

Reasons to turn the physical congress into an online congress

Travel restrictions

- Though the situation in Northern Macedonia is stable at the moment, it can't be guaranteed that measurements like quarantines or travel bans for travellers from specific countries won't be implemented
- Many European countries have imposed travel restrictions or even bans
- Many flights are being cancelled or rescheduled

—> It is unclear if delegates can travel freely, travel at all or on time

- The Bureau decided to suspend all travels for Bureau members for safety reasons to not to spread the virus and ensure the good health of the concerned persons. The suspension to travel for staff and bureau members for LYMEC duties enters into force. Dan-Aria Sucuri and Antoaneta Asenova will therefore have to cancel their respective MO representation missions.

Health of participants

- Travelling increases the risk to get infected with Corona Virus, it is recommended to reduce travels
- Gathering 150 from many different countries bears the risk to be a super spreader event, infecting people that would take it to many different parts of Europe
- All social events of the congress, are not recommended to do

—> At this stage we can't guarantee for participants well-being even if we would implement all the precaution measurements as recommended by WHO, which we in fact had all already prepared for

Why Online Congress not postponing?

- In the current situation it is unclear to when the congress could be postponed, as no one can calculate the situation.
- According to our statutory provisions, the LYMEC Congress must meet twice a year (LYMEC Statutes, art. 21 (1), Congress rules, art.1). In addition, the Bureau's annual financial report, together with the report of the external auditors, containing an itemized account of the expenditures must be transmitted four weeks prior to the annual Spring Congress (LYMEC Statutes Art. 21 (3), the budget needs to be approved by Congress (Congress rules art. 22 (5) and be ready for the Belgian authorities to review within the first half of the calendar year.

- This means as by Belgian law, under which we operate, we need an official closing of the books in the first half a year, which can only be approved by congress. As well according to our statutes we need to elect a new leadership. Not doing these two things now, would risk the operation and existence of the organisation.
- In addition, the statutory Congress deadlines stipulated in Appendix I, actions have been taken with accordance with those deadlines, and people took the decision to run for elections, devoting their time and effort campaigning with a view of the Congress dates which have been set. Postponing a Congress to an indefinite time would not only be undemocratic in view of the provisions of art.23 (3) and (4) providing for a two year mandate of the Bureau, but in violation of the right of the candidates standing for elections to be timely informed and come up with campaigning plans.
- Additionally, a new third congress, financially seen would have restrained the financial resources of the organisation.

What is the financial impact of the cancellation on LYMEC?

- The Bureau calculated all costs and the smallest financial loss was clearly with the option of turning the physical congress into an online congress.
- The financial loss should be around 12.000€, if we cancel in the week 12. That is why a decision needs to be taken now.
- Holding another congress would have created a financial loss of about 45.000€.
- Treasurer Lena Höglund will update the financial documents accordingly for the Online Spring Congress.

What about my payments and travels?

- LYMEC will pay all participation fees back. In order to get a reimbursement, we would ask organisations/individuals that paid already their fees to send us an invoice with the reimbursement amount requested.
- LYMEC will still pay the agreed sums to the participants that were granted travel support through the freedom fund. Unless your flight is cancelled and you would get a refund from the airline. Please contact us on an individual basis.
- LYMEC can unfortunately not financially support other participants travels. We recommend to wait, in case the airline cancels your flight altogether or alternatively check if your airlines offers rebooking for another time and another destination. In case you cancel, you are entitled to at least payback of the taxes.
- As per statutes, membership fees for 2020 need to be paid at the opening of the online Congress in order for organisations to have the possibility to vote on the different agenda points (including Bureau elections). **If you intend to pay in cash initially, the Treasurer will contact you to make sure you transfer the money on time.**