



# Helsedirektoratet

## **International Health Regulations - Norway**

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## Implementation of the IHR – so far

- Norway has implemented the main legal text, and the Biological incidents
- We continue our work towards implementing Nuclear and Chemical incidents
- Our focal point; the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, will receive warnings about Chemical incidents. A legal proposal is being developed to ensure that this can happen within a legal framework

## **Continued work towards full implementation – alongside continuous review of IHR provisions**

- We continue to work to ensure full implementation of the IHR, whilst at the same time recognising that the IHR are actually now being tested in real life for the first time
- Therefore, we now try to be vigilant and meticulous in terms of understanding how the scope of each respective article under the IHR will develop

# Legal texts – open to interpretation

- As with all other legal texts, the IHR is open to interpretation
- Impossible to create legal documents that take into account every particular circumstance
- Until practice is established, State parties and WHO should focus on harmonising their interpretations of the scope and the provisions of the IHR

# An example of interpretation difficulty

## – Travel advice

- In the early days of this pandemic, the WHO did not call for State Parties to issue recommendations against travel to Mexico
- Some State Parties, including Norway, issued travel advice contrary to WHO advice
- The WHO considered such actions to fall under the scope of IHR Art. 43; stating that travel advice could significantly interfere with international traffic. This interpretation creates an obligation for State Parties to provide the WHO with the rationale for the issuance

## What is the scope of IHR art. 43?

- The wording of IHR Art. 43 is unclear, as it states that; "for the purpose of this Article, "significant interference generally means refusal of entry of international travellers....., or their delay, for more than 24 hours"
- Is the issuance of travel advice "**refusal**" of entry or departure?
- The spirit of the IHR could support the interpretation recommended by the WHO; the wording, however?

# Harmonised understanding is important

- Joint understanding can facilitate the achievement of full political commitment, because it ensures greater predictability for each State party
- Joint understanding will also enable implementation of coordinated measures because a prerequisite for coordinated measures is coordinated understanding
- WHO and State parties must enable this process

# IHR – Continued process

- The Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services is responsible for the continued implementation of the IHR in Norway
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