Implementation of Article X of the Convention

Republic of Serbia

The Republic of Serbia attaches importance to the issue of international cooperation, i.e. to the effective and full implementation of Article X of the Convention in order to generate the benefits for the all State parties.

The enhancement of international cooperation is the vital interest of Serbian agencies/laboratories/institutions dealing with health, biosafety and biosecurity issues (Military Medical Academy — Institute of Epidemiology, BATUT Institute of Public Health, Torlak Institute of Immunology and Virology, Central Veterinary Laboratories of Serbia, Chamber of Biochemists, etc.).

One representative of the CBRN Centre participated in the International Conference "Global Biosecurity Challenges: Problems and Solutions", which was held in the Russian Federation (Sochi), from 23 to 28 June 2021. The aim of the conference was for participants to examine the current situation in the field of the provision of biosafety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as experiences in responding to infectious threats and research issues. The main topics of the conference were perspectives and areas of joint cooperation in the field of biosafety, scientific and technical cooperation, exchange of experiences on the implementation of BTWC and preparations for the next review conference.

In the period from March 2020 until the end of 2021, personnel of the CBRN Centre with formation devices and equipment was engaged in biological disinfection and decontamination of people, vehicles, facilities of the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces, hotels, COVID hospitals and outpatient clinics, sports halls, gerontology centres, other facilities and communications on the entire territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Especially bearing in mind that the Republic of Serbia is seeking to create facilities with biological containment at biosafety level 3, by upgrading laboratories to meet BSL 3 and 4 standards and by training staff to operate at biosafety level 3. Our national experts are dedicated, skilled and responsible with the genuine desire to meet all biosafety and biosecurity requirements, but additional international expertise, as well as financial and technical assistance is needed and more than welcome. In the Republic of Serbia the maximum laboratory safety capacity is currently at level 2.

The standards of systems, processes and laboratories is important to Serbia because of our critical location at the gateway between east and west that is crucial to disease control in Europe, especially in the agriculture sector. Our objective is not only to upgrade the laboratories to meet higher BSL, but also to develop the laboratories standards to evaluate new facilities. Our long-standing objective is to technically improve the general conditions in our facilities, which will help us to meet the higher standards for diagnostics, production, research and development.

The development of biotechnology and molecular biology cannot be stopped, but their application can be brought within the framework of ethical, moral and useful to man, by legal means.

A system of early warning, identification of the pathogenic agent and rapid reaction in crisis and emergency situations on a limited or wider territory, assessment of the spread and global consequences, as well as uniform action, in order to protect the population, is very important in terms of practical application.
It is necessary for certain procedures to be mandatory for all countries, which, according to their capabilities and technological development, will implement them, simultaneously using data exchange with other countries:
- Identification of infectious agents responsible for the unusual increase in patients
- Determining the origin of the agent (virus)
- Identifying the agent (causing agent)
- Analysis and interpretation of results
- Development of new technologies and improvement of data/file records
- Improving the analysis and interpretation of genetic data requires capacity and knowledge that are often beyond the expectations of most laboratories
- Employee education
- Special care is needed when creating instructions for the strain collection database
- Collective efforts to identify new opportunities to detect and confirm the use of "force" and identify responsibilities in the use of biological and biotechnological weapons
- The main goal for all countries is the fight against disease and the improvement of health
- Improvement of international cooperation
- Achieving biological security
- Advanced control of virulent pathogens
- Strict rules and control of import-export permits
- Control of possible dual purpose goods
- Improving the ability of states to respond in the event of a crisis/emergency situation in the event of a biosecurity incident and unifying criteria for risk assessment and response.