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## ERA Security Procedure

The purpose of this document is to establish basic procedures for ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey employees, Steering Board as well as our member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community in a case of emergency or situations when higher caution should be exercised. The document describes what to follow in the event of an emergency and a method for communications and departure should the evacuation be required.

An emergency contact list for the ERA employees has been prepared and is known as the ERA Phone chart. The Phone Chart contains the emergency contact phone numbers for all ERA employees. This list is distributed to all ERA employees so that they can keep in touch with each other throughout heightened safety situations or through an evacuation and so separate individuals can be contacted.

Izabela Đorđević, the Finance and Administration Officer, will inform the ERA employees in a case of security developments. All ERA employees who are aware of developments that can impact safety should notify other employees if they have reliable information.

Office must have the following information posted in a visible place.

### ***Employees Contact List***

Employees should also save these numbers into their mobile phones. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their contact phone numbers and addresses are up-to-date. The Finance and Administration Officer will update the contact information as needed.

### **Choosing an office**

When choosing a new office facility, ERA employees must work with Finance and Administration Officer to identify a facility that is appropriate for ERA operations and provides adequate safety for ERA employees. Decisions on whether to put up ERA signboards or logos to identify that the location is an ERA office, as well as having the office address and contact details listed on the ERA website, should be made on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the ERA employees and Board members.

### **Maintaining safety and security at the office**

Distribution of keys and key cards to ERA office facilities is limited to employees and it is closely monitored. Keys will be collected upon departure of an employee. Lost keys should be reported to the Finance and Administration Officer immediately.

ERA offices have in place the following safety equipment, that is regularly checked and maintained to ensure they are in proper working order.

- First aid kit (appropriate for the number of employees present in the office);
- Fire extinguishers and fire protection plan as per Serbian Labour Law;
- Cameras covering the building entrance and main door from outside and inside;

Testing of fire alarms/smoke detectors is tested by hired contractors, as per Serbian Law. All employees must have fire protection training, also as per law. All employees must complete the fire protection training upon joining ERA. Details of how to do this and what is required will be provided by Finance and Administration Officer. A locked metal file case for archiving sensitive files such as financial document, membership, contracts, personal information is located in the Finance and Administration Officer office.

Employees should not be alone in the office before or after the working hours, and in case the employee is staying after working hours, the doors must be locked and not be answered.

## **Weapons**

Under no circumstances will ERA employees carry weapons or have weapons or ammunition while under the contract with ERA. To do so would undermine ERA humanitarian imperatives and endanger the well-being of all employees. ERA offices have a “no weapons” policy, prohibiting weapons in ERA offices or events.

## **Visitors/Consultants**

Visitors to the office or consultants may be vulnerable to increased security risks if they are unfamiliar with the local context, language and security procedures.

ERA Finance and Administration Officer should maintain and periodically update a hotel recommendation list for ERA visitors, consultants or participants that should list hotels vetted and approved as safe options to stay in.

## **Local visitors**

It is sometimes necessary to have visitors to the ERA office for meetings and other events, or for maintenance and repair. Upon arrival, visitors should clearly explain who they are, their reason for visiting the office and who their ERA contact is before being permitted to enter. If a visitor is unknown or unexpected, identification should be requested. If the ERA office is in a building with a reception or security desk, employees there should be informed in advance that ERA is expecting visitors and should not allow anyone through unless authorized by ERA office. Visitors to ERA offices should be escorted throughout their visit.

## **International visitors**

ERA offices will often be visited by member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community, donor employees, or international partner employees. It is the responsibility of the Finance and Administration Officer, in discussion with Executive Co-Director, to determine whether in-country visits are appropriate and if so, the travel criteria and appropriate locations for visitor accommodation.

When on ERA property or attending ERA activities, international visitors should follow ERA security procedure and follow the guidance of the ERA employees.

The Finance and Administration Officer should be informed of ALL international visitors to the ERA office, including details of travel, accommodation and itinerary.

