

Operation of Hybrid scientific/professional and other conferences

A. GENERAL RULES OF CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

- Scientific / professional and other conferences can be held in a hybrid way, ie, there shall be in parallel:
 - Physical presence of a limited and predetermined number of participants at the conference venue, obeying all health rules described underneath, and
 - simultaneous live streaming for the other registered participants
- In the event that, for epidemiological reasons, the State imposes a ban on conferences with physical presence, the conference is not postponed/canceled, but is carried out as virtual in its entirety.
- The Organizers can choose to organize a virtual Conference from the beginning, online in its entirety, with no physical presence.
- Conferences with only physical presence are not allowed, without simultaneous live streaming.
- Physical presence is allowed only during Panhellenic, regional, and local conferences. International conferences are allowed with physical presence of foreign delegates in accordance with international travel instructions. It is allowed to invite a limited number of distinguished foreign speakers, wherever needed.
- In the case of physical preference of attendees, persons should be vaccinated (mandatory certificate of vaccination) or to have taken a rapid test or RT-PCR test of negative result, shown at the entrance).
- A Coordinator shall be set inside the Conference venue, to handle situations of possible COVID-19 cases.
- A specially designed, well-ventilated space is to be created near the entrance of the Conference Center, as an isolated area for suspicious cases, which will be supplied with protective equipment and supplies such as masks, paper tissues, garbage can with foot pedal, washbasin with liquid soap. The door of this area must be kept permanently closed and the entrance must be limited to staff trained to deal with possible cases of coronavirus.
- The Organizers shall keep a list with contact details of all registered participants in order for it to be used for contact tracking in case of a positive coronavirus case.
- The Organizers, in conjunction with health professionals, are responsible for carrying out rapid tests to everyone in the venue (attendees, Organization personnel, sanitation personnel, exhibitor personnel, etc.) upon the Opening of the Conference. Also, carrying out self-tests is recommended after the third day of the Conference.
- The number of attendees allowed with physical presence is limited by the capacity of the Conference halls, keeping with social distancing measures of 1,5m apart in all directions, with the limit of persons inside the hall (including staff) being fifty (50) people, if the area of the hall permits it. If the size of the hall is greater than 120m², another one (1) person is allowed for every extra 10m² of size.
- Wearing of face masks is mandatory for all present at the Venue (staff, technicians, security), for attendees and faculty. Otherwise, speakers can refrain from wearing a mask during their speeches, as long as there are Plexiglass dividers present, which are cleaned and disinfected thoroughly between the speakers.

B. CONGRESS PREPARATION

REGISTRATIONS

- Attendees who wish to attend the conference physically must be able to register online for an available seat in the Conference hall, in the Session they wish to attend. Registrations for physical presence are limited by the capacity of conference halls, the availability of diagnostic tests, and by the distance between seated attendees. Attendees who have not registered are not allowed entry, unless vacancies are available. Only the speakers, chairpersons, registered attendees, and conference staff shall be present in the Conference hall.
- Communication between participants and the Conference Secretariat/Organizers shall take place via telephone or online for any issue that may arise, in order to limit speaker/attendee movement to meet the Organizers/Secretariat, including financial issues, parking validation, etc.
- Registration, supply of conference badges, scientific programs, certificates, and other material shall take place online (via email, SMS, social networking).

TECHNICAL STAFF

- The venue shall be closed off and completely controlled during the entirety of the Conference setup and dismantling, and access shall be given only to certified persons that shall carry the relevant credentials (badge).
- All staff shall need to wear their badges as to be fully visible during all stages of preparation, as well as during the Conference. Frequent checks (via badge scanning) shall be carried out, in order to make sure that entry to the Venue is limited to allowed persons.
- Badges for associates and technical/construction personnel shall be given to the same upon their arrival to the Venue, and only since they have sent the Organizers all necessary information within relevant deadlines.
- During Conference setup, social distancing measures must be applied. This may bring the need for shift work for construction and technical personnel, especially in the case of complicated setup, to avoid crowding.
- The Security company and the person responsible for the Venue will carry out checks during the entirety of the Conference, in order to ensure the application and adherence of all health and safety protocols, and social distancing.
- Wearing face masks and adherence to health protocols is mandatory for all personnel.

C. CONFERENCE OPERATION

SECRETARIAT

- Registration, supply of entry badge, scientific program and handing out certificates shall take place online (via email, SMS, social networking).
- The conference secretariat, located in a prominent and comfortable space, will have a plexiglass barrier in front to avoid droplet transfer.
- Conference secretariat staff must wear a mask.
- Antiseptic gel/fluid will exist in front of each person of the secretariat staff, for any of the participants who wish to use it.

