

Q&A on extraordinary remote participation procedure

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To ensure Parliament remains operational, and in particular its legislative and budgetary activity, while avoiding the spread of COVID-19, temporary measures were put in place to allow members to fulfil their democratic rights and legislative duties.

Parliament's [Bureau](#) agreed to an alternative voting procedure, which was first used during the plenary session on 26 March 2020. Based on public health grounds, this temporary voting procedure is valid until 31 December, unless extended by a bureau decision.

Parliament has put in place measures for Members to take part in committee from a distance. Given the current circumstances, Members will be able to address the plenary remotely from Parliament's Liaison offices in the member states and from EP premises in Strasbourg and Brussels.

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How will the debate technically work?

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To respect the precautionary measures adopted due to COVID-19 outbreak, MEPs can attend the meetings and sessions remotely, via a special videoconference system. For the October II plenary session, Members who have been given speaking time can intervene from the European Parliament's Liaison Offices in the member states or from EP premises in Strasbourg and Brussels.

Interpretation will be provided in all languages.

The meeting will also be web-streamed here (Parliament's Multimedia Centre) and here (Europe by Satellite, EbS+).

How will the vote technically work?

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In view of the increased number of votes as of the May plenary part-session, the existing secure voting system has been adapted to allow votes to be recorded and counted automatically. Members are still required to print, sign and send back their ballot paper, and only this signed ballot paper makes their vote valid and therefore recorded in the minutes of the sitting.

Legal basis of the temporary participation rules

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Rule 25(2) of the Rules of Procedure entitles the Bureau to “take financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning the internal organisation of Parliament, its Secretariat and its bodies”.

Rule 186 on the right to vote provides that the right to vote is a personal right and Members shall cast their votes individually and in person.

Rule 187 on voting empowers the President to decide at any time that the voting operations be carried out by means of an electronic voting system.

Rule 192 on the use of the electronic voting system provides, in paragraph 1, that the Bureau shall lay down instructions determining the technical arrangements for use of the electronic voting system.

Parliament's Rules of Procedures

The precautionary measures in place to avoid being contaminated with COVID-19

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All the security and sanitary measures taken by Parliament to fight the spread of the virus remain in place. Only staff whose presence is absolutely necessary to help Parliament exercise its core functions will be physically present on Parliament's premises.

Members and representatives of Council and Commission can join meetings on the premises or attend meetings remotely. The required physical distancing of 1.5 metres will be respected on EP premises at all times.

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