

RULES GOVERNING VOTING UNDER THE REMOTE PARTICIPATION REGIME

BUREAU DECISION

OF 8 FEBRUARY 2021

THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

Having regard to Rules 25(4), 192(1) and 237c(6) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

- (1) On 17 December 2020, Parliament's Rules of Procedure were amended to introduce provisions to ensure the continued functioning of Parliament in extraordinary circumstances, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- (2) Those new provisions of the Rules of Procedure provide for a remote participation regime as one extraordinary measure that can be taken under exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances for a limited time, allowing Members to exercise their rights remotely, in particular voting rights, provided, inter alia, that their votes are cast in person and individually, in accordance with the Act concerning the election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage¹, Decision 2005/684/EC, Euratom adopting the statute for Members of the European Parliament² and Rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure.
- (3) Additionally, new Rule 237c(6) provides that the Bureau is to adopt measures concerning the operation and security of the electronic means used to implement the remote participation regime, in accordance with the requirements and standards laid down in Rule 237c(2).
- (4) On 20 March 2020, in order to address the urgent need to enable Members to vote remotely following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau adopted a Decision supplementing its Decision of 3 May 2004 on rules governing voting, to introduce an alternative electronic voting system.
- (5) In the light of the new provisions of the Rules of Procedure, as well as technological developments and experience gained since March 2020, the arrangements for remote voting in plenary should be adapted and incorporated in a new Bureau Decision, without prejudice to the Bureau's competence to take under Rule 25(4) further measures on the conduct of sittings.
- (6) The Bureau Decision of 20 March 2020 supplementing its Decision of 3 May 2004 on rules governing voting should therefore be repealed,

¹ OJ L 278, 8.10.1976, p. 5.

² OJ L 262, 7.10.2005, p. 1.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Chapter 1
Voting in Plenary under the remote participation regime

Article 1
Scope

Articles 2 and 3 of this Decision shall apply to any part-session or sitting in respect of which the remote participation regime provided for in Rule 237c is applied in accordance with a decision of the President under Rule 237a(2) and (3), point (d). During any such part-session or sitting, Articles 3 to 7 of the Bureau Decision of 3 May 2004 on rules governing voting shall not apply.

Article 2
Electronic means used for the remote voting

1. Members shall cast their votes in the plenary on-line voting application. That application shall be managed and supervised by Parliament services directly and internally. Parliament services shall ensure that the application is technology neutral.
2. Parliament's services shall ensure that the use of the plenary on-line voting application be restricted to Members who have accessed Parliament's internal network via a secure and authenticated connection.
3. Electronic mails from and to the European Parliament mailbox of the Members shall be transmitted as provided for in Article 3.

Article 3
Voting procedure

1. Ahead of the start of the voting session, the voting lists as well as the opening time and closing time of the voting session shall be published on Parliament's website.
2. At the start of the voting session, a hyperlink to an on-line ballot page in the plenary on-line voting application is sent by electronic mail from the mailbox "plenaryvote@europarl.europa.eu" to the European Parliament mailbox of each Member.
3. The Member shall cast his or her vote by indicating on the on-line ballot page in the plenary on-line voting application whether he or she is in favour, against or abstaining.
4. When the Member has finalised all his or her votes on the on-line ballot page, the plenary on-line voting application generates, on the basis of the votes so cast, a filled in ballot paper and sends it by electronic mail to the European Parliament mailbox of the Member.

That ballot paper indicates for each vote whether the Member has cast a vote in favour or a vote against, or abstained by the signs "+", "-" or "0" respectively. By way of exception, for

secret ballots, the ballot paper indicates only that the Member has cast a vote, or abstained, by the letter “S”.

The ballot paper also contains a solemn declaration above the place for the signature of the Member that the Member declares to have cast his or her vote on an individual and personal basis.

5. The Member shall print, sign and scan or photograph the ballot paper. The Member will then send each page of the duly signed ballot paper from his or her European Parliament mailbox, in PDF, JPG or any similar standard electronic format allowing for a clear and readable image, to the mailbox “plenaryvote@europarl.europa.eu”. Only handwritten signatures or signatures with a stylus pen for touch screen will be accepted. A ballot paper signed via other systems and applications will not be accepted.
6. Where the Member wishes to modify one or more of the votes sent in accordance with paragraph 5, the Member may do so by fully repeating the procedure laid down in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, by the closing time mentioned in paragraph 1. Votes cannot be modified by hand on the ballot paper generated by the application. The vote will only be valid if the votes recorded on the last ballot paper generated and sent correspond fully to the votes cast in the on-line system.
7. The President shall establish the result of the votes on the basis of the ballot papers which comply with the requirements of paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 and have been received by the closing time mentioned in paragraph 1.

Chapter 2

Voting in committees and in delegations under the remote participation regime

Article 4 Scope

Article 5 shall apply to any meeting of a committee or of a delegation in respect of which the remote participation regime provided for in Rule 237c is applied in accordance with a decision of the President under Rule 237a(2) and (3), point (d).

Article 5 Electronic means used for the remote voting

1. Members shall cast their votes by the electronic means referred to in the Guidelines of the Conference of Committee Chairs on the remote voting procedure, as amended. The electronic applications used to that end by the Members shall be managed and supervised by Parliament’s services directly and internally. Use of such applications shall be restricted to Members who have accessed Parliament’s internal network via a secure and authenticated connection.
2. Members shall be provided with the possibility to use technology neutral means to cast their vote.

Chapter 3
Final provisions

Article 6

The Bureau Decision of 20 March 2020 supplementing the Bureau Decision of 3 May 2004 on rules governing voting is repealed.

Article 7

This Decision shall enter into force on 8 March 2021.