



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic said in a statement aired live on Prva TV that as of a few days ago there were virtually no more Serbian citizens stranded at airports or border crossings abroad.

The Serbian Foreign Minister assessed that foreign policy these days boiled down to a war against the "demonic virus" as the Chinese President Xi Jinping called it, and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was working on the repatriation of its citizens and provision of medical supplies and humanitarian medical aid.

Minister Dacic stressed that close to 4000 people were transferred so far, half of them by plane.

"We have provided transfer to some 2000 persons by plane, with requests pending for as many more. Of course, we are now compelled to consider priorities", Dacic said.

In a statement for Prva television, the Minister said that a total of 1984 persons would be repatriated to Serbia, today's flight to Istanbul and Bucharest included.

The Minister announced that the Republic of Serbia would arrange a flight from Vienna, and that

yet another flight was expected from Paris.

"An airplane is expected to arrive from the Czech Republic on board of which one company will return its employees, as well as another flight from Israel that will also be an opportunity for Serbian citizens to return home despite the fact that these flights were not arranged by the Serbian authorities. Another flight will take off from Stuttgart, also set up by someone else", Dacic said.

The Minister added that actions regarding our nationals staying in Switzerland will be decided on.

Bringing up problems encountered in these efforts, the Minister noted that it happened that a certain number of people would apply for a humanitarian flight, but that aircraft end up returning half empty, as some passengers would not board the flights in the end, on hearing about a mandatory quarantine upon their arrival to Serbia.

"At least 15 percent of persons who apply for flights don't show up. It even happened that planes we send return half empty. When we organized transfer to Malta, some 40 persons contacted us willing to go there", the Minister said.

Minister Dacic said that it was the Foreign Ministry's responsibility to have these people pass the Serbian border checkpoints and that what followed relied on the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior including the quarantine and isolation procedures, however, that the Government recommended to all to assume to be quarantined from at least 14 to 28 days.

Asked about the passengers' background, the Minister responded that it was diverse, that most of the tourists had already returned, that an issue of Serbian nationals in Thailand and Indonesia remained to be resolved and that those who expressed interest to return included university students, persons receiving medical treatment abroad, those on business trips, but also individuals who had lost their jobs abroad.

Enquired about the well-being of Serbian diplomatic mission staff in Switzerland, Minister Dacic said that they were feeling good and that the only person who had faced a serious condition was on the mend, and that he was released from hospital.