

CG(2024)46-07

25 January 2024

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR CONGRESS MEMBERS 46th CONGRESS SESSION

### ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS

Members are requested to register for the session by **18.00 on Friday 15 March 2024** via Congress Connect: [Congress Connect \(coe.int\)](https://congressconnect.coe.int). Substitutes are invited to contact their delegation secretary to enquire about the possibility of replacing a representative for the session.

**Please note that members' voting rights are linked to their registration. If a member is not registered for the session by 15 March 2024, it will not be possible for them to vote.**

### ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR ACCOMPANYING PERSONS

Please register any accompanying persons on the Congress session [registration page](#) indicating the visitor's name, first name and exact job function.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND VISAS

You are responsible for obtaining any visas necessary for your journey and can apply for visa support on your Congress Connect account. The Table Office will support the visa requests of Congress members (including members of the partners for local democracy), secretaries of national delegations, and members' advisors.

Visa expenses of representatives or duly mandated substitutes will be reimbursed upon presentation of a supporting document of payment such as the receipt, preferably by digital version, and a copy of the passport page showing the visa in it. If applicable, it is the responsibility of each member to check and comply with the latest transit and entry requirements of all countries concerned before travel.

### REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES FOR MEMBERS

The **travel and subsistence expenses** of representatives and duly mandated substitutes who replace a representative for the whole session will be borne by the Council of Europe on the terms specified in the [Rules](#) concerning the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe travelling at the charge of Council of Europe budgets. Congress substitutes may receive a daily allowance if they partially replace a representative, without the reimbursement of travel expenses.

Please note that the rate of daily allowance has been set at **€186** in 2024<sup>1</sup>. Members are requested to arrange to travel by the cheapest route (economy class for air travel) and, if possible, make use of reduced transport fares. By virtue of Article 3 of the [Rules](#), all claims for reimbursement of travel expenses for all means of transport must be accompanied by a copy of the relevant ticket and evidence of the expenditure actually incurred, such as an invoice, preferably by digital version. In no case shall the amount reimbursed exceed the actual expenditure incurred.

Only complete financial claim files will be processed. Such files should include the individual reimbursement claim form and those receipts and proof of payment required by the Financial Rules of the Council of Europe.

<sup>1</sup> As modified by decision [CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1481/11.1-Part1](#)

Each member must indicate on each of these receipts the number of their individual claim form which can be found at the top of the claim form and begins with the letters OM (which stands for mission order in French), followed by the year and a number (e.g. OM24\_1234).

The complete claim file including the claim form and scanned supporting documents **MUST** be submitted IN ADVANCE of the session, and at the latest by **15 March 2024** via email to [finances.congress@coe.int](mailto:finances.congress@coe.int). The subject of the email should include the OM number and name of the member.

The Administrative and Financial Unit officers will be available for assistance in offices 1076-1078 of the Palais during the session at the following times:

25 March: 15.00-17.00

26-27 March: 8.30-12.00 and 14.00-17.00

28 March: 8.30-12.00

Reimbursement files will be closed **two months** after the end of the session; if your file has not been sent by that deadline it will be considered as tacit renouncement of reimbursement of the expenses incurred by your participation in this session.

**Prepaid tickets:** Please note that prepaid tickets cannot be arranged for this session.

**Advance payments** are no longer possible.

**Reimbursement** of travel and accommodation expenses will be made **exclusively** by bank transfer. Only complete reimbursement files will be processed by the end of the session week.

## **INSURANCE**

An insurance policy taken out by the Council of Europe with the insurers AIG EUROPE in Belgium (Policy number 2.004.761, helpline: + 32 3 253 69 16) covers risks related to official journeys such as medical expenses for illness, accident and medical repatriation for persons up to their 76th birthday.

## **AIRPORT SHUTTLES**

Shuttles to and from the airports of Baden-Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and Basle-Mulhouse (Switzerland/France) will be provided by the City of Strasbourg upon reservation. More information and a link to the reservation platform is available on the Registration webpage of the Congress Website: [Airport Shuttle \(coe.int\)](http://Airport Shuttle (coe.int))

## **ACCOMMODATION**

It is strongly recommended that you make hotel reservations as early as possible. The Secretariat of the Congress will not be able to make these reservations for you.

## **MEMBERS' BADGES**

If you do not have your Congress member photo badge with you upon arrival at the Palais de l'Europe, please have a passport or identity card to show at the entrance. A provisional badge which will grant access to the Palais de l'Europe and the European Parliament will be issued. The replacement of the provisional badge by the final badge (with photograph) can be requested at the accreditation unit on the ground floor of the Palais de l'Europe at any time during the session.

