

**INFORMATION NOTE No. 5****PROGRESSIVE AND GRADUAL RETURN TO ON-SITE WORK: “TRANSITION TOWARDS THE NEW NORMAL”**

Following the previous Information Notes published throughout the past few weeks and in an effort to keep providing updated and rigorous information regarding the situation of employees working abroad during this global health emergency caused by the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we would like to explain the latest updates on regulations which are part of the **“Plan for a transition towards the new normal”**.

On May 4th, 2020, the State Secretariat for Territorial Policies and Public Service issued a Resolution on the measures to be implemented in the General State Administration. These criteria stemmed from the Agreement between the Administration and the Trade Unions, which was reached on that same day in order to guarantee a progressive, asymmetrical and coordinated transition which ensures public employees’ health and safety at all times. The Resolution, which has been attached to this information note, emphasizes the **criteria which establish flexible hours and teleworking as a priority. In addition, paying special attention to vulnerable groups, employees with children or elderly dependents**, amongst other guidelines.

As an attempt to defend the rights of the General State Administration’s staff abroad and due to the hesitation and concern regarding the way in which these measures and guidelines must be implemented at each workplace, this Union Section has reminded the Directorate General of the Foreign Service that this Resolution applies to the entire General State Administration, **thus affecting all Foreign Service personnel without distinction. We have also stressed that under no circumstances should these criteria be given the status of mere guiding instructions.**

Additionally, the meticulous application of these measures should only be conditioned by public order measures that may have been implemented in the recipient country. Therefore, the non-application or adaptation of these criteria could only be justified in each specific case, due to mandatory public order regulations or health protocols established by the host country (or by regional or state authorities).

The main aim of these regulatory instruments is to guarantee users’ and public employees’ health and safety when performing their duties. As a consequence, **government personnel abroad cannot be left in a legal “limbo” because it would imply a big risk for their health, and they would find themselves at a disadvantage in relation to the rest of the Public Administration staff in Spain.**

The right to health protection is a constitutionally recognized fundamental right. The organization and monitoring of its workers’ health falls within competence and responsibility of the Administration. **As a result, this trade union has requested that the Directorate General of the Foreign Service sends the contents of this Resolution to the entire network of Spanish Embassies, Consulates and Representations Abroad. We have also demanded that it is immediately implemented**, given this severe global pandemic.

To finish this statement, we would like to insist on the fact that the established measures are a series of **minimum and unavoidable instructions, based on which each workplace may establish more detailed criteria depending on the specific circumstances of the host city, region or country.** These measures will remain in force until the competent Authorities determine the beginning of the new normal phase. **In this regard, at CCOO-Foreign Service, we will make sure that these measures are complied with and we will take appropriate action against any breach with these terms.**



Considering all of the above and to highlight what we have already insisted on throughout this pandemic, it is essential for you to contact our team, either at the Foreign Service Union Section of CCOO in Madrid or directly to your local or country Union Delegate, **if you have any doubts or if you identify any incidents or non-compliances with the fore-mentioned terms at your workplace.** To this effect, we would like to remind you of our contact information once again:

- **Email:** [cco-servicioexterior@fsc.ccoo.es](mailto:cco-servicioexterior@fsc.ccoo.es) / [osmany.llanes@fsc.ccoo.es](mailto:osmany.llanes@fsc.ccoo.es)
- **Landline:** +34 91 535 52 31
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**We will keep you informed!**

Madrid, May 7th, 2020.

