

e-Vote

User Guide

V1.0

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1) SCOPE

This document is intended to assist the use of the Management Committee Decision Making tool provided by the e-COST platform (<https://e-services.cost.eu/>). From here onwards, the tool will be referred to as e-Vote tool.

2) APPLICATION OF THE E-VOTE TOOL FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DECISIONS

As the Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee (MC) in COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (COST 134/14; http://www.cost.eu/action_management), Annex 1, stipulate, the Management Committee of a COST Action can take decisions either at Management Committee Meetings or electronically, i.e. via e-mail.

However, to ease the electronic decision-making process of the Management Committee by electronic means the e-Vote tool has been designed with the following main features:

- automatic information of all MC Members and MC Observers as well as the Grant Holder manager about an ongoing e-Vote and invitation to the MC Members to cast their vote
- automatic calculation of the outcome of the e-Vote in dependence of the results of each country having joined the Action, which is determined by their individual MC Member's votes
- automatic information about the outcome of the e-Vote to all MC Members, Substitutes, Observers and GH manager
- collection of e-Votes of an Action in one place in e-COST
- follow up possibility and automatic reminder

The e-Vote tool being available on the e-COST platform is recommended to be used for the electronic decision making of the Management Committee. It should replace decision making via e-mail or any other electronic means, which Actions might have developed in their own capacity.

The e-Vote tool shall not be used for the MC approval of the Work and Budget Plan and of international cooperation requests, for which specific e-COST voting solutions exist, which launch the electronic MC decision procedure automatically. Results of MC voting on the Work and Budget Plan or on International Cooperation are therefore not displayed in the overview list of the e-Vote tool.

The following table gives an overview about the rights a user has in dependence of their role in the Management Committee of an Action.

Who \ What	Action Chair	Vice Chair	MC Member	MC Substitute	MC Observer	Grant Holder manager	COST Association
Can initiate an e-Vote	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	yes*
Is informed about ongoing e-Vote	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Can cast a vote	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Can see individual votes by MC Members	yes	yes	(yes)**	no	no	no	yes
Can see country votes of a closed e-Vote	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
Can see outcome of a closed e-Vote	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes

Table 1: e-Vote tool rights. *) Science Officer; **) only of the one MC Member colleague from the same country

Figure 1 shows the principal steps of the e-Vote process.

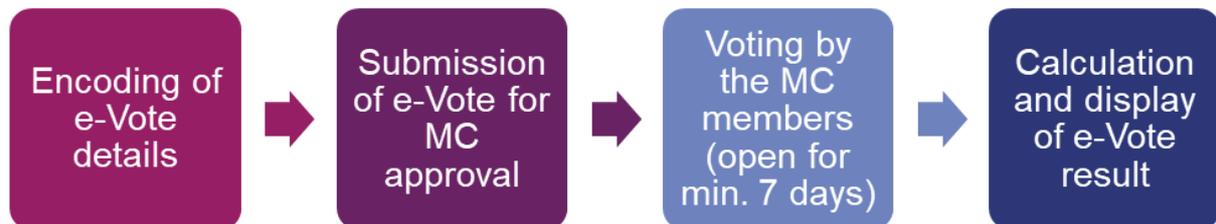


Figure 1: Principal steps of the e-Vote process

3) ACCESS TO THE E-VOTE TOOL

After having logged in to e-COST the user finds the e-Vote tool and all Management Committee decisions taken with the help of this tool in the tab “MC Decisions” of the side menu at the left of the COST Action e-COST web page (see Figure 2).

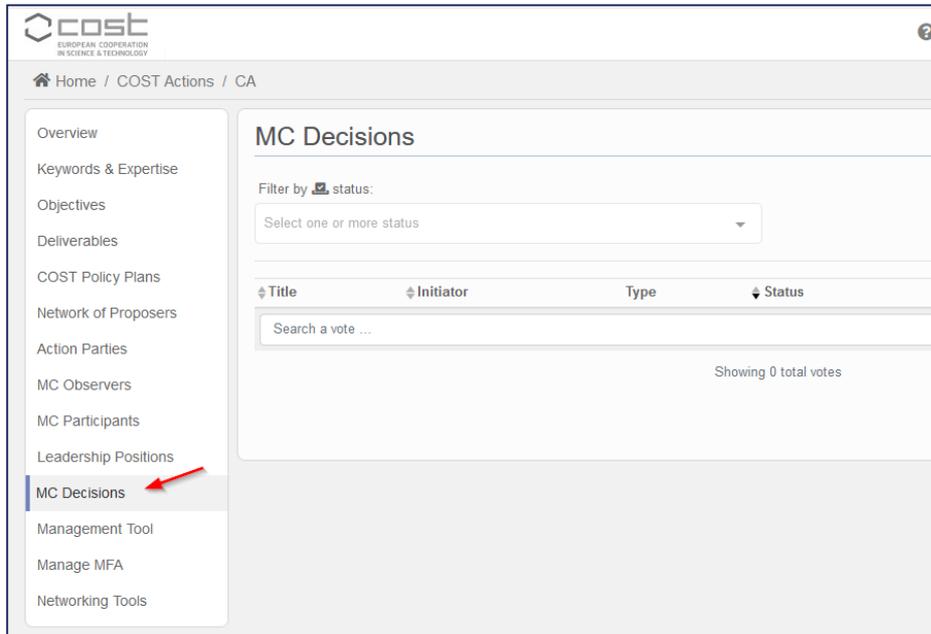


Figure 2: Access to e-Vote tool can be found in the side menu

The position of the tab “MC Decisions” may vary depending on the role of the user in the Action Management Committee.

