

# *Italian doctors thank Russian medical personnel for help in tackling COVID-19*

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Rome, April 18 (RHC)-- Doctors working in Bergamo, one of the epicenters of the coronavirus outbreak in Italy, thanked Russian specialists for their help in treating some of the most difficult cases.

The work of the Russian medical staff has been “extremely effective,” said Oliviero Valoti, chief medical officer at one of the hospitals in the northern Italian city. Valoti added that he and his colleagues had to entrust some patients in “quite grave condition” to the Russian physicians, who have done their job “flawlessly.”

Moscow sent 15 transport planes with 100 military virologists and epidemiologists to Italy in late March, along with eight medical teams, protective gear, and equipment. Italy was struggling at the time to catch up with the disease, which infected its citizens by the thousands every day.

Russian specialists were sent to the northern regions that were the most severely affected by the coronavirus. The medical staff has primarily worked in intensive care units, according to Valoti. Italians have also increasingly enlisted the services of Russian general practitioners, who take care of patients in regular hospital rooms.

Italian volunteers helping the hospital staff also highly appreciate the skills and adaptability of the Russian specialists. One of them told Russian media that it was quite easy to start working with the Russians “as if we have always worked together.”

While Italian officials, including Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, have repeatedly thanked Russia for its aid, the move did not sit well with some Western politicians and media outlets, who rushed to claim the equipment was useless and that Russia had a hidden agenda.

Conte has met such speculation with scorn, saying that the “mere insinuation” of a Kremlin ploy offends him.

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