CONFERENCE HALLS

- The number of attendees allowed with physical presence is limited by the capacity of the Conference halls, keeping with social distancing measures of 1,5m apart in all directions, with the limit of persons inside the hall (including staff) being fifty (50) people, if the area of the hall permits it. If the size of the hall is greater than 120m², another one (1) person is allowed for every extra 10m² of size.
- If there is no space between seats (e.g. in amphitheater halls), seats shall remain empty on both sides of each seated person. Seats that are not to be used will be explicitly marked.
- Standing persons are not allowed in the halls.
- Attendees' entrance to conference halls is monitored by electronic scanning of their conference badge. Only chairs/speakers of the meeting, authorized attendees and the technical staff are allowed to be present in the hall.
- Entry is not allowed to anyone who is not a registered participant or Conference personnel.
- There shall be a staff member inside the hall who shall monitor adherence to safety protocols by all present in the hall, including catering/hospitality/audiovisual staff, as well as the capacity limitation measures and available seating, to avoid overcrowding.
- Room staff will distribute the microphone during duration of Q&A, and will clean the microphone after each question.
- Separate meeting spaces are created for B2B meetings, if necessary, where social distancing rules are followed and all necessary precautionary measures are taken (e.g., use of a mask), to avoid overcrowding in the stands.
- Eating and receiving food is not prohibited in the halls.
- Wearing of face masks is mandatory for all present in the hall (staff, technicians, security, attendees, faculty).

SPEAKER/CHAIR PANELS

- At the chairpersons' panel, chairs are placed at a sufficient distance between them, and there are antibacterial gels for all moderators/chairpersons. Personal bottles of water will exist on the chairpersons' panel, and will be changed upon chairpersons' changing.
- Conference room staff or the catering service are responsible for changing water and utensils.
- Desktop table microphones are cleaned by audiovisual company staff supporting the conference, after each session. The same goes for any lapel/cordless microphones that are used.
- On the podium, microphones and controls, used for speaker presentations are cleaned after the end of each presentation by the audiovisual company, which supports the conference on the basis of the security/protection procedures that govern them. Bottled water that will be on the podium shall change along with the change of Speaker.
- Wearing of face masks is mandatory for all present at the Venue (staff, technicians, security), for attendees and faculty. Otherwise, speakers can refrain from wearing a mask during their speeches, as long as there are Plexiglass dividers present, which are cleaned and disinfected thoroughly between the speakers.

- Room staff will distribute the microphone during duration of Q&A, and will clean the microphone after each question.
- This same procedure is to be observed in all the parallel rooms of the conference.
- There is an explicit instruction for people with respiratory symptoms not to participate.

UPLOADING PRESENTATIONS

- It is encouraged to send speeches to the secretariat electronically.
- The secretariat of the preview desk has a plexiglass barrier on the front to avoid droplet transfer.
- The staff of the preview desks must wear a mask and have antiseptics.
- In front of each person of the secretariat staff, there will be antiseptic liquid for any of the delegates who wish to use it.

CONFERENCE SPONSORS/EXHIBITORS

- Commercial stands are allowed, providing there are no seating spaces, are manned by one (1) person, and do not have any printed or other tangible material for distribution to attendees.
- Showing of commercial material via video to attendees is recommended.
- The width of aisles between stands should be increased by twenty percent (20%) in relation to the width of previous years.
- Within stands, the same social distancing measures and seating arrangements are applicable as in retail services and dining.
- Participation of attendees, suppliers and staff shall be personal. For their entrance to the venue, their name shall need to be written explicitly on their name badge, to be worn in a visible place in the exhibition halls.
- Wearing of face masks are mandatory for exhibitors and exhibition staff inside the exhibition halls.

DINING AREAS

- Light buffet/coffee breaks are allowed during breaks, that must follow the mode of operation of outdoor canteens and the principles of the respective protocol of operation of dining, according to the relevant JMC 4, as it applies each time.
- In any case, it is preferable to serve meals packaged in individual packages.
- The consumption of food is done by observing social distancing measures.
- It is forbidden to eat in the conference room.

D. INFORMING PARTICIPANTS ABOUT PERSONAL HYGIENE MEASURES

- During the registration process as well as during the participation of the participants, people with symptoms of a disease of the respiratory system (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.). should be explicitly prohibited.
- The use of a mask is mandatory for all those present at the venue throughout the preparation and operation of the conference.
- In visible places inside and outside the Conference Center, hand antiseptic is placed in pumps, which are regularly checked for refills.

- Posters with instructions on:
 - Prohibition of people with symptoms from the respiratory system from entering the venue
 - Hand hygiene
 - Respiratory hygiene
 - Keeping distances
 - The correct use of a mask
 - No entry for non-registered delegates, or non-conference support staff
- The above-mentioned instructions can also be provided through electronic signage within the venue as well as through announcements from loudspeakers.
- If the Conference has an international participation, announcements should also be provided in English.