If the tab “MC Decisions” on the left side menu should disappears, a button “Back to MC Decisions” at the bottom of the page will appear as an option. Clicking on it will bring the user back to the “MC Decisions” page.

We are working to resolve this issue in a future e-COST release.

4) LAUNCH OF AN E-VOTE

A) ADDING/EDITING AN E-VOTE

An e-Vote for a Management Committee decision can be initiated by the Action Chair, Vice Chair or Science Officer of the Action, here called e-Vote initiator, by clicking on the button “Add new vote” (see Figure 3)

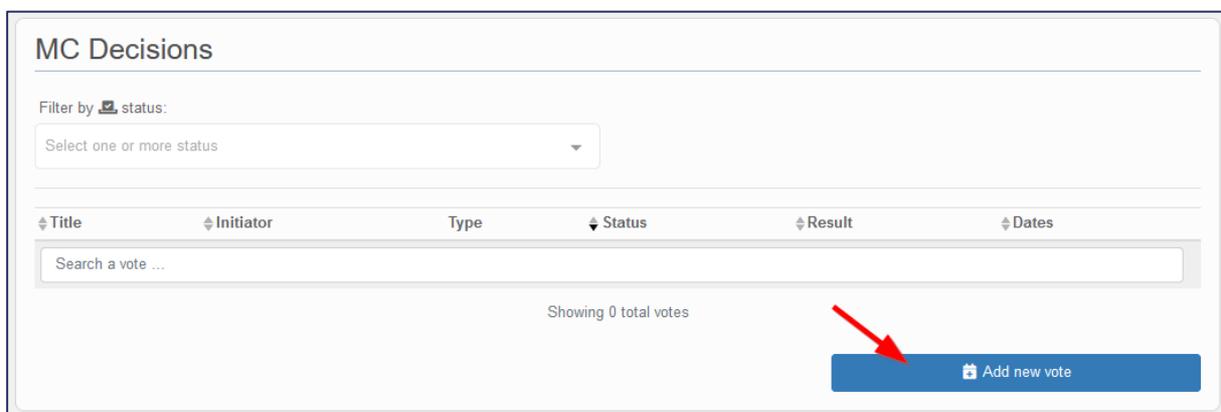


Figure 3: Add new vote

Adding a new vote allows the e-Vote initiator to provide textual information about the decision to take such as a title, a description and the question to vote on. The question to vote on should contain only one item to vote on and should be answerable by “Yes, I approve.” or “No, I object.”.

Furthermore, the e-Vote initiator can set the start date from which the Management Committee Members can cast their vote and the end date when the voting will be closed (see Figure 4). The duration of the e-Vote can never be less than 7 calendar days. The duration of the e-Vote is set automatically to the required minimum of 7 full calendar days. To accommodate holiday seasons or other reasons to allow the MC Members more time to cast their vote the duration of the e-Vote can be extended.

Add a vote

Title *
The title of the vote

Vote type * ▼

Description *

Size - | **B** *I* ☰ ☰

[Example text]
For the 4th joint MC & WG meeting taking place in ABCD from 23 July 2020 to 25 July 2020 the Local Organiser was able to negotiate a reduced hotel rate of EUR YYY. Therefore, it is suggested to reduce the daily allowance from EUR ZZZ to EUR XXX. This would allow, given the current planning to invite N additional participants, preferably ECIs from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, with attention for a better gender balance at the meeting (see also attached budget plan).

body p

A more detailed description to give more context to the participants

Question *
The exact question that will be voted

Start date *

End date *

Figure 4: Interface to provide the necessary information about the decision to take

The e-Vote initiator can either save the draft vote or submit it for voting.

Upon saving the draft, the e-Vote initiator can use the drop-down menu shown in Figure 5

- to edit the text again,
- to upload supporting documents (Figure 6),
- to see, under “Voting status”, the list of MC Members, who will be invited to vote (Figure 7), or
- to delete the draft vote.

The “Cancel” option is described in section 7).

MC Decisions

Filter by status:

Title	Initiator	Type	Status	Result	Dates	
[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting	Dr [redacted]	MC-Voting	Draft		24/11/2020 16:33 - 01/12/2020 23:59	<input type="button" value="Preview vote"/> <input type="button" value="Options"/>

Showing 1 total vote

- Edit
- Supporting documents
- Voting Status
- Cancel
- Delete

Figure 5: Drop-down menu for further options

Supporting documents

List of current supporting documents:
 No documents available to be downloaded.

