

Coronavirus arrives in France according to health minister



Paris, January 26 (RHC)-- France has confirmed its first two cases of the Wuhan coronavirus, with one patient being hospitalized in Paris and the other in the southwestern city of Bordeaux. Health Minister Agnes Buzyn told a news conference these were the first two confirmed cases in Europe and that more cases were likely to occur in France.

Earlier, the charity SOS Medecins said it had treated a patient of Chinese origin who was showing symptoms of fever and who said he had been in contact with people from Wuhan province in China, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak. Buzyn said this patient was 48 years old and had returned two days ago from a trip to China which included a stop in Wuhan. "He's been put in an insulated room so as to avoid any contact with the outside world. He's fine", she said. Buzyn said she had no information yet on the second case, in Paris, which had just been confirmed.

The virus has created alarm, but there are still many unknowns surrounding it, such as just how dangerous it is and how easily it spreads between people. It can lead to pneumonia, which has been deadly in some cases. The World Health Organization on Thursday declared the virus an "emergency in China", but stopped short of declaring it a global health emergency.

Buzyn said the official advice to those suspecting they might have caught the virus was not to go to a hospital - to avoid spreading it - but to call a special number where they would be told what to do. The minister said she planned to hold daily press conferences on the issue.

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