E. SURFACE AND AREA HYGIENE

CLEANING / DISINFECTION OF COMMON AREAS

It is clarified that:

Cleansing is the mechanical removal of organic and inorganic contaminants (e.g. dust) from a surface or tool to reduce the microbial load. Also, cleansing can be applied to human limbs (e.g. hands, face, head, etc.).

Disinfection is the process by which inactivation or destruction of pathogen microorganisms is achieved but not of their resistant forms (e.g. seeds) with chemicals (eg alcohol) or natural methods (e.g. temperature) on objects, tools and surfaces.

- Common areas are regularly cleaned and disinfected during preparation and operation of the Conference. In general, for daily surface disinfection procedures one minute (1 ') contact is required, with antimicrobial agents such as: sodium hypochlorite solution at a concentration of 0.1%, ethanol 70% and hydrogen peroxide 0.5%. The disinfectant must be spread on all surfaces and remain wet for the required contact time. The solution of sodium hypochlorite should be prepared (addition of bleach products to water) shortly before application. They must be applied properly during cleaning and disinfection, and at the end of cleaning or disinfection hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Cleaning work must be performed by the cleaning staff using masks, gloves, and work uniforms.

- For the cleaning and disinfection process, the provisions of the relevant circular apply.
- Every day after the closing of the Conference, cleaning and disinfection of the premises is recommended, which shall remain closed until the next use.
- Conference rooms are constantly ventilated, keeping all doors wide open as long as the preparation of the conference lasts.

- Bins for consumables, such as plastics and disposable cups, are placed inside and outside the conference room. This waste is collected at regular intervals by cleaning staff, who strictly adhere to all conditions of hygiene and safety, such as wearing a mask and gloves.
- WC common areas are regularly disinfected, with a special emphasis on sinks, knobs, and surfaces that are frequently touched.

USE OF WC

- Ensuring that sinks in the toilets always have a bottle of liquid soap and disposable paper towels, which should be discarded in bins next to the sinks, as well as alcoholic antiseptic with pumps.
- Ensuring all waste bins open by foot pedal and contain plastic disposable bags.
- Ensuring that physical distance measures are observed while waiting at the entrance to the toilet.
- The use of an automatic chlorine release system is recommended, while toilets should be flushed with the toilet lid closed.

VENTILATION / AIR CONDITIONING

- The doors of the halls in operation but also the external doors remain open, so that the spaces are naturally ventilated.
- The operation of the air conditioning of the premises is based on the relevant circulars.
- Taking appropriate measures for the proper operation of plumbing and air conditioning installations of the premises in order to protect against the *Legionella* bacterium is based on what is mentioned in the relevant circular.

ELEVATORS

Their use is allowed only for the disabled and for the transport of cargo, observing all hygiene and security measures.

F. MANAGEMENT OF A POSSIBLE COVID-19 CASE WITHIN A CONFERENCE CENTER

- If a person develops symptoms comparable with COVID-19 coronavirus, they should be led to the specially designed isolation area of possible cases, which will be equipped with sanitary ware such as masks, tissues / handkerchiefs, garbage bin with foot pedal, sink with liquid soap. The door must be kept closed at all times and entry must be restricted to only the minimum necessary personnel trained to deal with possible incidents of coronavirus COVID-19. It is recommended to perform a self-test, which should be available on site. If the result is negative, it is recommended that the person return to his home/accommodation with a recommendation for monitoring symptoms. If the result is positive, RT-PCR test should be done. If this test is also positive, the person must inform the COVID-19 Coronavirus Case Management Coordinator in order to facilitate the process of tracking contacts. Specifically, the coordinator informs EODY and the GSCP for epidemiological investigation and tracing of all possible contacts of the case.

OTHER TOPICS

- The Conference Organizer's Office should be located inside the Conference Center, to serve the speakers and to serve the administrative needs of the event. In addition, within the Conference Center, should also be located the Office of the Head of the Conference Center for service of technical and emergency needs. Digital media communication and compliance is recommended with all measures of social distancing.
- It is clarified that in the medical conferences under the auspices of the Panhellenic Medical Association certifications of attendance and the award of continuing medical education credits are in full effect.
- The Security company, in compliance with all the rules defined by hygiene and safety and measures of social distancing, controls application and adherence to all relevant rules by the participants in the Conference, but also by the organizers themselves, while performing ad hoc checks on the badges of people inside the Conference Center, in order to ensure entrance and staying in the Conference, only to those who actually have the relevant permission. The technical staff shall comply with all necessary measures and rules laid by the Authorities in order to serve the needs of the Conference during its operation.