## **Local Travel**

When travel is required away from ERA office additional procedures and precautions should be followed. All travel away from ERA office should ensure the following:

- The planned route of travel is studied, and potential problems identified, for example natural conditions (flooding, fires) or man-made conditions (bad roads, checkpoints). Identify alternative routes and places where you can get help or protection;
- Determine what is the most appropriate and safest route and transport method;
- Employees must carry any required identification or other paperwork;
- Overnight stays must be agreed upon in advance with the Finance and Administration Officer.
- Vehicles must have extra fuel, water, first aid kit, spare tire, basic emergency repair tools;
- Be aware of what items are in the vehicle. Do not transport sensitive information or documents in areas that are prone to checkpoints. Do not carry anything that can be considered contraband.

## **International Travel**

Communications and daily check-in of the employee travelling must be maintained during travel with the Finance and Administration Officer. Travelers may opt to include data roaming (for emergency communications purposes) on their own smart phone if that is an allowable program cost, or procure a local pre-paid SIM card.

Travelling internationally to and from certain countries, either by air or ground transport, may require additional precautions or considerations.

## **Information Security**

Information and data security at ERA are managed by the outsourced Information Technology (I.T) company and all ERAs information must be kept on server which is not on premises of ERA.

## **Handling cash**

Cash transfers are sometimes necessary for events, local purchases, but handling large amounts of cash can be a serious security concern. The following guidelines should be implemented:

- ERA will designate two employees to withdraw and transfer cash if situation arises when high amounts of cash are required (more than 1,000\$). At this point ERA does not anticipate this type of situation.
- ERA will use taxis for in-city transfers if required, and not public transportation.
- In the event of an attack, employees must not risk their lives to protect cash.

## **International SOS Assistance**

All ERA employees should consider downloading the ISOS Assistance Application to their smart phone. The App provides the following:

- One-click dialling to the closest International SOS Assistance Center, for immediate help;
- Mobile-friendly medical and travel security information to prepare for trips, with deeper content a further tap away;
- The latest medical and travel security alerts, delivering travel advice before and during trips;
- Favourite country content for fast navigation to travellers' most used information;

**Medical:** In a medical emergency, the first priority is for the affected employees to receive medical attention, depending on the type of emergency and the access to medical care available. This could be calling an ambulance,

calling a doctor, or taking the affected employees to a designated medical facility. Once initial assistance has been sought, or in the event that medical care cannot be located, employees should contact ERA Finance and Administration Officer for further guidance and assistance related to the medical emergency.

**Relocation:** It may become necessary to relocate employees if the usual operating location is deemed temporarily too risky and work can continue from that location. If the relocation is eminent the employee should contact Finance and Administration Officer to notify them and try to safely reallocate.

**Evacuation:** It may become necessary to evacuate employees from event location if a situation is present that imminently or immediately endangers the lives of employees. Evacuations may be triggered by several conditions, including:

- Widespread riots against LGBTI activists and community members;
- Targeted armed assault against LGBTI activists and community members;
- Government/embassy evacuation notice;
- Public health crisis;

Prior to any evacuation, sensitive HR, financial, and administrative documents must be identified and either transported or destroyed, particularly documents that contain details of locally-engaged employees that may be targeted because of their work with ERA or their ethnic/religious background. Bank accounts and petty cash should be drawn down or transferred to Executive Co-Director account, if time permits.

ERA employees and consultants who are ordered to evacuate or relocate and refuse to do so shall be considered terminated from their employment with ERA, effective immediately. Such persons must understand that they are staying at their own risk and responsibility; they absolve ERA of all loss and/or liability that could arise out of such refusal, and they are solely responsible for their continued safety and security. Under no circumstances are those refusing to evacuate allowed to continue employment at ERA.

In case the situation presents a threat to all employees or LGBTI activists and community members all activities will be suspended until further notice.

## **Incident Reporting & Management**

Every incident should be reported within ERA no matter how insignificant the incident may seem. Effective monitoring and updating of ERA's security procedures is possible only through analysis of the cumulative recording of every incident.

If an incident generates media attention, ERA's Executive Co-Directors will respond to the media and to all media requests for comments or information.