## **ACCOMPANYING PERSONS' BADGES**

Accompanying persons and other participants who have registered for the session ([registration page](#)) will receive a temporary badge upon presentation of a passport or identity card upon their arrival at the Palais de l'Europe, which will give them the appropriate access to the buildings and meeting rooms

## **ACCESS TO THE MEETING ROOMS IN THE PALAIS DE L'EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

The session is public. However, access to **the hemicycle of the European Parliament** is restricted to members of the Congress, Congress partners for local democracy, Congress statutory partners, honorary members, secretaries of delegation, youth delegates, members of national associations of local and regional authorities and Congress members' advisors and personal assistants (maximum of two per member) (Administrative Rule 3.2.).

For Chamber sessions, Congress members have priority for seating. Should a meeting room reach its full seating capacity, non-Congress members may be asked to leave the room until a seat becomes available.

**The plenary sittings of the 46th Session will be held in the hemicycle of the European Parliament. Access will be via the Palais de l'Europe for all registered participants. Directions from the Palais de l'Europe to the hemicycle of the European Parliament will be clearly indicated.**

## **VOTES DURING THE SESSION**

The votes in the **plenary sittings** will be carried out via the voting system of the European Parliament. Each representative or duly mandated substitute will be provided with a strictly personal voting badge, which **must be handed back to the Congress Secretariat at the end of the session.**

Voting in the Chamber of Local Authorities will be carried out via the KUDO on-line voting system.

## **POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SESSION**

With regard to political group meetings held in the context of the session, it should be noted that expenses will be refunded only to those members of political groups who are entitled to reimbursement of their travel and subsistence costs on the basis of their attendance at the session, either as representatives or as substitutes replacing a representative.

## **ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

All members must sign the attendance register before entering the hemicycle of the European Parliament or the meeting rooms in the Palais de l'Europe. Members should note that the reimbursement of expenses is linked to the signature of the attendance register.

## **FINANCIAL RULES**

*1089<sup>th</sup> meeting – 30 June 2010<sup>2</sup>*

### **Revised rules concerning the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe travelling at the charge of Council of Europe budgets**

#### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

##### **Article 1**

Members of the Congress (hereinafter referred to as the “members”) travelling on Council of Europe business and at the Council’s expense shall arrange their journeys in the most economical manner. Travelling expenses shall be reimbursed and daily subsistence allowances paid in accordance with the present rules.

#### **II. MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND TRAVELLING EXPENSES**

##### **Article 2**

1. Members shall be entitled, as provided for below, to reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in travelling between the address specified in the notice of the meeting (hereinafter referred to as the “place of departure”), and the place of the meeting.

2. If, for personal or professional reasons, members travel to the meeting from a place other than their place of departure or return to such a place after the meeting, the refund shall be restricted to the amount of expenses they would have incurred in travelling to or from their place of departure. In exceptional and duly justified circumstances, with the prior approval of the Secretary General, members may request reimbursement based on the actual itinerary.

3. Travelling expenses shall be refunded to only one member per meeting. If one member is replaced by another in the course of the meeting, the latter shall not be entitled to travel expenses.

##### **Article 3**

All claims for reimbursement of travel expenses for all means of transport must be accompanied by a copy of the relevant ticket and evidence of the expenditure actually incurred (for example, an original invoice or certified copy, credit card slip or statement). In no case shall the amount reimbursed exceed the actual expenditure incurred.

##### **Article 4**

###### **1. Rail travel**

The reimbursement of the first-class rail fare is authorised. Where the duration of the journey is longer than 6 hours between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., the cost of a sleeper may be reimbursed.

###### **2. Air travel**

Reimbursement shall be based on the economy class fare. However, reimbursement may be based on the business class fare in the following circumstances:

- for single flights lasting more than 7 hours;
- for more than 15 hours travelling time (more than one flight plus stopovers);
- for health reasons attested by a medical certificate, which must be submitted with the claim form.

The flight itinerary must be presented to justify the duration of flying time or total travelling time, as appropriate. Excess baggage charges are not refundable unless justified on grounds of official requirements.

###### **3. Sea travel**

The reimbursement of travel by sea shall not exceed the amount of the air fare as defined in paragraph 2 above. When members travel by car, the cost of transporting the car by sea shall not be reimbursed (see Article 6, paragraph 1).

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<sup>2</sup> As modified by decisions [CM/Del/Dec\(2013\)1162/11.4](#) and [CM/Del/Dec\(2023\)1481/11.1-Part1](#)

## **Article 5**

1. Transit fares in connection with changing from one means of transport to another and fares paid for travel between the place of departure and/ or the place of the meeting and railway station or airport are provided for within the daily allowances paid for attendance at meetings and shall not therefore be directly reimbursed. However, when such fares exceed 20% of the daily allowances paid, the difference may be reimbursed, subject to the prior approval of the Secretary General and on presentation of evidence of the expenditure actually incurred.
2. Local travel costs incurred during meeting days are provided within the daily allowances paid for attendance at meetings and shall not therefore be directly reimbursed.

