



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

The President

Brussels, 15 July 2020

PCAB/Sob/ssch/Dec 209/2020

Decision No 16/2020

of 15/07/2020

of the President of the Committee of the Regions on temporary measures for the functioning of the Committee of the Regions during the COVID-19 pandemic in the European Union

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,**

Having regard to

- The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 306 thereof;
- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014 and Decision No 541/2014 (EU) and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;
- The Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), and in particular Rules 37, 39, 40 and 71 thereof;
- Decision No 9/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 15 May 2020 repealing Decision No 7/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 17 March 2020, as amended by Decision No 8/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 3 April 2020;
- Decision No 13/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 10 June 2020 on the rules governing the participation of members in hybrid meetings;

- Regulation No 14/2020 of 23 June 2020 of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions on the payment of a flat-rate remote meeting allowance for members and duly mandated alternates of the European Committee of the Regions;
- Regulation No 8/2017 of 9 October 2017 of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions on the reimbursement of travel expenses and the payment of flat-rate travel and meeting allowances for members and alternates of the European Committee of the Regions;
- Regulation No 2/2018 of 30 January 2018 of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions on the reimbursement of transport expenses and the payment of flat-rate travel and meeting allowances for rapporteurs' experts and speakers who participate in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions;
- Regulation No 9/2017 of 29 November 2017 on the reimbursement of travel expenses and payment of flat-rate subsistence allowances for third parties participating in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions;
- the advice of the CoR Medical Service;
- the administrative assessment made by the CoR Secretary-General.

Whereas:

- taking account of the exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the European Union, it is important to continue to ensure the CoR's operational capacity, in particular its advisory activity in the EU decision-making process, while at the same time avoiding health risks for members, visitors, staff and other persons working at the CoR;
- in line with the other EU institutions, the CoR has adopted several risk mitigation measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 viral disease, such as the obligation to wear masks, the need to maintain social distancing and the prohibition to attend events for persons showing certain symptoms;
- the spread of COVID-19 in the Member States is slowing down, and following the easing of national confinement measures and the risk mitigation measures adopted by the CoR, an increased number of persons (such as those specifically invited as rapporteurs' experts, speakers, CoR national coordinators and members' assistants, non-EU members of bodies referred to in Rule 37(i) of the CoR Rules of Procedure (RoP), duly invited third parties and

participants in events taking place as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities), may have access to CoR premises;

- it is therefore necessary to repeal Decision No 9/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 15 May 2020 repealing Decision No 7/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 17 March 2020, as amended by Decision No 8/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 3 April 2020, and Decision No 13/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 10 June 2020 on the rules governing the participation of members in hybrid meetings, and to replace them with an updated decision,

HAS DECIDED

*Article 1*

**Definitions**

1. For the purpose of this decision a meeting is considered hybrid if a subset of the members or duly mandated alternates or other invited persons attending the meeting is located together in the same physical place and other participants join the meeting by conference call or web conference. The set of criteria for the organisation of hybrid meetings is defined in the appendix.
2. For the purpose of this decision a meeting is considered remote if all the members or duly mandated alternates or other invited persons join the meeting only by conference call or web conference.

*Article 2*

**List of possible remote or hybrid meetings**

1. During the COVID-19 health crisis, all face-to-face meetings of:
  - the bodies listed in Rule 1 of the RoP,
  - the Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs,
  - the working groups of the Bureau under Rule 37(e) of the RoP,
  - the bodies referred to in Rule 37(i) of the RoP,
  - the political groups under Rule 9(6) of the RoP,
  - the First Vice-President,
  - the commission chairs,
  - the political group chairs,
  - the rapporteurs,as well as other CoR meetings with stakeholders, shall be replaced, to the extent

possible, by remote meetings using electronic means or by hybrid meetings.

2. The members and duly mandated alternates as well as all other persons, invited to a hybrid meeting shall confirm their face-to-face attendance at least one calendar week before the date of the meeting.
3. External face-to-face meetings shall take place only in exceptional cases after approval of the CoR President.

### *Article 3*

#### **Cancelled events and visits**

1. With the exception of the events taking place as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities, other events or visits taking place on CoR premises shall remain cancelled until further notice, irrespective of their organiser or authorising authority. This includes (non-exhaustive list):
  - Events organised by commissions
  - Events organised by individual members
  - Events organised by the CoR administration
  - Events by outside bodies or co-organised with the CoR, taking place on CoR premises
  - Events organised by the political groups and non-attached members
  - Cultural events and exhibitions
  - Seminars, including press seminars
  - Member-sponsored visits
  - Members' personal visits
  - Staff personal visits, other than members or staff from other EU institutions
2. Persons other than members or staff of the CoR who seek access to the CoR premises on account of the cancelled events and visits shall be denied access.

### *Article 4*

#### **Measures applicable to face-to-face participation in meetings**

If a meeting referred in Article 1 is organised face-to-face or in hybrid mode, the following measures shall apply:

- a) persons other than the CoR national coordinators, those specifically invited as speakers and rapporteurs' experts, those in possession of a card giving access to CoR premises (members' assistants), duly authorised third parties, participants in events taking place

- as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities, technical staff required for the meeting and media representatives shall not be allowed to attend;
- b) the chair of the meeting shall ensure to the extent possible that attendees are not seated within 1.5 meters of each other. Based on the confirmation of attendance, the chair will give priority to the CoR members according to the criteria described in appendix 1. Other participants shall be denied entry to the meeting room once seats are filled and shall be asked to follow the meeting remotely;
  - c) attendees shall practice social distancing at all times and shall avoid any direct physical contact, such as handshakes;
  - d) with the exception of the chair of the meeting, and the attendees during their oral statements, all attendees shall wear a mask or face-covering over their mouth, nose and chin;
  - e) anyone who has a fever or shows symptoms of respiratory illness such as sneezing, a running nose or a cough shall not attend the meeting.