## **Emergency Incidents - Immediate Reporting**

Immediate incident reporting is a verbal report given to local emergency personnel such as police, medical, fire etc. to obtain immediate assistance. It should be done as soon as it is safe to do so. Keep the transmission of the information brief and accurate. Typical flow of information consists of:

WHO?	Your name and phone number)
WHERE?	(Exact location)
WHEN?	(Time of incident)
WHAT?	(Describe incident)

WHAT ACTION TAKEN? (What you have done and are doing)  
WHAT DO YOU NEED? (Assistance needed and precautions to be aware of)

### **Internal ERA Incident Reports**

Incidents involving ERA employees, visitors, consultants, interns must be reported quickly via text, phone call or email to the Executive Co-Director. If designated employee cannot be contacted, the most senior ERA employees available should be notified and will make key decisions until a more senior employees can be contacted.

Employees should be ready to provide the following information:

- Who you are (name and position);
- What happened;
- Where it happened, as precisely as possible (most satellite/cell phones have GPS);
- When it happened, as precisely as possible;
- Who was involved, with details about the victims when applicable;
- The incident's impact on those affected, with details of their current condition;
- Who/what caused the incident, with brief details of numbers, apparent affiliation, equipment, and any post-incident actions;
- Summary of the current situation and, if applicable, what problems remain;
- Decisions or actions that the person reporting proposes to take or has taken;
- Decisions and actions requested from the Executive Co-Director;

The person receiving this information should write it down as reported and ask questions as needed.

After ensuring the immediate well-being of the persons involved and after the danger/situation has passed, an oral debrief should be conducted with all employees either affected by the incident or involved in the response. This is to review how the incident was handled, to confirm that any procedures in place were followed, and to evaluate which aspects need to be modified or eliminated for future incidents. A decision may then be taken to conduct a further inquiry into the incident, depending on the circumstances.

Not all incidents will require immediate reporting. Minor injuries easily treated using the office first aid kit will usually not require immediate reporting, unless the cause of the injury needs to be addressed. Employees are expected to use their common sense and judgement to determine which incidents need to be reported for further action.

Examples of incidents that should be reported both immediately include:

- Medical incident or emergency requiring hospitalization;
- Attempted or actual personal attack/assault;
- Vehicle accident involving ERA employees;
- Fire at ERA office or employees place of residence;
- Medical evacuation (Medevac) of ERA employees;
- Arrest of ERA employees;
- Thefts of funds, goods, or other assets;
- Reported or documented surveillance of ERA employees or property;
- Extortion attempts;
- Threats in any form to employees or property

### **Maintaining Your Personal Safety**

Reducing risk and managing security are the responsibilities of each individual as well as the organization. The individual's behavior plays the most important role in maintaining personal safety and security. Common sense, precautionary actions, discipline, and alertness all play an important role in reducing or eliminating security risks.

***Do:***

- Carry only those necessities that are lightweight and that you can afford to lose or have stolen.
- Conceal those items that are not easily replaceable and are crucial to your travel arrangements - your passport, traveler's checks, cash, medical prescriptions, contact numbers for your doctor, and a copy of your insurance policy.
- Have a mobile communications device with you at all times.
- If placing a bag on the floor, put your foot through the strap of your purse or bag; don't leave it loose when sitting in a restaurant or other public area.
- Avoid walking alone at night as much as possible. It's always safest to do so in a group if you must but only in areas that have been recommended as safe to do so.
- Avoid using the same routine when traveling between work and home. Take different routes, and leave at different times. Most incidents occur when a person leaves or returns home.
- Find out where to get help in your neighborhood. Where is the nearest police station? That stores, restaurants, or other businesses are open late at night? Is there a telephone nearby?
- Be aware of times when crowds can be expected, such as after religious or sporting events.
- Pay particular attention to religious holidays and avoid movement during and after prayer times.
- Avoid tourist areas that are often favorite places for criminal activity. In high-risk areas, avoid busy markets and restaurants that internationals frequent.
- Lock any valuables in the hotel room safe or in the safe at reception.
- Carry a copy of your passport or other documents and keep the original(s) in the hotel or the office. If you must carry your original passport, consider disguising it with a plain slip-on cover.
- Maintain constant awareness of your situation, immediate surroundings, and the broader context in that you're working. Stay alert, and listen to people's advice.
- Carry a phone card, local coins, or a cell phone to make emergency calls if necessary.
- Program emergency numbers into your phone, and keep a separate emergency contact list with you.
- Stay calm in all situations. Be non-provocative when confronted with actual or potential hostile situations.
- Manage your stress levels; know your limits and expectations.
- Be aware of the environment where you are operating and local costumes;
- Learn a few words or phrases in the local language you can use to deter an offender or signal for help.
- Learn to recognize signs of threats and be conscious of escape routes.

