Annex 15. Social Media Guidelines

Background:

Social media provides powerful communication tools that are both engaging and have an impact on organizational and professional reputations. As a fellow and health care professional, your professional reputation is reaffirmed daily, and you are responsible for protecting that professional reputation.

Social media networking sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, X, YouTube, wikis, and blogs. Show respect for yourself, other fellows, colleagues, Training Sites, your Fellowship Programme, and ECDC by following these broad guidelines.

Posting content

- **Endorsement:** Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by EPIET/EUPHEM/ECDC or the Training Site is prohibited. You may not use these organizational names to promote opinions, products, causes, or political candidates. Be sure to include the statement: "This is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of XXX" when necessary.

- **Protect confidential and proprietary information:** Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not to include confidential information about individuals or Training Sites.

- **Be professional:** Content should not be threatening, obscene, defamatory, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

- **Keep it legal:** Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local or national laws and regulations.

Best practices

- **Think twice before posting:** Privacy does not exist in social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect on both the poster and the subject. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor or frontline coordinator for input.

- **Strive for accuracy:** Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

- **Be respectful:** Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or organizations. Identify your views as your own.

- **Remember your audience:** Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes current and prospective fellows, alumni, employers, colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

- **Photos:** Photographs posted on social media sites can easily be copied by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at lower dpi and smaller sizes to protect your intellectual property. Small images are enough for viewing on the Web but not suitable for printing. When posting photos in which people other than yourself are recognisable, you need to obtain their consent prior to publication.