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[This English translation is for information purposes only. The German version is the legally binding document.]

DIRECTIVE

Study trips, field trips and excursions conducted by members of ETH Zurich in the framework of courses: Handling risks

The Rector,

pursuant to Art. 9, Para. 2 of the ETH Zurich Organisational Ordinance of 16 December 2003 ⁽¹⁾,

issues the following directive:

Art. 1 Subject and purpose

¹ This directive governs the preparation and organisation of study trips, field trips and excursions in Switzerland and abroad (subsequently “trips”) in the framework of courses at ETH Zurich, in particular the approvals process for trips which involve elevated risk.

² Its purpose is the safe conducting of trips, the appropriate handling of risks to participants and the minimisation of risks to the reputation of ETH Zurich.

Art. 2 Scope

All ETH Zurich members are governed by this directive, in accordance with Art. 13 of the ETH Law⁽²⁾.

¹ RSETHZ 201.021

² SR 414.110

Art. 3 Planning and initial assessment

¹ The selection of the destination and the planning of on-site activities must proceed with reference to the educational objectives to be achieved.

² An initial assessment must be conducted to clarify whether potential elevated risks exist. These might be:

- a. General risks associated with the destination: military action, terrorism, social unrest, criminality, risk of kidnapping, special political circumstances, health hazards (epidemics, pandemics, radioactivity), etc.
- b. Risks associated with landscape and climate: natural hazards (earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, floods, etc.); risks associated with working in the mountains, on glaciers and on flowing water; hazards from flora and fauna; special climatic conditions (heat, cold), etc.
- c. Risks associated with the activities planned (occupational safety): work with mechanical or electrical devices, particular physical stresses, hazardous substances, special participant health requirements, etc.
- d. Risks which only affect certain participants (e.g. due to nationality, gender, state of health or religious confession) must also be taken into account.

³ The initial assessment of the risk situation must be based on the *Checklist for excursions and field trips which involve elevated risk* in Appendix 1. The initial assessment must take written form.

⁴ If elevated risks are identified, the precautions set out in Art. 4 to 9 must be noted and implemented.

Art. 4 Analysis of risk and pre-emptive measures

¹ If potential elevated risks are identified in the initial assessment, the following measures must be taken:

- a. Creation of a meticulous and comprehensive written safety and security concept which includes a risk analysis based on the checklist in Appendix 1
- b. Development of a comprehensive level of knowledge regarding the destination country and the local circumstances, preferably also through local investigations
- c. Involvement of people and experts who are familiar with the local circumstances and the handling of local risks, or are trained for the activities envisaged
- d. Thorough, early preparation of the trip and, if indicated, training of all participants
- e. Emergency planning and instructions on conduct for participants
- f. Assessment of risk in the planning phase, before the trip begins, and during the trip

² If any existing, altered or suddenly occurring safety hazards are assessed as too serious, the trip must be cancelled or alternative destinations considered.

Art. 5 Travel abroad

¹ The evaluation of security risks in the destination country should refer particularly to the recommendations, travel alerts and safety-related information issued by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

² The classification of the security situation specific to the country or region is based on the decision matrix of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA)³. The respective security levels are listed in Appendix 2.

³ For trips to and through countries or regions with Security Level 3 and higher as per Appendix 2, the Safety, Security, Health and Environment (SSHE) unit must be consulted early, i.e. in the planning phase and no later than three months before the trip begins. SSHE will assess the situation together with Finance and Controlling (FC) and Academic Services and issue a recommendation about conducting the trip. The recommendation will consider the risk situation and measures envisaged or taken in accordance with Art. 4 and 5.

⁴ For any trips to countries or regions with Security Level 3 and higher, guidance from people who are familiar with local conditions (e.g. staff from a local university) is imperative.

⁵ Trips to countries and regions with the highest security levels (Levels 5 and 6 as per Appendix 2) will not be approved.

Art. 6 Procedure when there is elevated risk

If (irrespective of whether the trip is in Switzerland or abroad) there are elevated risks as per Art. 3, Para. 2 (b) or (c), the procedure set out in Art. 5, Para. 3 and Art. 7 applies.

