

## Questionnaire on the impact of COVID-19 on intercountry adoptions under the 1993 Adoption Convention

<i>Identification for follow-up purposes:</i>	
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<b>I. OVERARCHING QUESTIONS</b>	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
1.	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, has your State <b>modified</b> intercountry adoption procedures under the 1993 Adoption Convention? If so, what has your State done to ensure that the <b>safeguards and procedures</b> of the Convention have been, and continue to be, respected?</p> <p>Vienna, Salzburg: No legal changes                  Carinthia, Styria: No intercountry adoption since 2020, no modification                  Upper Austria: No modification, but travel regulations had to be ensured                  Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Burgenland: no modification                  Lower Austria: The application for prospective adoptive parents was modified to online communication.</p>
<b>II. OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 (cases in transition only)</b>	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
2.	<p>What measures, if any, did your State take to deal with cases where the <b>child had already</b> been <b>matched</b> with prospective adoptive parents, but no adoption decision had been issued at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in your State? How many children were in such a situation?</p> <p>Vienna: 5 Children are waiting in South Africa; The prospective adopting parents got fotos and videos of the child. They had direct online contact with the children´s home and were able to talk to the competent care team. They could see the child playing in the background.                  Carinthia, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Lower Austria, Burgenland: ---                  Upper Austria: One child was adopted in Mexico and will travel back to Austria with the adoptive mother as soon as possible. One child in Thailand is already 18 years old, the prospective parents are relatives of the child. One child from Vietnam came with a visa for students to Austria before COVID-19 outbreak.</p>

3.	<p>What measures, if any, did your State take to deal with cases where the <b>adoption decision</b> had already been <b>issued</b>, but the <b>child</b> was <b>still in the State of origin</b> at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in your State? How many children were in such a situation?</p> <p>Vienna, Upper Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Burgenland, Salzburg: 0</p> <p>Lower Austria: One Child from Romania: The prospective adoptive parents traveled to Romania in February to get to know the child. Then they were not allowed to see the child for 10 weeks due to COVID-19 outbreak. In June they were able to come to Austria with the child.</p>
<p><b>III. DURING COVID-19 (cases in transition and new cases)</b></p>	
	<p><u>States of origin only</u></p>
4.	<p>Has your State adapted, and if so how, the following stages of the adoption procedure:</p> <p>a) Declaration of <b>adoptability</b> of the child:</p> <p>No adaptation.</p> <p>b) <b>Matching</b>:</p> <p>No adaptation.</p> <p>c) <b>Socialisation</b> period:</p> <p>Lower Austria: The socialisation period takes much more time: 2 families with children from South Africa. One of them went to South Africa in November 2020 and came back in February 2021. The socialisation period of the other families is still going on.</p> <p>d) <b>Support</b> and counselling to adoptable children:</p> <p>Lower Austria: Mostly online support.</p> <p>e) Adoption <b>decision</b>:</p> <p>No adaptation.</p> <p>f) Other stages:</p> <p>0</p>
	<p><u>Receiving States only</u></p>
5.	<p>Has your State adapted, and if so how, the following stages of the adoption procedure:</p> <p>a) <b>Eligibility</b> and <b>suitability</b> of prospective adoptive parents:</p> <p>Vienna: Taking account of the restricting government measures because of Covid 19. Preparation courses were suspended.</p> <p>Tyrol: The courses for prospective adoptive parents are partially online.</p> <p>Lower Austria: no adaptation.</p> <p>b) <b>Support</b> and counselling to prospective adoptive parents:</p>

	<p>Vienna: EFKÖ: South Africa: Covid 19 caused increasing need of discussion, online meetings are offered and transfer of photos and videos increased. Information about the limitation of travel possibilities, extension of the procedure caused by lock down, restriction of activity of the competent authority, and probably a longer stay in the state of origin.</p> <p>Lower Austria: support and advice of prospective parents online or by telephone.</p> <p>Vorarlberg: The preparation course will be offered online</p> <p>c) Other stages:</p> <p>0</p>
<p><b>IV. USE OF TECHNOLOGY</b></p>	
	<p><u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Has the use of technologies (e.g, videoconferencing) <b>evolved</b> in the adoption procedures in place in your State since the outbreak of COVID-19 in your State? Please specify:</p> <p>a) any <b>benefits</b> and <b>challenges</b>:</p> <p>Vienna:</p> <p>1. Online meetings with prospective adoptive parents cannot replace home visits.  advantage: Prospective adoptive parents can participate in the development of the child.  disadvantage: Waiting is a burdensome condition for the prospective adoptive parents.</p> <p>2. Online meetings with the organisation of the state of origin:  advantage: Allows quick exchange of information.  disadvantage: It is difficult to send original documents.</p> <p>Upper Austria:  uses password-protected areas to transmit large datasets.</p> <p>Salzburg:  disadvantage: It is difficult to send original documents.</p> <p>Vorarlberg:  advantage: No loss of time because of inward and outward journeys.  disadvantage: less personal impression</p> <p>Lower Austria:  advantage: possible to obtain faster an appointment  disadvantage: less personal impression</p> <p>b) if your response to <b>question 72</b> (“Use of new technologies”) of the <a href="#">2020 Questionnaire on the practical operation of the 1993 Adoption Convention (Prel. Doc. No 3)</a> has changed:</p> <p>0</p>

<b>V. POST COVID-19: LOOKING AHEAD</b>	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
7.	<p>Has your State developed any practices during this pandemic period that would be <b>useful to mainstream into regular work</b> practices? If so, please elaborate on what those practices are and how you plan to go about mainstreaming them into regular work practices:</p> <p><u>Vienna: Online communication will be maintained as useful addition.</u></p>
8.	<p>Please share any good practices and lessons learned by your State which may be applied in the event of <b>another pandemic or similar state of emergency</b>:</p> <p><u>Vienna:</u> <u>EFKÖ: The prepatation course will be adjusted. The prospective adoptive parents will be informed that a long waiting periode could be possible also between matching and travel to the child.</u></p>
<b>VI. ANY OTHER COMMENTS</b>	
	<u>Both States of origin and receiving States</u>
9.	<p>Please insert here any other comments you may have:</p> <p><u>Lower Austria: When prospective adoptive parents spend more time in the state of origin to get to know the child is an advantage for integration into the family.</u></p>