

Mr. Aurelijus Veryga,
Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania

Mr. Linas Kukuraitis
Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania

Ms. Asta Kubilienė
Chairperson of the Committee on Health Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Date: 20th of April 2020

BUSINESS SUGGESTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19

Dear Government and Parliament representatives,

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania is an independent, non-profit networking organisation representing and uniting Swedish companies operating in Lithuania and international companies working within the Swedish-Lithuanian business context. The Association unites around 100 companies that represent Swedish, Lithuanian, and European businesses from a broad range of industries. Our aim is to strengthen co-operation, enhance business relations as well as to encourage and expand trade and investment between Sweden and Lithuania.

Unfortunately, in the light of COVID-19, businesses find themselves struggling and fighting to overcome new and global challenges. Companies start investigating innovative business solutions in order to survive. The past few weeks have shown us that an increased cooperation between the private and the public sectors makes a state and its people stronger and proves that everyone needs to work together.

Therefore, the Members of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce have joined their forces and initiated an advocacy group in order to bring forth some new suggestions based on the practices of government-business collaboration in other countries.

The following suggestions have been presented:

- 1. Increased COVID-19 testing as a commercial service for businesses.** As medical equipment and the capacity to run tests is available nationally, businesses could be allowed to pay for the testing service in order to permit employees, if tested negative, to return to their regular working environment before the lift of the quarantine. Currently it is difficult to understand if the testing is restricted due to its availability or its cost. If the reason is the latter, self-paid testing should be permitted for commercial fee as soon as possible. Also, indications and recommendations of which tests are considered safe and reliable is very much appreciated.
- 2. Guidelines and action plans for increased employee protection.** Many large foreign capital companies with more than 100 employees currently running their operations would benefit from a clear action plan or guidelines on how to provide safe environment for their staff. After "UAB

Vilnika" case in Nemenčinė, where the spreading of the virus started within the company, later causing a lock-down of the entire city, many businesses hope to avoid and prevent a similar scenario. SCCL Advocacy group members are kindly asking the Ministries' of Health and Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania for information in English on how to ensure a safe work environment for the employees. Focus of such guidelines should include: what actions should be taken if the virus was detected among employee/s in order to allow the company to continue its operations and what is the general protocol if an employee falls ill of COVID-19 virus?

We kindly invite you to an open dialogue and hope to be able to contribute with some Lithuanian-Swedish business expertise.

On behalf of the Members of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania

Sincerely,

Lina Šiumetė

Chairperson of the Association