

Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period

In light of the exceptional circumstances triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Committee

1. Emphasizes the importance of solidarity and partnership in these exceptional times and stresses the need to ensure continuity of the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE);
2. Authorizes the Chair of the Commission to circulate, after consultation with the UNECE Bureau, draft decisions of the Executive Committee to all member States, through the Permanent Missions in Geneva, under a silence procedure of at least 72 hours and in accordance with Rule 20 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure as contained in ECE/EX/3/Rev1;
3. Decides that if the silence is not broken, the decision shall be considered adopted, and the Executive Committee shall take note of the decision at its first meeting held after the cessation of precautionary measures as soon as the circumstances allow, and that this decision on the procedures for taking decisions of the Executive Committee shall be in effect until the end of May 2020 unless extended through this procedure;
4. Authorizes the Chair of the Commission to convene remote informal meetings of the Members of the Executive Committee to discuss matters of crucial importance for the continuity of the work of the Commission under current circumstances including in preparation of silence procedure. The minimum deadline of 72 hours should only be used for silence procedure following a remote informal meeting of the Members of the Executive Committee;

5. Requests the Secretariat to continue exploring possible solutions to the issue of interpretation in remote meetings in accordance with Rules of procedure 18 and 19, with a view of proposing solutions to the membership as soon as possible;
6. Encourages the subsidiary bodies of UNECE to explore, in full respect of the above temporary measures, innovative formats to conduct business remotely. On an exceptional basis and for business-critical issues, this may include decision-making through written consultations and silence procedure outside the regular sessions of the respective bodies. In this regard, the Bureaux of UNECE intergovernmental bodies, supported by the UNECE secretariat, should propose specific modalities in line with the modalities approved by the Executive Committee and for approval by the Executive Committee. These modalities would then apply to the respective subsidiary bodies, temporarily until end of May 2020;
7. Underlines that these arrangements are exceptional and time-limited and requests the Secretariat to report back to EXCOM on their implementation throughout the COVID-19 situation.

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