
COVID-19 Coronavirus: Czech Republic, Caritas steps up online and phone counselling

(Bratislava) - Caritas Czech Republic has around 8,000 employees and assistants who provide various kinds of services to 150,000 people in need throughout the country. Most of them are over 65, and are therefore most at risk of COVID-19. "Most of our employees are out there doing their best to respond to the needs of our clients within the framework of our crisis management", Caritas Director Lukáš Curylo explains. "Our main role is to help the most fragile – seniors and people with chronic diseases. We do it in ordinary times, and we have to do it also now that the coronavirus pandemic is raging", Curylo adds, pointing to the fact that Caritas is desperately lacking protective equipment like gloves, face masks and respirators for nurses and social workers. The new situation has brought new challenges to vulnerable groups of citizens who were already facing financial hardships, indebtedness, lack of care or simply loneliness. For this reason, Caritas has set up dedicated phone lines where trained experts address various questions, while also inviting people to avoid personal contacts as much as possible and to use online or phone counselling. So far, 1,165 people in the Czech Republic have tested positive for COVID-19, with one confirmed death. The relatively slow progress in the number of infections is mainly attributed to the Government's early adoption of strict preventive measures.

Marco Calvarese