

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Backstopping, Risk Assessment for TCT operations – Mitigation and Alternatives

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SUMMARY

The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) imposes the preparation of a contingency plan in case it continues to spread in Europe and Western Balkans countries which would inevitably also impact the TCT operations.

Protection of health and safety of staff is of utmost priority. This document is to be used as a guide for the Permanent Secretariat staff as precaution and in case the situation deteriorates.

The TCT Secretariat Staff are enrolled in individual, private health insurance schemes. In case of medical emergency, they should act upon instructions received from their health insurance providers and the Serbian Government.

In general, staff members are **urged** to closely **monitor** the information posted on the websites dedicated to the COVID-19 regarding the latest developments, how to protect from the virus, symptoms, treatment etc.:

- [WHO](#)
- [Serbian Ministry of Health](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

IMPACT ANALYSIS – MEASURES AND MITIGATIONS

A significant part of TCT operations are regular Working Group meetings that are scheduled to take place at the Headquarters based in Belgrade with a frequency of approximately every 12 days. Apart from TCT staff, participants of these meetings are government officials, experts and other relevant stakeholders from the 6 Western Balkan Countries and the European Union who are required to travel to Belgrade and stay for 1 or 2 nights.

POSSIBLE DISRUPTIONS

Non-participation at the WG meetings in Belgrade

Limiting travel, especially across borders, is one of the preventive measures against contracting the virus. It is likely that for the upcoming planned meetings there will be hesitation or rejection by some of the invitees for participation.

Mitigation and Alternative Measures

An alternative would be to organize video conferences enabling participation of all parties in one way or another. Video conferencing should be the preferred option for all meetings or, if this is not possible, meetings should be postponed to a later date.

As the video conferencing equipment is in the initial procurement stages, external services are to be used that enable video conferencing for multiple participants using different IT networks and equipment.

Services such as [Webex](#) have been identified as a potential temporary solution.

If a meeting is held, a compulsory registration of participants of all meetings shall be made by the Permanent Secretariat following the same format used by the Commission (Ref. Ares(2020)1411296 - 06/03/2020).

Headquarters Operation

Absence from work shall be imposed in situations as follows:

- **When a staff member is feeling unwell and noticing any of the most common symptoms of COVID-19** such as: fever, tiredness, and dry cough (World Health Organization, 2020), they must seek immediate medical help, not show up for work and inform the Director as soon as possible.

- **The Serbian Government issues guidelines or imposes movement restrictions for citizens.**
In this case, the HR/Administration Officer informs the Director who in turn instructs the staff members not to come to the office and perform **teleworking** instead.

In case any Permanent Secretariat staff member contracts the virus and is unable to perform the duties, a backstopping schedule (Annex I) has been prepared indicating which staff members can serve as 1st or eventually 2nd replacement to cover the critical tasks.

Additional consideration shall be given to staff members who are more vulnerable such as pregnant women.

With regards to the meetings taking place at the Secretariat with internal and external participants, a compulsory registration of all participants shall take place in line with the Note from the Secretary General of the EC with Ref. Ares(2020)1411296 - 06/03/2020.

Teleworking

Under the assumption that all staff members have broadband internet and are in possession of a laptop or desktop, personal or official, teleworking would serve to perform at least the essential duties of each staff member.

A critical factor for teleworking to function is that all staff members are enrolled in Office 365. Currently only 6 staff members have access. Whilst teleworking is also possible without Office 365 accounts, it is much more difficult to, for example, edit and share files, thus collaboration can be less efficient.

Office 365 enables excellent online collaboration tools including file sharing/viewing/editing, Skype for Business (recently replaced by Microsoft Teams) audio/video conference calls etc.

SAFETY OF ASSETS

Information Technology Assets

The TCT Information Technology Infrastructure consists of a server located at the Permanent Secretariat, a website, Office 365 accounts, laptop and desktop computers, a printer, scanner and routers.

Precautionary measures

Perform regular backup of server data and staff members are instructed to keep a copy of their working files on a 2nd storage medium such as USB or another personal laptop/desktop.

Inventory

The inventory of the Permanent Secretariat, apart from the aforementioned IT assets, includes office equipment and furniture. These are all located inside the office at the Headquarters. Access to the Headquarters is regulated via access control RFID cards and individually locked office doors, once you have entered the premises. As per the Headquarters Agreement, the Government of Serbia is responsible for the security and safeguarding of the Permanent Secretariat premises.

Precautionary measures

Staff members are reminded to lock their offices upon departure every evening.

Financial Assets and Transactions

The Permanent Secretariat has a bank account at Raiffeisen Bank in Belgrade. Authorized signatories are the Director (Interim) and the HR & Administration Officer. Any outgoing transaction requires a double signature of both signatories whereby the Director (Interim) must sign 1st.

Risk assessment

In case one of the two authorized signatories is unavailable, a situation may arise whereby no payment can be executed, including staff salaries and expenses essential for normal operation.

Electronic signatures are currently not an option.

Mitigation and Alternative Solutions

To increase the number of authorized signatories from 2 to 4 and to enable another pair of double signatures. This would involve delegation of limited authority from the Director (Interim) to the other 2 staff members.

Find ways to allow for electronic signing of transactions.

REFERENCES

World Health Organization. (2020, February 4). *WHO*.

Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>