#### *Article 5*

#### **Rules on access**

1. Access to the CoR premises shall be granted according to the applicable rules adopted by the competent authorities of the CoR and the European Economic and Social Committee and without prejudice to any applicable confinement or other restrictive measures imposed by a Member State or a third country with a view to combating the spread of the COVID-19 viral disease.
2. Access shall be denied to persons who have knowingly been in contact with a person confirmed to be infected with the COVID-19 viral disease, and who have not yet received confirmation from a medical practitioner that they are not infected.
3. Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall also apply *mutatis mutandis* to CoR meetings held away from the CoR premises and shall be without prejudice to any risk mitigation measures adopted by the competent national authorities.

#### *Article 6*

#### **Reimbursement of expenses**

1. Members and duly mandated alternates of the European Committee of the Regions who take part remotely in hybrid meetings shall be entitled to the allowance set out in CoR Bureau Regulation No 14/2020<sup>1</sup>, subject *mutatis mutandis* to the rules set out therein,

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation No 14/2020 of 23 June 2020 of the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on the payment of a flat-rate remote meeting allowance for members and duly mandated alternates of the European Committee of the Regions.

as well as their implementing measures.

2. Members and duly mandated alternates of the European Committee of the Regions who take part in face-to-face in hybrid meetings shall be entitled to the allowances set out in CoR Bureau Regulation No 8/2017<sup>2</sup>, subject *mutatis mutandis* to the rules set out therein, as well as their implementing measures.
3. Duly invited rapporteurs' experts and speakers who take part in face-to-face in hybrid meetings, where their face-to-face participation is deemed necessary by the chair of the relevant CoR official meeting or for the preparation of the latter, shall be entitled to the allowances set out in CoR Bureau Regulation No 2/2018<sup>3</sup>, subject *mutatis mutandis* to the rules set out therein, as well as their implementing measures.
4. Third parties who are duly invited and take part face-to-face in hybrid meetings, shall be entitled to the allowances set out in CoR Bureau Regulation No 9/2017<sup>4</sup>, subject *mutatis mutandis* to the rules set out therein, as well as their implementing measures.

#### *Article 7*

#### **Implementing measures**

The Secretary-General shall implement this decision as regards the staff of the CoR and as regards the practical implementation of the measures foreseen herein.

#### *Article 8*

#### **Final provisions**

1. This decision repeals and replaces Decision No 9/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 15 May 2020 repealing Decision No 7/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 17 March 2020, as amended by Decision No 8/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 3 April 2020, and Decision No 13/2020 of the President of the Committee of the Regions of 10 June 2020 on the rules governing the participation of members in hybrid meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation No 8/2017 on the reimbursement of travel expenses and the payment of flat-rate travel and meeting allowances for members and alternates of the European Committee of the Regions.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation No 2/2018 of 30 January 2018 of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions on the reimbursement of transport expenses and the payment of flat-rate travel and meeting allowances for rapporteurs' experts and speakers who participate in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions.

<sup>4</sup> Regulation No 9/2017 of 29 November 2017 on the reimbursement of travel expenses and payment of flat-rate subsistence allowances for third parties participating in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions.

2. This decision shall be without prejudice to any additional preventive and health-security measures for risk mitigation adopted by the competent authorities of the CoR and the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as by the relevant competent authorities in the case of meetings held away from CoR premises.
3. This decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.
4. This decision shall lapse on 31 October 2020 unless renewed, amended or repealed by the President.

Brussels, 15 July 2020



Apostolos Tzitzikostas

## **APPENDIX**

### **Criteria for the organisation of hybrid meetings**

#### **I Availability of meeting rooms**

Hybrid meetings are dependent on the availability of meeting rooms equipped with the necessary technical installations, taking into account applicable health legislation on the maximum number of participants allowed and social distancing measures. Adequate information will be provided prior to the meetings to all registered participants and be displayed in the CoR premises.

If the number of members or duly mandated alternates having confirmed their attendance exceeds the capacity of the room, the chair of the meeting shall establish priority based on the following criteria: chairs and vice-chairs, chairs of political groups/political coordinators, rapporteurs, persons specifically invited as speakers, at least one representative per Member State, if possible. The presence in the room shall reflect proportionally the membership in the various political groups.

The members or duly mandated alternates who cannot be seated in the main meeting room, the CoR national coordinators, the persons in possession of a card giving access to CoR premises, and duly authorised media representatives, shall be invited to seat in adjacent meeting rooms. They shall be informed about the seating arrangements in due time.

For an active participation in the meeting (speaking, listening and voting), the members or duly mandated alternates shall bring along their own IT device and headphones.

#### **II Interpretation**

Due to the COVID-19 crisis restrictions, the language regime for hybrid meetings shall be reduced and subject to technical availability.

The CoR administration shall continue to work with interpretation providers to enhance the interpretation regime.

#### **III Voting**

All members or duly mandated alternates shall vote using the same remote voting system.

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