Decision

Special rules and procedures

1. Following the formal request made through a joint letter of 28 April 2022, signed by 43 Member States of the WHO European Region, the WHO Regional Director for Europe, in consultation with the President of the 71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, convened a special session of the Regional Committee for Europe pursuant to Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe.

2. The Twenty-ninth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) decided through a written silent procedure that this special session would be held under a fully virtual format and start on Tuesday, 10 May 2022 to end no later than Wednesday, 11 May 2022.

3. Special rules and procedures need to be put in place so that the Regional Committee can pursue its work during a virtual session. This draft decision is intended to enable the Regional Committee to take a decision in that regard at the start of its special session. The special rules and procedures to regulate the conduct of the virtual special session of the Regional Committee are set out in the Annex to this draft decision below.

4. Both the text of the draft decision and the special rules and procedures detailed in the Annex closely follow the arrangements adopted by the Regional Committee at its 71st session. These special rules and procedures will supplement or clarify the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, where needed.

ACTION BY THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

5. In view of the foregoing, the Regional Committee may wish to consider the following draft decision:

The special session of the Regional Committee for Europe, agreeing with the recommendation of the Twenty-ninth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe to hold the special session of the Regional Committee virtually, and having considered the report on special rules and procedures, decides to adopt the special rules and procedures set out in the Annex to this decision in order to regulate the conduct of virtual meeting of the special session of the Regional Committee pursuant to Rule 5 of its Rules of Procedure, opening on 10 May 2022 and closing no later than 11 May 2022.

1 Document EUR/RCSS/4
ANNEX. SPECIAL RULES AND PROCEDURES TO REGULATE THE CONDUCT OF THE VIRTUAL SPECIAL SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Rules of procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these special rules and procedures, in which case the Regional Committee’s decision to adopt these special rules and procedures shall operate as a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of Procedure to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe.  

Officers of the Regional Committee

2. In accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, the officers and rapporteur elected by the Regional Committee for Europe at its 71st session will hold office for this special session of the Regional Committee for Europe.

Attendance

3. Attendance by Members, States that are not members of the Regional Committee, invited representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other regional international organizations, and non-State actors in official relations with WHO or accredited by the Regional Committee shall be through secured access to videoconferencing or other electronic means, allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely.

Quorum

4. It is understood that virtual attendance of Members shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure.

Addressing the Regional Committee

5. During the virtual special session, Members shall be provided with the opportunity to take the floor. Individual statements will be limited to three minutes. Group statements will be limited to five minutes. Any delegate wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak.

6. Members, States that are not members of the Regional Committee, invited representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other regional international organizations, and non-State actors in official relations with WHO or accredited by the Regional Committee shall have the opportunity to submit written statements of no more than 600 words in one of the working languages of the Regional Committee for posting on the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) website under the related agenda item. Any such written statements may be submitted until the closure of the special session of the Regional Committee. A written statement may be submitted in lieu of an oral intervention or to complement it.

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2 This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee: Rules 41 and 44 (voting by show of hands or secret ballot).

3 As per Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe the term “Members” include Member States and Associate Members of the European Region of the World Health Organization.
7. Written statements shall remain posted on the WHO/Europe website in the language of submission until the adoption of the report of the special session. The content of the written statements will be summarized/reflect, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the special session.

8. Notwithstanding Rule 25 and Rule 26 bis, any Member wishing to raise a point of order or exercise a right of reply in relation to an oral statement made at the Regional Committee should signal its intention to do so. It is understood that, in accordance with well-established practice, any right of reply to such a statement shall be exercised at the end of the meeting.

9. Any Member wishing to exercise a right of reply in relation to a written statement should do so in writing as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than five working days after the closure of the relevant virtual session. Any Member wishing to exercise a further right of reply in relation to a written statement submitted in reply to its previous written statement should do so in writing as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than five working days after the posting of the statement in reply. The content of statements thus submitted will be summarized/reflect, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the special session.

**Credentials**

10. In accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure, the names of Members’ representatives, in the form of credentials, shall be communicated electronically to the WHO Regional Director for Europe, before the opening date of the Regional Committee.

11. In accordance with Rule 14.2.10 (h) of the Rules of Procedure, a subdivision of three members of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe shall assess, before the opening of the special session, whether the credentials of Members are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure, and shall report to the Regional Committee accordingly during the opening meeting with a view to the Regional Committee making a decision thereon. The subdivision will assess whether credentials received after the opening meeting are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure and will report immediately to the Regional Committee.

**Public nature of the meetings**

12. The virtual session of the Regional Committee shall be broadcast on the WHO/Europe website, in line with usual practice.

**Decision-making**

13. All decisions of the Regional Committee taken during its virtual special session should, as far as possible, be taken by consensus. In the event that a vote is required, voting shall take place by roll call conducted through the virtual system. During a roll-call vote, should any delegate fail to cast a vote for any reason, that delegate shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the delegate fail to cast a vote on the second roll call, the delegation shall be recorded as absent.

14. Brief statements consisting of explanations of vote may, if not made orally, be submitted in writing no later than three working days following the closure of the virtual special session. The content of the statements consisting of the explanations of vote will be summarized/reflect, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the special session.
Use of languages

15. Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure shall continue to apply. In so far as practical arrangements made at short notice might not allow for securing interpretation in all four working languages, the meeting could be conducted in less than four working languages, provided the relevant delegations agree.

16. Member States may provide translations of their submitted written statements into one or more of the working languages of the Regional Committee, if they so wish. Such translations should be clearly marked with the words “unofficial translation.”

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