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Stockholm, 20 April 2020
Our ref: DIR-2020-OUT-1059-AnAmJeGo

Re: Invitation to participate in the EU Initiative on Health Security (ENI/2020/415-420)

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you regarding the new EU Initiative on Health Security funded by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations), which will be implemented by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Your country is invited to be part of this important initiative towards improving health security in the EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries from threats posed by communicable diseases.

In 2005, the European Union has mandated ECDC to identify, assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health from communicable diseases. To fulfil its mission, ECDC relies extensively on close collaboration with the public health institutes of the EU Member States but also with public health authorities in neighbouring countries.

In 2014-2016, in the framework of a European Commission funded action, ECDC has been collaborating with ENP partner countries to encourage sharing of best practices among experts, strengthening capacities in prevention and control of communicable diseases, and establishing official contacts for timely exchange of technical information. This cooperation gave the opportunity to more than 200 experts from ENP partner countries to be introduced to ECDC activities, tools and practices for the prevention and control of communicable diseases. Additionally, more than 50 experts received highly professional training on epidemic intelligence and risk assessment.

Since 2013, ECDC is leading the scientific expertise of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (MediPIET). Until now twenty-two fellows have graduated MediPIET, 18 participate in the current cohort and over 800 health professionals including 200 senior epidemiologists have been trained. As of 2021, the programme will be part of the EU Initiative on Health Security and managed by the ECDC.

Against this background, I would like to invite you to further develop our collaboration within the EU Initiative on Health Security in 2020-2024, aiming to set up a regional competent workforce for the prevention and control of challenges from communicable diseases and to enhance regional cooperation to tackle cross-border health security threats. ECDC has developed the general proposal to meet the set goals, however we strive to have a dialogue with each partner country and agree on the specific activities of the EU Initiative on Health Security that could cover the needs in the field of prevention and control of communicable diseases. In order to start the activities under the EU Initiative on Health Security ECDC would be pleased to receive from your side:

1. **Letter of Intent** confirming your interest to participate in the EU Initiative on Health Security;
2. **Nomination of a National Correspondent attached to the Letter of Intent** to act as single point of contact for interaction with ECDC in relation to the EU Initiative on Health Security and overall cooperation with ECDC;

3. Joint development of the Inception Report. In order to have a clear vision and established baseline for our future work we shall perform an assessment of your country's level of preparedness to public health emergencies, with the current outbreak of COVID-19 serving as a reference point to this assessment. We understand the current pressure on your experts and health system; therefore, we will avoid comprehensive in-country assessments and propose a self-assessment of your country's level of preparedness to public health emergencies that will be later on analysed by ECDC and result in the Inception Report with a number of activities to be proposed for the coming years. Details of the self-assessment process will be communicated in due time to the nominated National Correspondent.

Should you support this initiative, I would appreciate receiving Letter of Intent with the nominated National Correspondent at your earliest convenience, but no later than 8 May 2020 (return to director@ecdc.europa.eu with copy to international.relations@ecdc.europa.eu). Please do not hesitate to contact me or Antonis Lanaras, Head of European and International Cooperation Section (antonis.lanaras@ecdc.europa.eu, +46 858601056) for any further clarification.

Dear Minister, I am convinced that your and our experts in the field of prevention and control of communicable diseases would benefit from working together within the EU Initiative on Health Security and make all of us better prepared to the outbreaks in the future.

Looking forward to our fruitful cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Ammon', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Andrea Ammon
Director

Encl.:

1. Description of the EU Initiative on Health Security
2. Terms of Reference and Nomination Template of the National Correspondent
3. Privacy Statement