



ΕΕΑΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΑΤΟΜΙΚΗΣ ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑΣ
GREEK ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION



OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

June 2020



> Introduction

We present the actions implemented from March to June 2020 under the exceptional conditions of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

The common reference point of decisions taken and the innovative actions implemented during that period was:

- ▮ the health and safety of EEAE staff and partners,
- ▮ the continuity of EEAE operational capability and
- ▮ the minimization of impact on the regulatory functions.

In the context of systematic interaction with interested parties we also present the findings of a survey conducted among undertakings subject to regulatory control, aiming at assessing the potential impact of the lockdown restrictions in radiation protection and safety.



> for EEAE staff and our partners

The implementation of measures necessary for EEAE staff and partners' safety **were taken in time and preceded the general lockdown measures.**

In the beginning of March, instructions were given to EEAE staff based on health safety considerations especially in relation to specific functions, such as the on-site inspections and the hosting of seminars/events. An ad-hoc crisis management team was set up, which consists of the Occupational Medical Doctor, the Health and Safety Advisor, the Personnel Department management and the upper management. This team continues to assess the situation and proposes the necessary measures to ensure health and safety in the workplace.

At the same time, teleworking was made possible for EEAE staff by the Information Technology Department, **following security protocols and using virtual private networks (VPNs).**

> for the undertakings in the health care system

Regarding the licensing process, **we have given priority to the authorization of diagnostic medical practices**, such as the operation of CT scans and X-ray systems, necessary to deal with COVID-19 cases; we accelerated the licensing or registration procedures for radiation practices conducted by public or private health care providers (indicatively General Hospital of Amaliada, General Hospital of Thessaloniki Papageorgiou, Pammakaristos Hospital, etc.).

Furthermore, **we provided advice on how to change the use of radiology equipment** to be used safely to face the increased needs related with COVID-19 cases, such as the modification of portable X-rays systems into fixed units in designated areas (control areas).

Also, **we responded to requests for radiation protection advice to healthcare workers** with increased workload, since they were worried on how to cope with the increased number of radiation diagnostic examinations.



> for undertakings subject to regulatory inspections

Within a pilot context we conducted remote inspections, aiming at ensuring the safety of the people involved and the continuity of the regulatory control. A remote inspection involves live-streamed audio-video interaction between inspectors and the counterparts.

Over the past months, due to health safety restrictions related with COVID-19 pandemic, on-site inspections have been carried out only in extraordinary cases and under appropriate protection measures.



> for undertakings subject to regulatory control

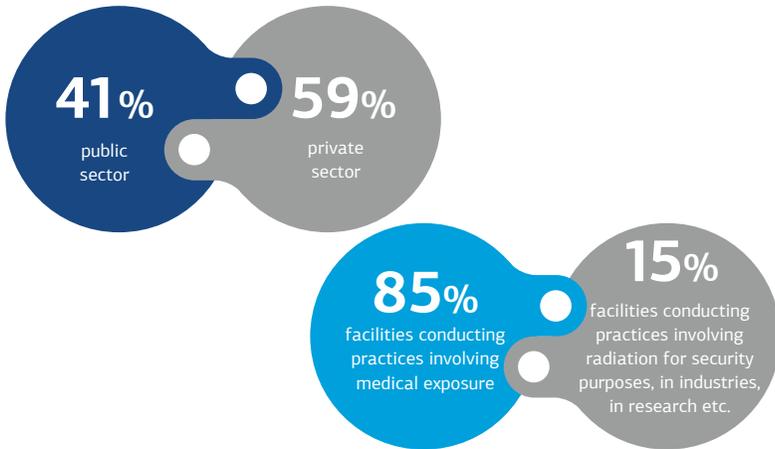
Taking into account the special working conditions during the COVID-19 lockdown **we considered important to assess any possible impact on radiation protection and radiation safety.** To this purpose, we conducted a survey from 11 to 19 of June 2020, aiming specifically at identifying:

- a. any problems arisen with the implementation of practices using ionizing radiation;
- b. the degree of satisfaction from EEAE response during the lockdown.

The questionnaire was sent to undertakings subject to regulatory control. The recipients' list included undertakings conducting practices involving medical exposure (hospitals, health care units, etc.) or non-medical exposure (industries, research institutes, etc.).