Upload and add supporting document:

Title / Description *

File to upload *

You can upload files up to 2 MB each. Supported file types are: pdf, png, jpg, jpeg, gif, doc, docx, odf, xls.

Figure 6: Interface to upload supporting documents

Participants

People **Countries**

Filter by status:

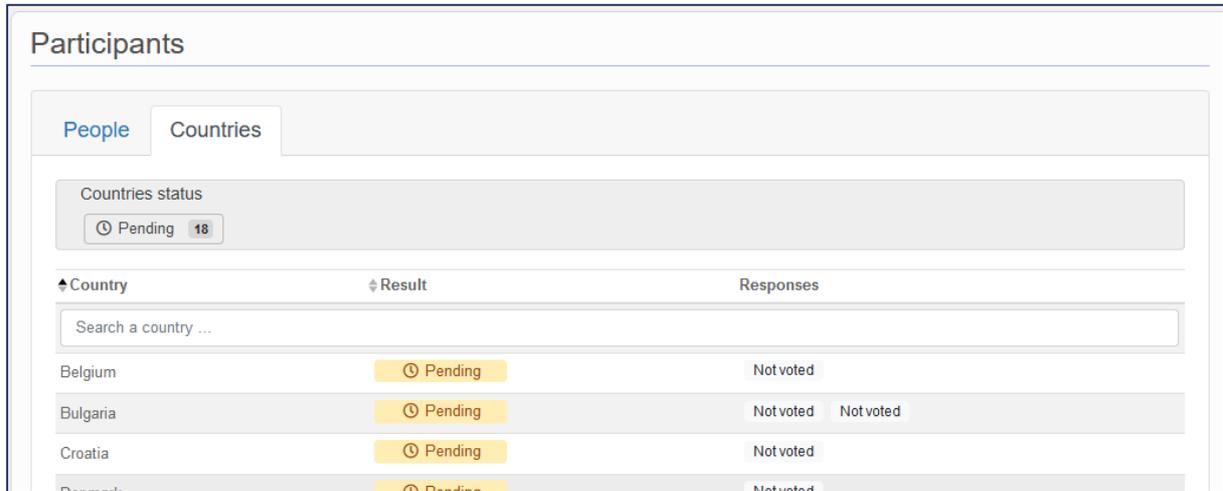
Filter by quality:

Name	Country	Quality	Status	Aut. approval
[redacted]	Spain	MC Member		<input type="button" value="Options"/>
[redacted]	Hungary	MC Member		<input type="button" value="Options"/>
[redacted]	Portugal	MC Member		<input type="button" value="Options"/>

Figure 7: List of MC Members who will receive the invitation to vote

In the “Countries” tab (Figure 8), which is also accessible via “Voting status” (Figure 5) the e-Vote initiator will be able to follow the votes of the COST Full or Cooperating Member Countries participating

in the Action. At this stage, when the e-Vote has not been launched, the country voting status are “Pending”.



Participants

People Countries

Countries status

⌚ Pending 18

Country	Result	Responses
Search a country ...		
Belgium	⌚ Pending	Not voted
Bulgaria	⌚ Pending	Not voted Not voted
Croatia	⌚ Pending	Not voted
Denmark	⌚ Pending	Not voted

Figure 8: COST country vote view

The “Preview vote” button in Figure 5 displays to the e-Vote initiator a preview of the e-Vote, as it will be displayed also to the voters (see Figure 9 and Figure 13) .

Preview vote ✕

Details MC-Voting Draft

[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting

Description [Example text]
For the 4th joint MC & WG meeting taking place in ABCD from 23 July 2020 to 25 July 2020 the Local Organiser was able to negotiate a reduced hotel rate of EUR YYY. Therefore, it is suggested to reduce the daily allowance from EUR ZZZ to EUR XXX. This would allow, given the current planning to invite N additional participants, preferably ECLs from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, with attention for a better gender balance at the meeting (see also attached budget plan).

Start 24/11/2020 16:33
End 01/12/2020 23:59

Supporting documents [Example text] Budget plan for 4th MC&WG meeting [Download](#)