## **Article 6**

1. Members travelling by means other than public transport a distance exceeding 30 kilometres per journey (one-way) shall be refunded a lump sum based on a kilometric allowance determined annually by the Committee of Ministers. Distances over 1600 kilometres for the return journey shall be refunded on the basis of the economy class air fare from the nearest airports, unless there is prior approval from the Secretary General authorising reimbursement based on the kilometric allowance. Journeys of less than 30 kilometres (one-way) are not reimbursed.
2. The journey time used as the basis for the calculation of daily allowances shall be the result of the number of kilometres divided by 90 and shall not exceed 24 hours.
3. Related costs, such as toll and parking fees, may only be reimbursed with the prior approval of the Secretary General and only where there is no other possible alternative. Such claims shall be accompanied by evidence of the expenditure actually incurred.
4. If two or more members entitled to claim expenses use the same car, a refund shall be made only to the person in charge of the vehicle, with an increase of 10% for each passenger.
5. Members travelling by car do so at their own risk. The Council of Europe disclaims all liability in respect of any accident that may occur during the journey.

## **III. DAILY ALLOWANCES**

### **Article 7**

1. During the meeting, experts shall be entitled to receive an allowance at a daily rate determined annually by the Committee of Ministers.<sup>3</sup>
2. This allowance shall be deemed to cover all expenditure incurred by members in attending meetings, except for the travel expenses provided for above. However, where in exceptional and duly justified circumstances, and with the prior approval of the Secretary General, total accommodation costs (room, breakfast and related taxes) amount to more than 60% of the total daily allowances payable in respect of the meeting, members may submit a claim for a supplementary payment. Any such claim must be supported by original vouchers attesting the actual expenditure incurred for accommodation.

### **Article 8**

1. The duration of the period conferring entitlement to the allowance shall be determined as follows:
  - i. Members shall be entitled to the daily allowance for each 24-hour period covered by the duration of the journey to and from the meeting. The duration taken into account for the entitlement to daily allowances shall not exceed the shortest necessary for attendance at the meeting in accordance with the means of transport taken as the basis for the refund of travel expenses, as determined by the rules above.
  - ii. The daily allowance shall not be payable for any period of less than 4 hours.
  - iii. Where the duration of the journey is equal to or more than 4 hours but less than 8 hours and no hotel accommodation is involved, members shall be paid a quarter of the daily allowance. The same shall apply to any period equal to or more than 4 hours but less than 8 hours, in excess of 24 hours or any multiple of 24 hours.
  - iv. Where the duration of the journey is equal to or more than 8 hours but less than 24 hours and no hotel accommodation is involved, members shall be paid half the daily allowance. The same shall apply to any

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<sup>3</sup> The rate in force as from 1 January 2024 is €186 (cf. Appendix VI/Table 25 of [CM\(2024\)1](#)).

period equal to or more than 8 hours but less than 24 hours, in excess of 24 hours or any multiple of 24 hours.

v. Where the duration of the journey is equal to or more than 4 hours but less than 24 hours and hotel accommodation is involved, members shall be paid the full amount of the daily allowance. The same shall apply to any period equal to or more than 4 hours and less than 24 hours, in excess of 24 hours or any multiple of 24 hours.

2. In the case of air, rail and sea travel, the duration of the journey shall be increased, for the purpose of calculating the subsistence allowance, by a fixed period of 2 hours.

3. Members shall declare any meals or overnight accommodation provided to them free of charge. Where overnight accommodation or meals of members are provided free of charge the daily allowance shall be reduced, unless the Secretary General decides otherwise, by the following amounts:

- Overnight accommodation (50% of the daily allowance) €93 per night<sup>4</sup>
- Main meal (lunch or dinner) (15% of the daily allowance) €27.90 per meal<sup>5</sup>

#### **IV. OTHER EXPENSES**

##### **Article 9**

1. Other expenses incurred by members in connection with their attendance at the meeting, such as visa fees and vaccination costs, which are strictly unavoidable, shall be reimbursed. Such claims shall be accompanied by evidence of the expenditure actually incurred.

2. Expenses related to insurance, representation, communication by telephone or fax, the use of the Internet and the rental of meeting rooms are not reimbursed.

#### **V. SICKNESS AND ACCIDENT**

##### **Article 10**

When travelling on behalf of the Council of Europe, members are covered in respect of risks specifically related to such travel by insurance taken out by the Organisation on their behalf. They are nevertheless obliged in the first instance to exhaust all possibilities of payment of benefits due to them under the scheme to which they are affiliated in their own country in respect of illness and accident occurring during the journey and/or the meeting.

#### **VI. REIMBURSEMENT**

##### **Article 11**

The expenses referred to above shall be refunded upon submission of a claim certified true and correct by the member, to which all vouchers required by the rules must be appended.

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<sup>4</sup>. The rate in force as from 1 January 2024 is €186.

<sup>5</sup> The rate in force as from 1 January 2024 is €186.