Art. 7 Cognisance and responsibility

¹ Responsibility for planning and conducting the trip in adherence to this directive lies with the main lecturer of the course in question.

² The responsible Director of Studies must be informed of trips subject to elevated risk at an early stage, certainly no later than three months before the trip begins. He/she may, independent of Art. 5, Para. 3 and Art. 6, order an assessment of the risk situation by FC, SSHE and Academic Services.

³ If the main lecturer insists on conducting the trip despite the recommendation of FC, SSHE and Academic Services to cancel it, the case must be presented to the Rector. The final decision lies with the Rector.

⁴ Any costs resulting from a rejection are borne by the organiser.

³ <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/reise-services/laender-a-bis-z>

Art. 8 Involvement of course participants

¹ The main lecturer must inform the participants of existing risks in writing. If there are any changes as per Art. 4, Para. 1 (f) all participants must be informed immediately.

² All participants must be insured sufficiently against risk. Here the following applies:

- a. Students must be informed that they are responsible for their own health, accident and travel insurance and that they should thus check their insurance situation and, if need be, take out additional cover.
- b. The insurance cover of ETH Zurich employees (accident, travel and liability insurance) is guaranteed by their employer.

³ Participants must be instructed to procure valid travel documents and entry permits themselves, in a timely manner.

⁴ In the destination country the participants are subject to the provisions of the local legal system. It should be noted that actions which are permitted in Switzerland may be illegal in the destination country.

⁵ The main lecturer in charge is responsible for ensuring that all participants are informed about the special regulations and practices which apply in the destination country.

Art. 9 Emergency precautions

Emergency precautions must be taken for trips subject to elevated risk, in particular:

- a. Defining of a procedure and responsibilities in the event of an emergency or evacuation
- b. For trips abroad: Establishment of contact with the Swiss diplomatic representation in the destination country.

Art. 10 Entry into force

This directive enters into force on 1 August 2017.

Zurich, 11 April 2017

The Rector of ETH Zurich
Prof. Dr Sarah M. Springman

Appendix 1

Checklist for excursions and field trips which involve elevated risk

(Version: 1 August 2017)

Excursions or field trips (hereinafter “trips”) which involve elevated risk, e.g. trips abroad, in the mountains or on flowing water, require careful planning on the part of the organiser – especially with regard to the safety and security of trip participants. SSHE and Finance and Controlling (FC) have compiled information that enables trip organisers to conduct an initial assessment for every trip of this kind. What risks may materialise in association with the trip? If the trip involves elevated risks as defined in the directive “Study trips, field trips and excursions in Switzerland and abroad conducted by members of ETH Zurich in the framework of courses: Handling Risks”, or the destination is a country with an elevated risk situation¹, the respective initial assessment must be submitted to SSHE. SSHE will consult FC and Academic Services and together they will assess whether the trip can be approved.

If it is possible to achieve similar results in the framework of a less risky trip, the safer option must always be preferred. If the success of a trip (learning objectives, research results) is directly contingent on the elevated risk, a detailed risk analysis must be prepared. It will provide the basis for deciding whether the trip may proceed despite elevated risk.

Safety concept

For all trips subject to elevated risk the organising body must, in advance, prepare a safety concept which includes a risk analysis. The components of the safety concept and the risk analysis are listed below². The [Checklist Preparation and Risk Analysis of Excursions Domestic and Abroad](#) is a comprehensive risk analysis instrument available on the SSHE website.

Risks

a) Risks on trips abroad

1. Armed conflict
2. Road traffic
3. Socio-cultural factors
4. Legislation (differs from that in Switzerland)
5. Ecological risk (e.g. hazardous radiation levels, air pollution)
6. Social risk (consequences of poverty: criminality, kidnapping)
7. Illness
8. Dangerous animals
9. Trips and sojourns in the desert / wilderness

¹ From Security Level 3 as per the estimate of the Austrian authorities (Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs ([BMEIA](#))).