Vote

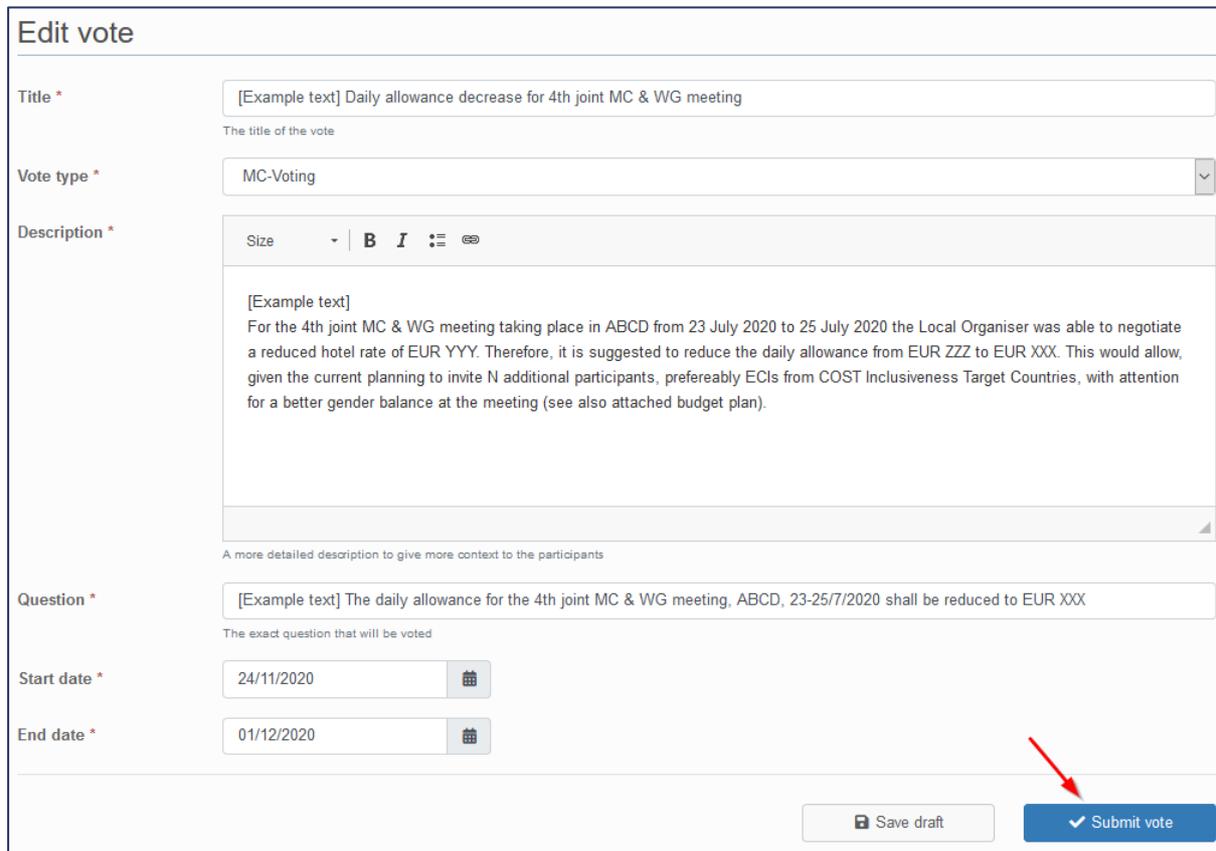
[Example text] The daily allowance for the 4th joint MC & WG meeting, ABCD, 23-25/7/2020 shall be reduced to EUR XXX

Finish

Figure 9: Preview of vote text as visible to the voters

B) SUBMISSION OF AN E-VOTE

In order to submit an e-Vote and to bring it to voting by the MC Members, the e-Vote initiator has to click on the “Submit button” in the “Add a vote” / “Edit vote” screen (Figure 4 /Figure 10).



Edit vote

Title * [Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting
The title of the vote

Vote type * MC-Voting

Description *
Size | **B** **I** | ☰ ☹
[Example text]
For the 4th joint MC & WG meeting taking place in ABCD from 23 July 2020 to 25 July 2020 the Local Organiser was able to negotiate a reduced hotel rate of EUR YYY. Therefore, it is suggested to reduce the daily allowance from EUR ZZZ to EUR XXX. This would allow, given the current planning to invite N additional participants, preferably ECIs from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, with attention for a better gender balance at the meeting (see also attached budget plan).
A more detailed description to give more context to the participants

Question * [Example text] The daily allowance for the 4th joint MC & WG meeting, ABCD, 23-25/7/2020 shall be reduced to EUR XXX
The exact question that will be voted

Start date * 24/11/2020

End date * 01/12/2020

Save draft Submit vote

Figure 10: Submission of an e-Vote

Submission of the e-Vote will change its status from “Draft” to “Ready” (Figure 11). This will make the e-Vote to be sent to the MC Members normally one hour later. If the e-Vote initiator has specified a later start date, then the e-Vote will remain in the “Ready” status until being sent out for voting to the MC at the specified date. The delay of one hour is given in order to allow the e-Vote initiator to still delete the e-Vote submitted, in case that they spot a major error. Although possible, it is not recommended to edit the e-Vote anymore at this stage.

When the 1-hour delay has passed or the specified start date has been reached, the status of the e-Vote will change to “Running” and e-notifications will be sent

- to Management Committee Members, with the invitation to cast their vote, and
- to Management Committee Observers, the Grant Holder manager and the Action Chair informing them about the ongoing e-Vote.

Three days before the closure of the running e-Vote those MC Members not having voted so far will receive an automatic reminder to cast their vote.

