



Brussels, 16 June 2021
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FIN 467
CES 6

'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: Budget Committee

To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Council Decision on a temporary derogation from Decision 2013/471/EU on the granting of daily allowances to and the reimbursement of travelling expenses of members of the European Economic and Social Committee and their alternates in view of the travel difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Union

– *Adoption*

1. On 16 April 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) requested the Council to consider an addendum to Council Decision 2013/471/EU on the granting of daily allowances to and the reimbursement of travelling expenses of members of the Economic and Social Committee and their alternates¹.
2. The purpose of the addendum is to introduce an allowance for remote attendance of meetings, following the adaptation of EESC working methods since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. While physical participation at meetings remains the norm, in EESC's view remote attendance could be an additional and necessary tool to cater for a broad series of needs, going beyond the current sanitary crisis.

¹ Council Decision 2013/471/EU of 23 September 2013 on the granting of daily allowances to and the reimbursement of travelling expenses of members of the European Economic and Social Committee and their alternates (OJ L 253, 25.9.2013, p. 22).

3. The Budget Committee examined this proposal at its meetings on 27 April 2021, 19 May 2021, 26 May 2021 and 3 June 2021.
4. At these meetings, the Budget Committee agreed on a two-step approach, involving as a first step the introduction of an allowance for remote attendance of meetings specifically linked to the continued travel difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Union, and, as a second step, a future, more comprehensive revision of Decision 2013/471/EU. Consequently, the Budget Committee discussed, on the basis of a Presidency proposal, the modalities of a temporary derogation from Articles 2, 3 and 4 of Decision 2013/471/EU, applying only for the period of continued travel difficulties and sanitary restrictions. The Budget Committee held that the rate of the allowance for remote attendance suggested by EESC was not sufficiently justified, and agreed on a lower amount.

Furthermore, the Budget Committee agreed that the EESC should be required to submit regular reports on the application of the Decision in order to allow the Council to evaluate the continued existence of the conditions which justify the derogation. Those reports would also enable the Council to consider the adoption of appropriate measures, in particular in the framework of a future comprehensive revision of Decision 2013/471/EU.

5. Following these discussions, the Budget Committee unanimously agreed to suggest that the Permanent Representatives Committee advise the Council to:
 - adopt the Council Decision on a temporary derogation from Decision 2013/471/EU in view of the travel difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Union, as set out after legal-linguistic finalisation in document 9382/21;
 - have this Decision published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.