***Do NOT:***

- Accept beverages or food from strangers.
- Go to isolated places alone, whether on business or sight-seeing, day or night.
- Leave the "please make up room" sign on your hotel room door as it tells thieves your room and possessions are unattended.
- Leave valuables in the hotel room.
- Wear visible, expensive-looking jewelry. Even fake gold may provoke a robbery or attack.

**Safeguarding your physical and emotional health**

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### ***Stress management***

Effective stress management will vary based on a person's culture, gender, personality, identity, and many other factors. Each person experiences stress differently and must manage it in his/her own way. For stress management to be effective, it must be consistent and include the techniques that work best for the individual. Below are some stress management suggestions for individuals:

- Remember, you cannot take care of others if you do not take care of yourself. The time to act is before you burn out, not after.
- Learn about stress. Acknowledge the possibility that you can become stressed. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of stress, such as drinking, irritability, or depression.
- Know yourself. Observe your feelings and attitudes before trying to change your behavior.
- Ensure rest and relaxation. Get adequate, regular sleep. Consistently do activities for relaxation, such as pursuing hobbies or reading.
- Maintain a sense of humor and perspective. Try to have contact with others outside of work, that can help you keep a proper perspective.
- Be informed. Understanding the work situation and environment is an effective way to check and immediately address concerns.
- Change a stressful environment as much as possible. When faced with a difficult situation, identify the problem, think of alternatives, evaluate the alternatives, and finally select and implement the best alternative.
- Put words to your emotions. Sharing a problem with others could help you find a solution and will make you feel less isolated. This stress management technique can be useful for both men and women.
- Learn to accept the intensity of your own emotions as normal in an abnormal situation. This is especially important if the emotion you are feeling is fear—a natural response to danger.
- If you cannot talk to others about your feelings, keep a journal or diary or write letters.

### **Protocol in the event of a fire**

#### If you discover a fire:

- Alert others to the fire by activating the fire alarm or shouting 'FIRE!'
- Telephone the local fire department/brigade.
- Help people in immediate danger.
- Do not attempt to use a fire extinguisher if you do not know how.
- Decide if you can put out the fire and then do so. If not, evacuate the building.

#### If you hear the fire alarm:

- Prepare to evacuate the building as quickly as possible.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Organize/help other people in the room.
- Leave personal belongings behind as these may impede your exit, but bring your cell phone if possible
- Evacuate the building and proceed to the identified assembly area.
- Move at a quick pace. Do not run.
- Report to the supervisor that you and/or your group are there and if you know of anyone trapped in the building.
- Remain in the assembly area until you are informed that you may leave or move by a member of the emergency services.

#### If you must move through a closed door that you cannot see through:

- Feel the door **with the back of your hand** to see if it is hot.
- Look for smoke coming under the door.
- Open the door slowly and look around it to see if there is a fire behind it.
- If there is no fire on the other side, proceed through and close the door behind you.
- Move to the assembly area as quick as possible.

#### If you are trapped in a room

- Exit through a window if you are on the ground floor.
- If you are not on the ground floor:
  - Close the door; block the bottom of the door with wet fabric if possible
  - If there is smoke in the room open the window a little so you can breathe fresh air. If not, do not open the window. This can assist in the spread of fire into your area from lower floors.
  - Attempt to call the fire department/brigade to alert them to your location
  - Attract people's attention outside. This can be achieved by writing on a paper and sticking it to the window or calling out the window. If you open the window remember to close it again as this can be an entry point for fire. Do not open the window fully.
  - If the room is filling with smoke, stay close to the ground. The air is cooler and oxygen is more plentiful lower to the ground.
- Try to cover your face and nose with a piece of clothing.
- Wait for the fire department to rescue you.
- If it becomes impossible to await rescue, attempt to exit through a window by lowering yourself down with rope or lengths of fabric tied together.

DO NOT DELAY. REMEMBER: Fires spread rapidly. Fires produce thick black smoke that is difficult to see through and can cause suffocation. The freshest air will always be near the floor. Move quickly, but do not run. Think for 10 to 30 seconds. Make a decision and follow that decision.