

European Economic
and Social Committee

The President

Brussels, 05.03.20 000128 -
(PRES.CAB)(2020)D/800

THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Having regard to

- Rule 14.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee.
- the advice of the Medical Service

Whereas,

- there is a need to protect the health of Members, staff, as well as other persons working at or visiting the European Economic and Social Committee,
- the outbreak of the viral disease COVID-19 which started in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, has spread to different regions of the world, including clusters in certain regions in the European Union determined by the European Centre for Disease Control, and constitutes a threat to public health,
- there is a risk that persons who have recently been in the above-mentioned regions particularly affected by the infectious disease caused by COVID-19 might be infected and infect others before experiencing symptoms of illness,
- public authorities of Member States therefore recommend that persons who have travelled to certain areas particularly affected by COVID-19 be isolated for a period of fourteen days,
- it is therefore appropriate to deny access to the buildings of the European Economic and Social Committee to persons who have recently visited the above-mentioned regions where there is a significant risk of infection with the new virus, for a period of fourteen days following the return from those regions without prior medical clearance,
- the European Economic and Social Committee has therefore adopted a series of preventive measures in respect of the Members and staff of the institution on 25 February 2020,

- it is however not always possible for the European Economic and Social Committee to identify with a sufficient degree of confidence, among its large numbers of external visitors and event attendees, whether or not they have travelled from or via such an area particularly affected by COVID-19,
- events attended by a large number of people are recognised by the World Health Organisation as facilitating respiratory illness transmission,
- consequently certain large-scale events have already been cancelled in a number of Member States of the European Union and in Switzerland,
- the European Economic and Social Committee, as a political assembly, has a cooperation agreement with the European Parliament as well as with the Committee of the Regions which foresees *i.a.* a direct access between our respective buildings,
- the President of the European Parliament has adopted, on 2 March 2020, a decision in respect of non-core events involving outside visitors or attendees to Parliament's premises;
- it is therefore appropriate to adopt similar measures in respect of non-statutory events involving outside visitors or attendees to the European Economic and Social Committee' premises,
- while protecting health, the European Economic and Social Committee (hereafter "the Committee") should retain its capacity to exercise its core functions as attributed to the Institution by the Treaty on European Union,

HAS DECIDED

Article 1

1. The statutory meetings of the Committee, notably plenary session, bureau, sections meetings, as well as any meeting of Bodies created according to the Rules of procedures of the European Economic and Social Committee or permanent or ad-hoc groups depending on the President or the bureau, and their respective preparatory meetings with the groups and other stakeholders in direct relation to those meetings, shall not be restricted in their ability to function normally.

No other attendees other than those specifically invited by the President, by the Secretary General or by the respective Chairs as special guests will be accepted.

2. Other, non-statutory events or visits taking place on the Committee's premises are hereby cancelled until further notice, irrespective of their organiser or authorising authority. This includes (non-exhaustive list):

- Events organised by Groups/sections/CCMI
- Member-sponsored visits
- Members' personal visits
- Accredited assistants' personal visits
- Visits of local assistants

- Staff personal visits, other than Members or staff from other EU Institutions insofar their access is not to be denied pursuant to the provisions of article 2
- Events organised by the Committee administration
- Seminars
- Cultural events and exhibitions
- Events by outside bodies taking place in the Committee's premises
- Events co-organised with the Committee taking place in the Committee's premises
- Events organised by the Groups and non-attached Members
- Events organised by individual Members

3. Persons other than Members or staff of the Committee who are seeking access to the Committee's premises on account of the cancelled events and visits shall be denied access. An exception can be provided for people accompanying members with reduced mobility.

4. Media representatives shall be allowed to access the Committee's premises, unless so required by Article 2.

Article 2

1. Access to the buildings of the Committee is denied to any person having visited during the last 14 days before they seek access to the Committee's premises the areas that will be indicated in the list published in the Committee's Intranet, based on the latest developments and updates.

2. The prohibition shall cease to apply, for each of the persons concerned by paragraph 1, fourteen days respectively after their date of return from the areas indicated in that list in case no symptoms of the disease have become manifest during this period.

3. Access is also denied to persons who have been in known contact with a person whose infection with the new virus has been confirmed and who have not yet received from a medical practitioner confirmation that they are not infected.

Article 3

1. All persons except Members and staff of the Committee have to declare when they wish to enter the Committee's premises whether they have been to any of the concerned regions referred to in Article 2(1) within the last 14 days before they wish to enter.

2. For Members and staff additional rules may be adopted by the competent authorities of the Committee.

Article 4

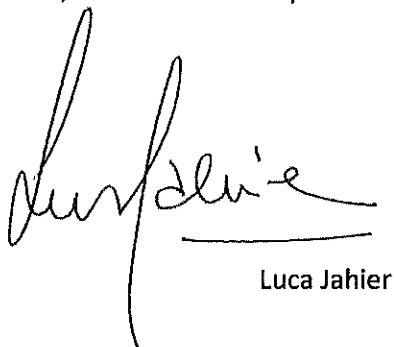
The Secretary-General shall implement this decision as regards the staff of the European Economic and Social Committee and as regards the practical implementation of the measures foreseen herein.

Article 5

1. This decision shall take effect on 6 March 2020. By way of derogation, the present decision shall not be applicable to non-statutory events which have started before 4 March and which continue on or beyond this date.

2. This decision shall lapse until 22 March 2020, unless renewed by the President.

Brussels, 5 March 2020



Luca Jahier