



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS



Ministry of Health
of the Republic
of Lithuania

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA,
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA AND
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
ON COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE
IN THE HEALTH RELATED CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

The, Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania, hereinafter collectively referred to as “the Participants”, and individually as “the Participant”:

being convinced of the need for cooperation between the Participants in the event of a natural or man-made emergency to protect people’s life and health;

wishing to further improve their cooperation through this Memorandum of Understanding, which can be regarded as a framework for cooperation and possible further Agreements;

mindful of the commitments imposed on the Participants by the International Health Regulations (2005) as well as the commitments imposed on the European Union Member States by the Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU (Text with EEA relevance);

being aware of and *not duplicating* the EU assistance mechanisms provided in the Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union

civil protection mechanism; Commission implementing decision (EU) 2019/1930 of 18 November 2019 amending implementing Decision (EU) 2019/570 as regards RescEU capacities and Commission Decision 2021/C 393 I/02 of 16 September 2021 Establishing the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority;

acknowledging and refraining from overlapping the Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Estonia on mutual aid for providing ambulance services in border areas, signed electronically on 22 September 2022; *and* the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on the cross-border cooperation in the provision of ambulance services in the border area between the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia, signed in Bauska on 3 October 2018; *and* the Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania on Joint Procurements of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices and Lending of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices Procurable Centrally, signed electronically on 5 April 2022.

without prejudice to any present or future bilateral or trilateral agreements or other forms of cooperation in the field of emergency prevention, preparedness and response;

have reached the following understanding:

Section 1

Definitions

The terms in the present Memorandum of Understanding will have the following meaning:

- a) **emergency** – any situation which has or may have a severe impact on people's life and health;
- b) **crisis management** - strategic and coordinated approach that organizations, professionals, and authorities take to effectively respond to and mitigate critical situations or emergencies that can disrupt the normal functioning of healthcare systems, compromise patient safety, or pose a significant threat to public health. The four stages of the crisis management cycle are emergency prevention, preparedness, response and assistance during recovery;

- c) **prevention** – any action aimed at reducing risks or mitigating adverse consequences of an emergency for people's life and health. Therefore, activities and measures taken in advance to ensure effective response to the impact of hazards, including the issuance of timely and effective early warnings and the temporary evacuation of people and property from threatened locations;
- d) **preparedness** – a state of readiness and capability of human and material means, structures, communities and organisations enabling them to ensure an effective rapid response to an emergency, obtained as a result of action taken in advance. Therefore, pre-disaster activities, including an overall strategy, policies and institutional and management structures, that are geared to helping at-risk communities safeguard their lives and assets by being alert to hazards and taking appropriate action in the face of an imminent threat or the actual onset of a disaster;
- e) **response** – any action taken upon request for assistance under the present Memorandum of Understanding in the event of an imminent emergency, or during or after an emergency, to address its immediate adverse consequences;
- f) **recovery** – any action taken upon stabilizing and restoring healthcare system functions and capabilities after the emergency;
- g) **response capacity** – assistance that may be provided under the present Memorandum of Understanding upon request, including exchange of medicines and medical supplies and experts, patient transport to assisting Participant with necessary equipment and personnel, patient treatment in assisting Participant hospitals and other necessary measures, which is needed to protect people's life and health;
- h) **Competent Authority** – the national authority or authorities designated by the Participant for the practical development and implementation of the collaboration within the framework of this Memorandum of Understanding, including matters related to requests for assistance and decisions to render assistance;
- i) **requesting Participant** – Participant, whose Competent Authorities request assistance from another Participant;

- j) **assisting Participant** – Participant, whose Competent Authorities comply with a request of assistance from another Participant;
- k) **expert/medical team** – organised group of healthcare professionals and other specialists (experts), who participate in the provision of healthcare services of the assisting Participant, assigned for rendering assistance and having the necessary equipment.

Section 2

Scope

The primary aim of the Memorandum of Understanding is to protect people's life and health. The Memorandum of Understanding enables the Participant to enhanced cooperation in health related crisis management, share expertise, best practices, available resources while ensuring preparedness and prevention as well as in events of an emergency or an imminent threat.

Section 3

Competent Authorities and Points of Contact

1. The Participants will designate one or more Competent Authorities for the purposes of this Memorandum of Understanding. The Competent Authorities are:

- 1) In the Republic of Estonia:

The Ministry of Social Affairs

Estonian Health Board (serves also as Early Warning and Response System 24/7 contact point).

