

Operation of the Committee of the Regions

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Operation of the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is convened by its President at the request of the Council or the Commission. It may also meet on its own initiative (Article 264 of the Treaty establishing the European Community).

The work of the commissions

The President assigns to the responsible commissions requests from the Council, Commission or European Parliament for the drafting of opinions, informing the Bureau to this effect at its next meeting.

If the subject of an opinion or a report concerns more than one commission, the President designates a lead commission and, where necessary, may make a proposal to the Bureau that a working group be created to be made up of representatives of the commissions concerned.

If the commission concerned cannot draw up a draft opinion or report by the deadline set by the Council, Commission or European Parliament, the Bureau may propose that the Plenary Assembly appoint a rapporteur-general, who submits his draft opinion or report straight to the Plenary Assembly. When a deadline does not give the Plenary Assembly time to appoint a rapporteur-general, the rapporteur-general may be appointed by the President.

Applications for own-initiative opinions or reports may be submitted to the Bureau by three of its members, by a commission via its chairman or by 32 members of the Committee. The Bureau decides the action to be taken on applications by a three-quarters majority of votes cast and the President refers the opinions to the relevant commission. The President informs the Plenary Assembly of all Bureau decisions approving and allocating own-initiative opinions or reports.

Draft resolutions or applications for the drafting of a resolution may be submitted to the Committee by at least 32 members or a political group. If the Bureau decides that the Committee is to discuss a draft resolution or an application for the drafting of a resolution, it may either put the draft resolution on the Plenary Session preliminary draft agenda or appoint a commission to draw up a draft resolution under the procedure used for drawing up draft opinions or reports.

A commission is convened by its chairman. At the written request of at least one quarter of its members, the chairman is obliged to convene an extraordinary commission meeting. As a general rule, the proceedings of the commissions are open to the public. A quorum exists if more than one half of its members are present. Decisions are taken by a majority of the votes cast.

The commissions submit their draft opinions or reports within the time limits set out in the interinstitutional calendar. The discussion of a draft opinion or report shall require no more than two meetings. In exceptional cases, the Bureau may authorise further meetings to discuss a draft opinion or report, or may extend the time limit for the submission of the draft.

Where the commission considers that a document referred to it by the Bureau has no regional or local interest, or is not of political importance, it may decide not to draw up an opinion or report regarding it.

Plenary Session

The draft opinion or report (or draft resolution) drawn up by the commission responsible is debated and voted on during the Plenary Assembly.

A quorum exists at a Plenary Session if a majority of the members is present. The quorum may be verified on the request of a member, but only if at least 15 members vote in favour of such a request. If the verification of a quorum is not requested, all votes are valid regardless of the number of voters. If it is established that there is no quorum, all items on the agenda which require voting are postponed until the following meeting day, when the Plenary Assembly may hold a valid vote on these items regardless of the

number of members present.

As a general rule, the Plenary Assembly decides by a majority of the votes cast. In calculating the majority, only the votes cast for and against are taken into account. In the event of a tied vote, the text or proposal is deemed rejected. Votes relating to persons are by secret ballot.

In urgent cases where a deadline set by the Council, Commission or European Parliament cannot be met under the normal procedure and the relevant commission has adopted its draft opinion or report unanimously, the President transmits this draft opinion to the Council, Commission and European Parliament for information. The draft opinion is submitted to the following Plenary Session for adoption without amendment.

Draft opinions or reports adopted unanimously by a commission are adopted by the Plenary Assembly without debate unless at least 32 members or their duly mandated alternates, or a political group table an amendment (simplified procedure).

The Committee's opinions and reports, as well as any communication relating to the use of a simplified procedure or a decision not to draw up an opinion or report, are addressed to the Council, Commission and European Parliament. As in the case of resolutions, they are forwarded by the President.

The opinions, reports and resolutions of the Committee are published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

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