Title	Initiator	Type	Status	Result	Dates
[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting	Dr [redacted]	MC-Voting	Ready		24/11/2020 16:40 - 01/12/2020 23:59

Showing 1 total vote

Figure 11: e-Vote status "Ready", which indicates that the e-Vote will be sent to the voters at the specified date and time

5) VOTING

A) MC MEMBER VOTING

The Management Committee Members will receive a e-notification to cast their vote in e-COST. They can do this by either clicking on the link provided in the e-notification or by accessing the respective e-Vote in the list of e-Votes displayed in the tab "MC decisions" (see Figure 2). For the e-Vote(s) with status "Running" they have a "Vote" button available (Figure 12), which provides them access to the e-Vote details and allows them to cast their vote (Figure 13).

Title	Initiator	Type	Status	Result	Dates
[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting	Dr Ralph Stuebner	MC-Voting	Running		24/11/2020 11:40 - 01/12/2020 23:59

Showing 1 total vote

Figure 12: Vote button to access an e-Vote for voting

Vote
✕

☰ Details
MC-Voting Running

[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting

Description [Example text]
For the 4th joint MC & WG meeting taking place in ABCD from 23 July 2020 to 25 July 2020 the Local Organiser was able to negotiate a reduced hotel rate of EUR YYY. Therefore, it is suggested to reduce the daily allowance from EUR ZZZ to EUR XXX. This would allow, given the current planning to invite N additional participants, preferably ECIs from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, with attention for a better gender balance at the meeting (see also attached budget plan).

Start 24/11/2020 11:40
End 01/12/2020 23:59

Supporting documents [Example text] Budget plan for 4th MC&WG meeting 📄 Download

☑ Vote
🖱

[Example text] The daily allowance for the 4th joint MC & WG meeting, ABCD, 23-25/7/2020 shall be reduced to EUR XXX

ⓘ Please **click one of the buttons** to vote. Note that **you can vote until:** 01/12/2020 23:59

I approve

I object

Other MC Member of your country voting status (if any):

MC Member	DK	Prof [REDACTED]	✉	☐ Not voted
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Figure 13: MC Member screen with e-Vote details and voting buttons

The “Vote” screen (Figure 13) gives the MC Member access to the e-Vote details and allows them to cast their vote, either by approval or objection.

At the bottom of the screen there is, if applicable, also information about how their fellow MC Member from their country has voted in this specific e-Vote. It is recommended that Management Committee Members from the same country consult each other before voting as contradicting individual votes will render their country vote void.

In this context it shall be reminded that MC decisions are taken by the simple majority of the COST Full or Cooperating Member Countries having joined the Action. An overview of how a COST country vote results from individual MC Member vote(s) is given in Table 2.

MC Member per COST Member Country	MC Member(s) vote	COST Country vote	Remark
1 MC Member only	Approved	approved	
	Objected	objected	
	no reaction	approved	Tacit approval
2 MC Members	approved / approved	approved	
	objected / objected	objected	
	approved / objected	void	
	no reaction / objected	void	
	no reaction / approved	approved	Tacit approval
	no reaction / no reaction	approved	Tacit approval

Table 2: Possible outcome of the country vote based on individual MC member vote(s)

When MC Members do not vote until the closure of the e-Vote, their vote will be considered as a tacit approval.

While the e-Vote is still open for voting (status “Running”), a MC Member can at any time change their vote by accessing the “Vote” screen again via the “Change vote” button (Figure 14). This button will become available in the MC decision list after a first vote on the specific e-Vote is cast.

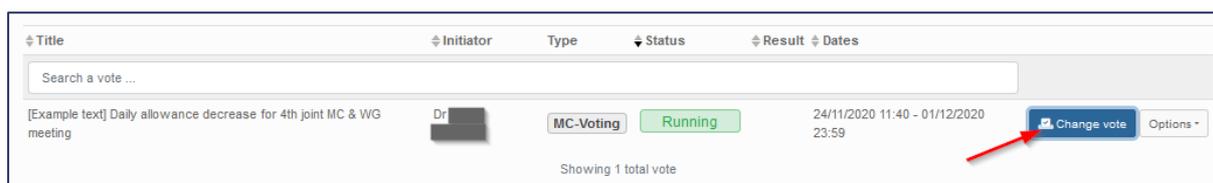


Figure 14: Possibility to change the initial vote

B) E-VOTE INITIATOR VIEW

While e-Vote is open for voting by the MC Members, the e-Vote initiator has the possibility to follow the progress by clicking on “Voting Status” (Figure 15)

