

Lessons from COVID-19: permanent rules for remote participation in committees

- Current rules require physical presence in committee meetings
- MEPs to be allowed to participate remotely outside “extraordinary” periods
- Voting and in camera meetings will still require physical presence
- Appropriate standards to be set for remote interventions

The Constitutional Affairs Committee endorsed draft rules that would enable remote participation in committee meetings even when not in “extraordinary circumstances”.

On Monday, the [Committee on Constitutional Affairs](#) voted in Strasbourg in favour of a [draft proposal](#) aiming to amend [Rule 216](#) of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure on committee meetings.

The new provisions will allow MEPs to participate in meetings remotely - even outside the context of extraordinary circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic - with the notable exceptions of votes and in camera meetings. The text also stipulates that remote interventions should take place using secure technological means managed by Parliament’s services directly, through solutions that are ‘technology neutral’, with the necessary audio and video quality, and from an appropriate place.

When convening a meeting, Committee Chairs will decide whether it will take place in physical-only or ‘hybrid’ format, on a case-by-case basis and with the approval of political group coordinators representing a majority. Interinstitutional negotiations (‘trilogues’) and other meetings not covered by rule 216 will continue to take place exclusively in person.

The proposal was approved with 20 votes in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

Next steps

Parliament will vote on the final proposal on Wednesday, 6 July. The new rules will enter into force on the day following their adoption.

Background

Last month, Parliament's [Conference of the Presidents](#) instructed the Committee on Constitutional Affairs to check if changes to the Rules of Procedure are needed in order to capitalise on the experience gained through the use of new technological tools over the past two years. Remote participation was previously adopted to facilitate work during the pandemic and Parliament [folded provisions reflecting this new reality into its internal rules](#) already in 2020. However, the improving situation has permitted a return to normality and, since the extraordinary measures are no longer in place, the physical presence of MEPs is required for all committee meetings.

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Committee on Constitutional Affairs](#)

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[Free photos, videos and audio material](#)

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