



Resolution 689 (1979)¹

Procedure in committee -quorum, vacant seats and replacements

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering that its Rules of Procedure require the presence of the majority of members of a committee when a vote is taken on the substantive part of a report as a whole, and the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, if such election is held by ballot (Rule 45, paragraph 4.c, first sub-paragraph) ;
2. Noting that most committees still have difficulties in raising a quorum, especially for votes on texts as a whole, and that this necessitates additional meetings, wastes time, involves national delegations and the Council of Europe in higher expenditure, and hampers its own efficiency ;
3. Observing with regret the failure of the steps to improve the situation that were advocated in the report of 5 April 1976 by its Committee on Rules of Procedure ([Doc. 3757](#)), in particular the suggestion that delegations that cannot or do not wish to ensure the regular presence of their members at meetings should leave vacant all or some of the seats allotted to them in committees, as well as Rule 45, paragraph 7, which provides that "if a seat remains empty for three consecutive meetings, the Chairman of the committee shall so inform the Bureau of the Assembly" ;
4. Observing further that when national delegations which have deliberately left seats on committees vacant in order to facilitate raising a quorum wish to fill them on a provisional basis, difficulties may arise by virtue of the provisions of Rule 43, paragraph 4, which provides for the appointment of all members of committees by the Assembly or the Standing Committee ;
5. Considering, moreover, the necessity to clarify the procedure for replacing a regular member of a committee, either by his alternate appointed in implementation of Rule 43, paragraphs 3 and 4, or by another member of the Assembly of the same nationality (Rule 45, paragraph 6),
6. Resolves :
 - a. to replace the first sub-paragraph of Rule 45, paragraph 4.c of the Rules of Procedure, as from the opening of the 31st Session of the Assembly, by the following text : "A committee may deliberate and take decisions when one-third of its members are present ; however, if so requested by one-sixth of its members before voting begins on the substantive part of a report as a whole, or on the election of the Chairman or Vice-Chairmen, the vote may be taken only if the majority of committee members are present" ;
 - b. to insert in Rule 43, after paragraph 4, a new paragraph reading as follows : "Where a seat on a committee is vacant, it may be provisionally occupied by a Representative or Substitute from the national delegation to which the seat is allotted, subject to the agreement of the Chairman of that delegation", and to add to the second sub-paragraph of paragraph 4.c of Rule 45 the following footnote : "When vacant seats are occupied provisionally, in accordance with Rule 43, paragraph 5 above, the total number of committee members must be adjusted in consequence" ;

1. See [Doc. 4259](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 27 March 1979.



- c. to add to the first sub-paragraph of Rule 45, paragraph 6 a footnote reading as follows : "If a regular member is absent, his alternate appointed pursuant to Rule 43, paragraph 3 above, sits on the committee as of right and enjoys all the prerogatives. On the other hand, the regular member may inform the Chairman of the committee that should his alternate be unable to attend, which, if any, other member of the delegation should take his place".