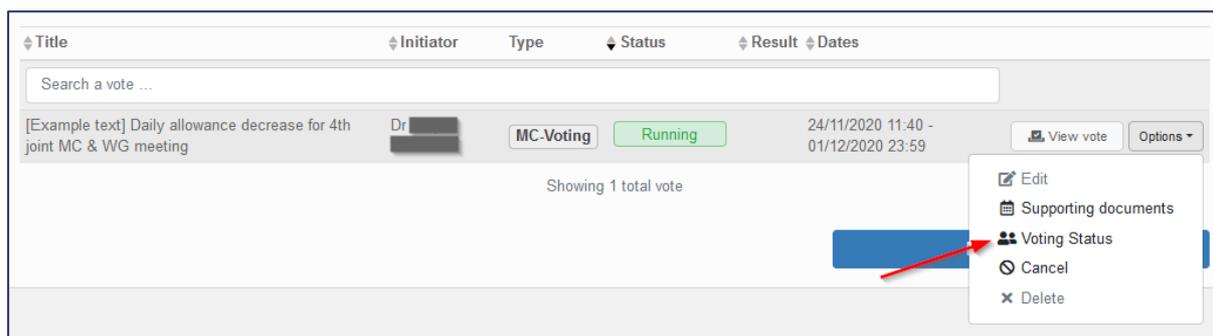


Figure 15: Access to the voting status

The tab “People” (Figure 16) is visible only to the Action Chair, the e-Vote initiator and the COST Association. It allows to see the voting progress of individuals and offers the possibility to send individual reminders. However, it should be taken into consideration that the e-Vote tool automatically sends three days before the closure of the e-Vote reminders to all those colleagues, who have still not voted.

The tab “Countries” (Figure 17) allows to follow the progress of the e-Vote per COST Full or Cooperating Member Country participating in the Action, calculating in accordance with Table 2 the country vote in dependence of the individual votes by the MC Members.