² The list does not claim to be exhaustive.

10. Swimming / sport in lakes and rivers

11. Food and water

b) Elevated risk in general

1. Landscape characteristics

- i. Mountains / glaciers / caves / moorland
- ii. Standing water (boat trips, currents, high water, water temperature)
- iii. Flowing water (boat trips, currents, high water, water temperature)
- iv. Forests (storms)
- v. Further risks associated with landscape

2. Weather / climate / external influences

- i. Temperature
- ii. Precipitation
- iii. Thunderstorms: lightning strikes
- iv. Fog
- v. Wind: storms
- vi. Weather changes
- vii. Aridity
- viii. Frost
- ix. Time of year
- x. Time of day
- xi. UV radiation
- xii. Atmospheric pressure (high mountains)

3. Natural hazards

- i. Rockslides
- ii. Ground subsidence
- iii. Earthquakes
- iv. Landslides
- v. Rockslides
- vi. High water / flooding
- vii. Avalanches
- viii. Mudflow
- ix. Falling rock
- x. Slippery roads
- xi. Severe weather
- xii. Forest fires

4. Occupational safety (analogous to the SUVA checklist, [Gefahrenpotenzial im Betrieb](#) ["Potential hazards in the workplace"], without 8. *Belastungen durch Arbeitsumgebungsbedingungen*, which is already covered above)
 - i. Mechanical hazards
 - ii. Risk of falling
 - iii. Electrical hazards
 - iv. Hazardous materials (chemical / biological)
 - v. Risk of fire and explosions
 - vi. Thermal hazards
 - vii. Special physical stresses
 - viii. Musculoskeletal stress
 - ix. Psychological stress
 - x. Unexpected activities
 - xi. Power failure
 - xii. Work organisation

5. Other
 - i. Observance of rest periods (consider drivers separately)
 - ii. Food (e.g. allergies)

Contact

ETH Zurich

Safety, Security, Health and Environment

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Appendix 2

Determination of security levels according to the decision matrix of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA)

(Version: 1 August 2017)

Security level	Note on level	Causes / Risk factors	Conduct	Preparation / documents / process	Persons to be involved / decision makers
1	Lowest level – no particular safety risk	Inherent risks involved in travelling and sojourning abroad		Study trips directive and appendices; determination of destination based on teaching objectives	Trip organiser
2	Elevated risk throughout the country or in individual regions	Countrywide protests, outbreaks of disease, natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, flooding) and industrial accidents causing personal injury and material damage	If the security risk is raised to Level 2 after the trip begins the sojourn in the country must be reassessed in consultation with the decision makers (Director of Studies, Head of Department).	Study trips directive and appendices; determination of destination based on teaching objectives	Director of Studies and Head of Department (if not already informed)
3	High risk in individual regions	Kidnappings, violent altercations involving fatalities, risk of terrorist attack	A decision is based on a careful evaluation of the safety and security risks. (The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) only advises against visiting an entire country if virtually no government structures are functional.) If the security risk is raised to Level 3 after the trip begins the sojourn in the country must be immediately reassessed in consultation with the decision makers.	Study trips directive and appendices; determination of destination based on teaching objectives The SSHE / FC / Academic Services approvals process is compulsory	SSHE / FC / Academic Services

4	High risk throughout the entire country and very high risk in individual regions	Kidnappings, violent altercations involving fatalities, high risk of terrorist attack	Trips to the country that are not absolutely necessary are discouraged. Any exceptions must be approved by the Rector. If the security risk is raised to Level 4 after the trip begins, the group must leave the country immediately.	Travel directive and appendices; determination of the destination based on teaching objectives The SSHE / FC / Academic Services approvals process is compulsory	SSHE / FC / Academic Services
5 + 6	Highest risk level. Very high risk throughout the country	(Civil) war situation, martial law imposed, war, civil war	Travel not permitted. If the security risk is raised to Level 5 after the trip begins, the group must leave the country immediately.	Excursions not permitted	