health increased in the COVID-19 pandemic, but remains amongst the lowest in south-eastern Europe.
- There is a continued reliance on out-of-pocket (OOP) payments which accounted for 41.7% of health spending in 2021, one of the highest shares in south-eastern Europe.
- Most primary care services are free at the point of delivery but there are user charges for inpatient care and specialist outpatient visits and medicines.

**Fig 1. The share of health spending paid OOP is more than twice the EU average**



- Catastrophic health spending remains a problem for poorer households, largely driven by OOP payments for outpatient medicines.
- Unmet needs for medical care due to cost have declined over the last decade but remain relatively high in low-income groups.
- Primary care is provided mostly by private solo practices but reforms envisage multidisciplinary teams.
- Hospital and bed numbers have been falling but occupancy rates are still low.
- Rates of doctors and nurses are relatively low but have increased in the last decade, although migration is a challenge.
- The information system Moj Termin (My Appointment) has reduced waiting times for appointments and diagnostic tests.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on life expectancy.
- Childhood immunization was falling even before the pandemic and continues to decline, although maternal and infant mortality rates have improved markedly in recent years.
- Noncommunicable diseases are a major concern, but mortality from stroke and ischaemic heart disease has decreased in recent years.
- High blood pressure, smoking, unhealthy diet, high blood sugar, and air pollution all represent significant risks and overweight and obesity are increasing.

	North Macedonia	SEEHN*	WHO European Region	European Region
Population in millions (2022)	2.0	54.7	929.1	512.7
GDP per capita PPP\$ (2021)	17 918	30 022	38 936	48 615
Life expectancy at birth	73.2 (2021)	75.9	78.2	79.9
Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births (2020)	3.0	7.3	12.6	6.4
Infant mortality per 1000 live births (2021)	4.6	4.6	6.3	3.2
Poverty rate (% of population)	21.8 (2021)	22.6 (2017)	14.9 (2018)	17.0 (2018)

\* The South-Eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Israel, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Serbia

Sources are given in full in the Insight and include WHO, Eurostat and the World Bank

Written by Bernd Rechel, Simona Atanasova and Neda Milevska-Kostova