

[Press release - Coronavirus]

This morning the Mayor of Menton attended a meeting, organised by the Prefect of the Département of Alpes-Maritimes, with the Regional Health Authority (ARS - Agence Régionale de Santé) and elected local representatives, to discuss the health crisis surrounding the presence of the coronavirus, Covid19, in Italy.

The Prefecture announced at the meeting that, while the Home Office remained vigilant, it had decided not to proceed, at this stage, with health checks at the border or at other arrival points for travellers entering France (the airport, stations and ports).

The Prefect also confirmed that, under the current state of affairs, major special events in the Département, including Menton's Fête du Citron (Lemon Festival), would go ahead as planned. Next weekend's festival is therefore maintained, but remains subject to cancellation if the public health situation should worsen.

The ARS specified that Nice University Hospital was being equipped with screening systems to detect the virus and that Pasteur Hospital would be officially ready within 48 hours to handle any suspected cases of the disease, in lieu of La Timone Hospital in Marseille. Other hospitals in both the east and west of Alpes-Maritimes may also be authorised to carry out screening tests.

State representatives reiterated that a toll-free number had already been set up to answer questions from the general public: 0 800 130 000. The local authorities promised to inform the community about this service which is run by doctors.

After the meeting, the Mayor of Menton duly noted the measures taken by the Département and expressed his council's wish to play an active part in the day-to-day monitoring bodies set up by the Prefecture. Their next meeting is to be held tomorrow.

Most importantly, Jean-Claude Guibal presented the first decisions taken by Menton municipal council, which is to host meetings in the immediate future with school staff, childcare and welfare workers, associations, retailers and people working in tourism. As schools prepare to reopen after the half-term holiday, the purpose of the meetings is to help these local players to identify and disseminate the appropriate "instruction sheets" on how to react, which are provided by the Government. Council staff will also be involved and their trips for work purposes will be kept to a strict minimum.

In case the situation worsens, the Municipality is aiming for maximum preparedness in terms of logistical resources, by ordering masks and forehead thermometers, and preparing to open the necessary care centres.

Lastly, as Chairman of the Supervisory Board of La Palmosa Hospital, Jean-Claude Guibal is setting up a watch body comprising members of the ARS, private practitioners and other healthcare professionals from Menton, in order to optimise the circulation of information and provide help with the handling of any confirmed cases.

The Municipality of Menton would like to thank the Italian authorities for the measures they have implemented, and to appeal to the common sense of the general public. Any person having travelled to Italy in recent weeks and who has the characteristic symptoms of a cough or high temperature, should dial "15" and speak to a paramedic.