Profile of organizations completing the questionnaire



Some conclusions drawn by the analysis of the responses include the following:

- the COVID-19 restrictions did not cause problems in practices with ionizing radiation (79% of the responses). Some operational problems or problems related to the compliance with radiation protection controls were identified in medical facilities, possibly in reference hospitals designated to treat COVID-19 cases due to workload and accessibility restrictions;
- there was no significant impact in terms of occupational, medical or public exposure;
- 23% of the undertakings responded that they modified the use of diagnostic equipment during the lockdown; 18% said that they had to modify common hospital rooms to radiology areas;
- only in few cases the workload of the exposed workers increased, due to the increase in the number of radiation diagnostic examinations (e.g. chest X-ray procedures), possibly in reference hospitals designated to treat COVID-19 cases. In the rest of the cases the lockdown resulted in a decrease of the workload;
- the majority of respondents seems satisfied with EEAE actions and initiatives during the lockdown;
- the launch of activities, such as the remote inspections and the on-line training are very much welcomed by the 88% of the respondents; it is proposed to systematically conduct such activities in the future.



> for exposed workers

The unhindered continuation of the individual monitoring of exposed workers was one of EEAE priorities from the onset of COVID-19 lockdown.

Given the exceptional conditions and in full respect of the increased workload of the medical staff and the people working for the distribution services, **we decided not to proceed with the monthly dispatch of the personal dosimeters, initially planned to take place in the end of March, just a few days after the lockdown.**

The workers were informed in time to keep using the same dosimeter for a two-month period instead of one. The estimation of the respective level of exposure was based on the use of one dosimeter, considering all the relevant parameters, such as the fading and background correction of the longer monitoring period. A similar method is used for the two-month monitoring period in summer (July-August).

In this way, we ensured the on-going individual monitoring of exposed workers without posing further burden to courier services and health care facilities with increased workload due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Our operational response to the pandemic challenges in the field of individual monitoring has been broadly recognized, as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) invited EEAE to present its experience as a good practice in the webinar “Continuity in COVID-19 pandemic: How to run effective technical services for individual monitoring during a pandemic” which took place on 27 May 2020.

We choose
safety!

We are socially
responsible

We keep the March
dosemeter

We keep using **the same
dosemeter** in April!



dosimetria@eeae.gr

Contact EEAE
only by email!

Do not forget...

The dosimeter does not
protect from radiation!
It only measures the
radiation dose



> for interested parties

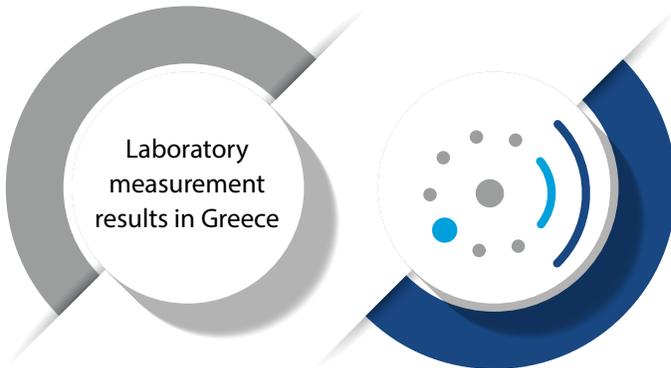
- We provided feedback to HERCA (Heads of the European Radiological Protection Competent Authorities) regarding measures taken at regulatory level during COVID-19 lockdown, focusing on health care providers.
- We provided feedback to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through the survey entitled "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Regulatory Activities for the Safety of Radiation Sources".
- We informed the European Commission through the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) about measures taken to ensure radiation and nuclear safety at national level during the lockdown.
- We uploaded at EEAE website a set of Questions & Answers relevant with EEAE functions and the continuous operation during COVID-19 lockdown as well as with radiation protection issues.
- We uploaded at EEAE website information about the use of UVC radiation for disinfection purposes.

> for all of us

In the midst of the pandemic, **the operational readiness of environmental radioactivity monitoring was successfully tested** as a result of the forest fire which lasted for several days in the area of Chernobyl, Ukraine.

Specifically, during April 2020, the Network of Collaborating Laboratories conducted a set of laboratory measurements in air filters collected in Athens, Thessaloniki and Ioannina, to verify whether any traces of Cs-137 were detected in the atmosphere of the country.

EEAE announcements about the topic are available at <http://eeae.gr/en/news/announcements>.



#Chernobyl



ΕΕΑΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΑΤΟΜΙΚΗΣ ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑΣ
GREEK ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

 PO Box 60092, 153 10 Αγία Παρασκευή

 +30 210 650 6700  +30 210 650 6748

 info@eeae.gr  www.eeae.gr    [eeae.gr](https://www.instagram.com/eeae.gr)