- 2) In the Republic of Latvia:

The Ministry of Health

Latvian State Emergency Medical Service (serves also as Early Warning and Response System 24/7 contact point).

- 3) In the Republic of Lithuania:

The Ministry of Health

Health Emergency Situations Centre of the Ministry of Health (serves also as Early Warning and Response System 24/7 contact point).

2. The Competent Authorities will inform each other without delay of any changes to the Competent Authorities and Points of Contact.

Section 4

Cooperation measures and initiatives

1. Participants decide to cooperate in the following areas:
 - 1.1 Share knowledge and expertise by organising joint activities, such as common training, exercises, exchange of experts, seminars or workshops, and projects aimed at improvement of health related crisis management;
 - 1.2 Exchange of data related to health related crisis management and risks;
 - 1.3 Engage in discussions to further explore cooperation in the following aspects of mutual assistance:
 - providing assistance in vaccination and other supportive epidemiological activities;
 - providing psychological crisis aid to the disaster victims;
 - providing assistance in receiving and distribution of foreign humanitarian aid;
 - sharing other medical resources and capabilities in a way that is not regulated by other agreements;
 - providing non-medical capacities in order to secure healthcare services providers operational continuity;
 - sharing medical teams to increase requesting Participant medical capacities;
 - sharing resources for medical transport within or forth requesting Participant territory.
 - 1.4 These measures could be employed in instances where national legal acts afford such assistance and do not replicate or duplicate corresponding EU legal provisions.
2. Participants may jointly take measures and initiatives to facilitate the rendering of assistance and cooperation during an emergency.
3. If the Participants wish to establish a joint response capacity it would be regulated by a separate agreement signed by the Competent Authorities or other responsible authorities within the scope of their competence.

Section 5

Implementation and follow-up

1. The Participants convene a meeting at least every two years on the rotation basis to monitor the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, analyse future actions and draw up plans for further development of cooperation in accordance with Section 4. At the level

of Competent Authorities the meeting could take place more often. Every Participant has the right to convene a meeting.

2. The Participants may give detailed guidance on and adopt the procedure for measures and initiatives in connection to Section 4.

Section 6

Financing

In the case of joint trainings and exercises, each Participant will cover the costs related to the participation of its experts and resources. Joint costs will be covered as agreed separately.

Section 7

Final provisions

1. This Memorandum of Understanding is not legally binding and is not intended to supersede the laws and regulations applicable in the territories of the Participants' States or international obligations, which the Participants are bound up with.
2. The Participants will notify each other in case of any conflict arising from this Memorandum of Understanding. All disputes regarding the interpretation or implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding will be settled by negotiation between the Participants.
3. This Memorandum of Understanding will remain in effect for an unlimited period of time. This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect on 24th of April 2024.
4. This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by the mutual written consent of the Participants. The Amendments will come into effect and may be terminated by any Participant in accordance with Paragraph 6 of Section 7 of this Memorandum of Understanding.
5. This Memorandum of Understanding may be supplemented by cooperation agreements that Participants may deem necessary for more effective implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding. Cooperation agreements shall become an integral part of this Memorandum of Understanding and shall enter into force upon the signature of these agreements by all Participants.

6. Each Participant may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding by giving a written notice to the other Participants. Such termination shall take effect 6 (six) months after the date on which the Participant sends out such written notice. The Participants will consult to determine how any outstanding matters should be dealt with.
7. All information provided or generated pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding will be safeguarded, used, transmitted, stored, handled in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable in the territories of the Participants' States.

Signed in three copies at Brussels on 24th of April 2024 in English.

For the Ministry of Social
Affairs of the Republic of
Estonia



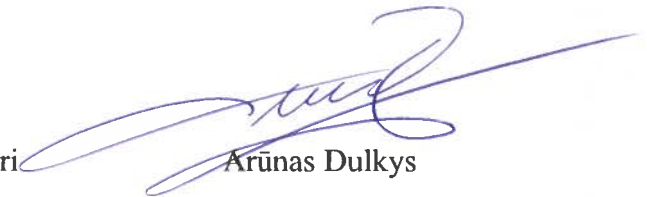
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