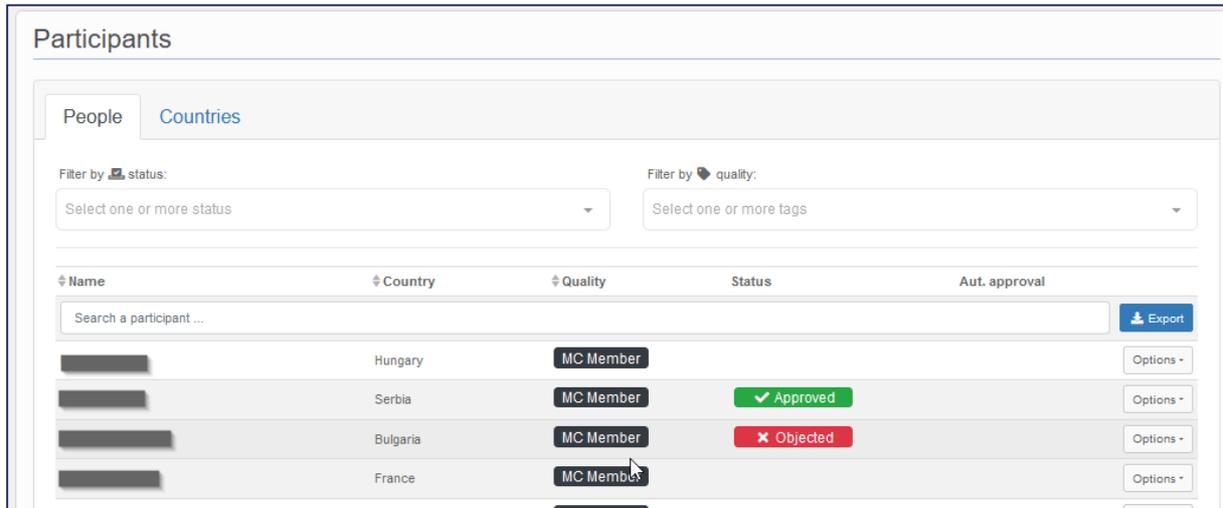


Figure 16: "People" view of the voting status

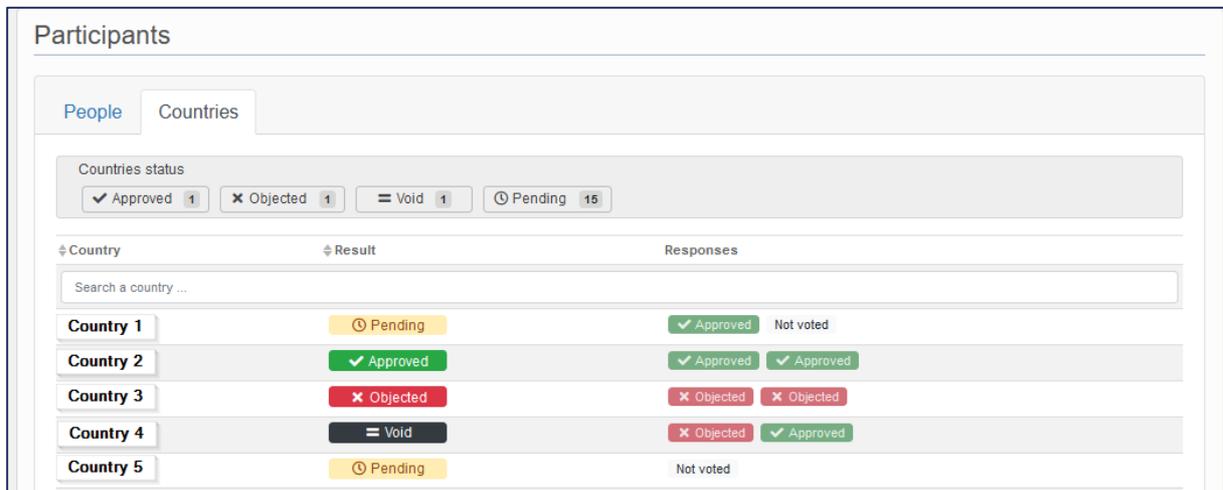


Figure 17: "Country" view of the voting status

6) RESULT OF AN E-VOTE

Upon reaching the end date as specified in the "Add vote" / "Edit vote" screen (Figure 4, Figure 10) the e-Vote will be closed, which means that nobody can vote anymore on the specific e-Vote. The overall outcome of the e-Vote is calculated according to the details displayed in Table 3: Overall outcome of the e-Vote in dependence of the votes of the COST Full or Cooperating Member Countries participating in the Action.. The Action Chair, the vote initiator, the MC Members, MC Substitutes, MC Observers and the Grant Holder manager receive an e-notification about the outcome of the e-Vote.

Simple majority of COST Countries voted	Overall Outcome
Approved	Approved
Objected	Objected
Void	Objected
Void & Objected	Objected

Table 3: Overall outcome of the e-Vote in dependence of the votes of the COST Full or Cooperating Member Countries participating in the Action.

Furthermore, the result of the e-Vote as well as other e-Votes, which may have taken place already, can be looked up in the "MC Decisions" list (Figure 18), which is accessible via the side menu (Figure 2).

MC Decisions						
Filter by  status:						
Select one or more status						
Title	Initiator	Type	Status	Result	Dates	
[Example text] Daily allowance decrease for 4th joint MC & WG meeting	Dr [redacted]	MC-Voting	Closed	Approved	24/11/2020 09:40 - 23/11/2020 12:59	View vote Options

Showing 1 total vote

Figure 18: Display of results in the "MC Decisions" overview list

The "View vote" button shows the content details of the e-Vote as well as its outcome (Figure 19)

View vote

☰ Details

MC-Voting
Closed
Approved

Description [Example text]
 For the 4th joint MC & WG meeting taking place in ABCD from 23 July 2020 to 25 July 2020 the Local Organiser was able to negotiate a reduced hotel rate of EUR YYY. Therefore, it is suggested to reduce the daily allowance from EUR ZZZ to EUR XXX. This would allow, given the current planning to invite N additional participants, preferably ECIs from COST Inclusiveness Target Countries, with attention for a better gender balance at the meeting (see also attached budget plan).

Start 24/11/2020 09:40
End 23/11/2020 12:59

Supporting documents [Example text] Budget plan for 4th MC&WG meeting [Download](#)

Vote

[Example text] The daily allowance for the 4th joint MC & WG meeting, ABCD, 23-25/7/2020 shall be reduced to EUR XXX

 Please note that **this vote was closed on:** **23/11/2020 12:59**

[Finish](#)

Figure 19: Details of a specific e-Vote, accessible via the "View vote" button.

Via "Voting status" in the drop-down menu under "Options" (Figure 15) it is possible for the Action Chair, MC Members, MC Substitutes and MC Observers as well as for the GH Manager and the COST Association to check how many COST Full or Cooperating Member Countries have either approved or objected the e-Vote, and how many have casted a void vote due to contradicting votes by its two MC Members (Figure 20).

