Press release

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Joint initiative of FONES, the Federal Commission of Experts on Data Processing and Data Security, ICTswitzerland, FITSU – MELANI, ISSS, SATW, SNV, SQS and SVV

Cybersecurity quick check for SME

Cyberattacks are now part of our daily lives. SMEs must therefore have a way to quickly determine whether their technical, organisational and staff-related measures can protect them adequately against cyber-risks. A high-calibre group of specialists has therefore developed a quick-check for this purpose.

More than 98% of companies in Switzerland are SMEs. They form the backbone of the Swiss economy. To secure their long-term success, SMEs must use digital technologies to integrate suppliers, employees and customers into their processes. This requires a growing networking of corporate infrastructure and data with the Internet. And that is associated with a dramatic increase in the risks from cyberspace.

More than a third of Switzerland's SMEs have already been hit by cyberattacks
Hackers are increasingly targeting their cyberattacks at what are referred to as "low-hanging fruit", that is, insufficiently protected SMEs. The findings of a study entitled "Cyberrisiken in Schweizer KMUs" (The Cyber-risks for Swiss SMEs), published in December 2017, are clear: about a third of the country's SMEs have already been hit by viruses or Trojan horses. Four percent of the companies polled said they had already suffered data loss and/or been blackmailed online. Many companies do not address the issue seriously until it is too late: "We frequently sense great uncertainty among SMEs with regard to cybersecurity. Many simply don't know how they can tackle the issue. The quick check is a good way to start tackling the matter and identify what, if anything, they need to do," says Nicole Barandun, the president of the Zurich municipal trade association GVZ.

A quick check test in 12 areas
The aim of the initiative is to provide a self-assessment tool that is particularly practical for smaller companies. Rather than focusing on a comprehensive and complete analysis, this is a way for SMEs – especially those with little in-depth understanding of computing and IT security – to quickly and easily find out whether their technical, organisational and staff-related measures provide sufficient protection against cyber-risks. A brief and deliberately simple accompanying document provides additional information on each topic, should this be required.

A broad-based initiative in line with the national cyber strategy
The quick check was developed at the initiative of the SQS and under the auspices of the SATW within a broad-based group of specialists that included representatives from the FONES, the Federal Commission of Experts on Data Processing and Data Security, ICTswitzerland, FITSU – MELANI, ISSS, SATW, SNV, SQS and SVV. "Protecting against cyber-risks is the joint responsibility of companies, society and the state. In so doing, we are making an important contribution towards implementing the new cyber strategy and providing SMEs with a tool that helps them better assess their own cyber-risks," says Pascal Lamia, the head of the Reporting and

Analysis Centre for Information Assurance (MELANI). Over the summer, a number of people and organisations demanded the rapid implementation of the new version of the National Strategy for the Protection of Switzerland against Cyber Risks (NCS 2.0), including National Councillor Marcel Dobler, the Chairman of ICTswitzerland: "We welcome the fact that the relevant players are now getting involved themselves. This confirms how urgent the matter is. I am convinced that the Federal Government will take the necessary steps to make sufficient resources available to enable the rapid and targeted implementation of the NCS 2.0."

The cybersecurity quick check for SME as well as further information can be found at the following address:

- www.cybersecurity-check.ch

The following documents are available for downloading:

- Cybersecurity quick check for SME
- Notes for a minimum level of protection

For more information, contact

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The Federal Office for National Economic Supply

On the basis of a legal mandate (Article 102 of the Swiss Federal Constitution), the Federal Office for National Economic Supply (FONES) focuses on securing the supply of essential goods and services with respect to food, drinking water, energy, medicines, logistics, information and communications technology. The system of national economic supply is based on cooperation between the economy and the public sector. This enables specialist know-how and existing private-economy structures to be made available to fulfil state obligations in an emergency. www.bwl.admin.ch

The Federal Commission of Experts on Data Processing and Data Security

To implement a motion by Councillor of States Paul Rechsteiner forwarded by the Swiss Federal Parliament, the Federal Council brought together a group of data protection and data security experts to act as a commission. This group of experts is tasked with addressing issues relating to big data, data processing and data security as well as the opportunities and risks inherent in the rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT), all while taking macrosocial issues into account. The commission is due to submit its report to the Federal Council in mid-2018. www.admin.ch

ICTswitzerland

ICTswitzerland is the umbrella organisation for the digital economy. Founded in 1980, the organisation brings together 31 large and medium enterprises, along with 21 associations. ICTswitzerland represents their interests towards the general public, the authorities and other associations, and aims to promote and develop digital technologies, and the education and further training of ICT specialists. ICTswitzerland is also committed to the identification and prevention of cyber-risks. In Switzerland, a total of 205,000 ICT specialists are employed throughout all the business sectors and in public administration (2016). With a gross value of CHF 29.7 billion in 2015, the ICT core sector is Switzerland's seventh-largest industry. www.ictswitzerland.ch/en

The Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU) – MELANI

The Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU) ensures that the strategy on information and communications technology (ICT) is implemented within the federal administration. Among other things, the FITSU is also responsible for heading the Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance (MELANI) and coordinates the implementation of the National Strategy for the Protection of Switzerland against Cyber Risks (NCS). MELANI has been commissioned by the Federal Council to protect critical infrastructure in Switzerland. It is designed to detect and tackle dangers early and support the operators of critical infrastructures in an emergency. www.melani.admin.ch

Information Security Society Switzerland (ISSS)

Information Security Society Switzerland (ISSS) is an active, independent association that networks more than 1100 security professionals in Switzerland, including more than 150 companies. The association addresses theoretical and practical technical and legal security-related aspects of the information society. https://isss.ch

SATW: it's all about technology

The Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW) is the most important network of technology-related experts in Switzerland and maintains contact with the highest scientific, political and industrial bodies in Switzerland. The network comprises selected individual members, member organisations and experts. The SATW operates on behalf of the Swiss Federal Government to identify industry-relevant technological developments and informs politicians and the general public about their significance and consequences. As a specialist organisation with high credibility, it conveys independent, objective and comprehensive information about technology to act as the basis for well-founded opinion-forming. It is politically independent and non-commercial. www.satw.ch

Swiss Association for Standardization (SNV)

As the Swiss national standardisation organisation, the SNV ensures international collaboration on standardisation. It represents the interests of its members within the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). Without such a voice, Switzerland would be at a disadvantage in the international standardisation process or would be excluded from it entirely. This would then weaken the economy's innovative strength significantly. As an exporting nation, it is particularly important for Switzerland to always be kept up-to-date in terms of standardisation. The SNV was founded back in 1919. In 1998, it was tasked by the Federal Government with defending Switzerland's interests in international standardisation. www.snv.ch

Swiss Association for Quality and Management Systems (SQS)

Swiss Association for Quality and Management Systems (SQS) has been the leading certification and evaluation institution in Switzerland – including on IT security and data protection – for more than 30 years. The SQS assesses both management systems and their implementation. With integrated quality management for the benefit of users. www.sqs.ch

Swiss Insurance Association (SVV)

Swiss Insurance Association (SVV) is the umbrella organisation for the private insurance sector. The SVV counts as its members about 80 small and large, nationally and internationally operating insurers and reinsurers, employing some 48,000 people in Switzerland. Its member companies account for more than 90% of the private insurance premiums generated on the Swiss market. www.svv.ch