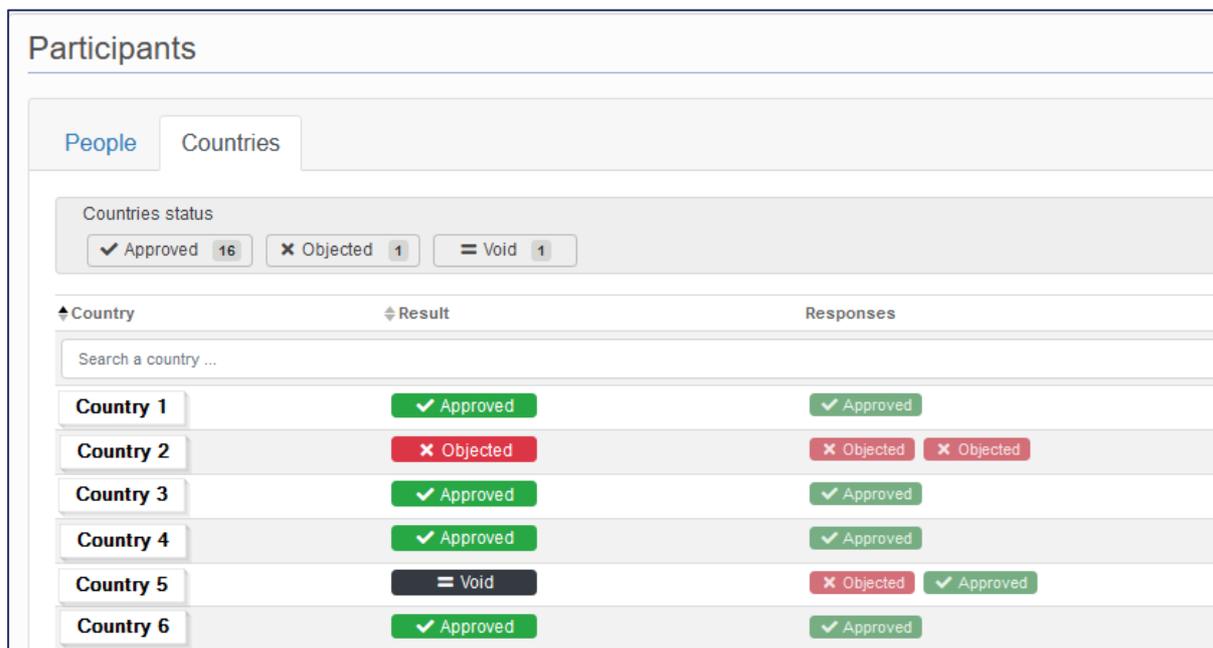


Figure 20: Voting results per country, accessible via "Voting status"

The voting in the "People" view provides the vote of each MC Member (Figure 21). This view is only accessible to the Action Chair, Vice Chair and the COST Association. The tick box in the column "Aut. Approval" (automatic approval) indicates that the respective MC Member has not cast their vote, which results in a tacit approval (Table 2).

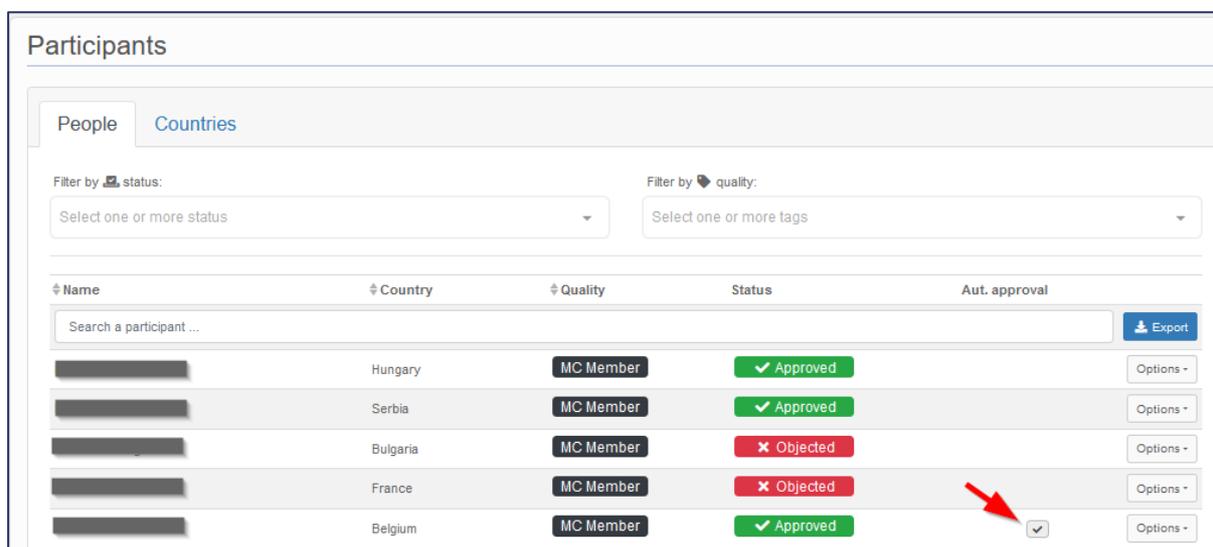


Figure 21: Voting result per MC Member

7) CANCELLATION OF AN E-VOTE

Where an e-Vote contradicts the COST rules and principles as laid out in the COST documents available on <https://www.cost.eu/funding/how-to-get-funding/documents-and-guidelines/> or where it contradicts the COST Policy on Excellence and Inclusiveness, it is possible to cancel an e-Vote independently of its status (draft, ready, running or closed).

This possibility to request the cancellation of an e-Vote is given only to the COST Association, here namely to Science Officers, and is accessible under "Options" (Figure 5). Upon validation of the cancellation request by the Head of Science Operations of the COST Association the e-Vote, its voting

result and the MC decision taken (if applicable) are declared null. In case of a running or closed e-Vote and e-notification will be sent to the Action Chair, Vice Chair, MC Members, Substitutes and Observers as well as to the Grant Holder manager. In case of an e-Vote in status “draft” or “ready”, only the e-Vote initiator gets notified. The cancellation of an e-Vote must be reported in the minutes of the next Management Committee Meeting.

8) DISCLAIMER

To establish the different screen shots for this user guide, it was needed to vary start and end date in order to cover the full process. Therefore, they may vary for the various screen shots.

The screen shots provided in this document display the e-Vote tool appearance at the date of establishment of this guide. As this tool as any other part of e-COST underlies constant maintenance, one may experience a slightly different appearances in e-COST, while the principal functionalities should remain available.