



PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

(prepared by the ECA Secretariat)

Background

At the 39/4 meeting of the Executive Committee (the ExCom) in September 2022, the Chairperson of the ECA presented a proposal of amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the ECA (the RoP). The Chairperson shared the proposal after the meeting with the Secretariat. The Secretariat shared the proposal for review with relevant REU officers and with the ExCom members.

The Secretariat has carefully revised the proposals and would like to share the following points for consideration:

1. Rule II/1

The RoP was amended in 2017 aiming at providing a clear guidance on the replacement of the Chairperson of the ECA in case of resignation. Introducing first and second Chairpersons was the suggestion of the ExCom at that time, as they saw the continuity of work ensured in such a way after one year of having discussed the different options also with the involvement of FAO LEG. It was emphasized at that time that the distinction of vice-chairs is key to ensure in case of resignation of the chair who is leading as the experience in the years before created difficulties. This suggestion was agreed by the ECA 2017 with the approval of the revised RoP.

Since the amendment of the RoP, there wasn't any opportunity to "test" how this rule works in practice, i.e. there were no need for the replacement of the Chair so far. We have to note here, that in the current composition of the ExCom, we have two equal vice-chairs, instead of having first and second vice-chairs, so the current RoP was not followed in this regard. The next elections at the 43rd ECA shall correct this mistake. Considering the above, the Secretariat would request the Executive Committee to reconsider the need for further adjusting the rule II/1 of the RoP and maintaining the current version.

2. Rule III/3

The ROP indicate that the Ex Com shall meet whenever the Commission holds a session. However, it does not indicate that it should be a formal meeting, leaving flexibility for the ExCom members to apply this rule according to their needs and possibilities.

Meeting of the ECA ExCom members in an informal modality back-to-back to the ECA used to be a good practice and provided opportunity to meet and exchange face-to-face, as ECA Ex-Com members are usually delegated to participate at the ECA. It is also beneficial as a kick-off for the – mostly virtual - joint work in the upcoming two years and for briefing the newly elected members of the ExCom on their responsibilities as ExCom members.

Considering that overall the ROPs – for all the different bodies of the organization - intend to provide a framework and not to regulate details, the Secretariat suggest to consider keeping this flexible rule in the RoP.

In the discussion at the meeting, the ExCom requested the Secretariat to present at the next meeting the timeline for the amendment of the RoP. The timeline for the amendment of the RoP of the ECA had been presented to the ExCom at the 38/5 meeting in December 2020 (document ECA_ExCom/38/5-6).¹ The same information, slightly corrected, is presented again in Annex 1.

The original proposal shared by the Chairperson is presented in the meeting document ExCom_39_5_4_Proposal_Amendment_RoP-MG.pdf.

The Secretariat has inserted the original Chairperson's proposals and one additional editorial change into the current text of the RoP (in track-change). This track-change text is presented in the document ExCom_39_5_4_RoP_Amendment_TC.docx.

The ExCom is invited to:

- discuss the proposed amendments to the RoP of the ECA, considering the Secretariat's comments
- note the timeline for the amendment of the RoP
- agree on the next steps.

¹ https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/reu/europe/documents/events2020/excom_38_5/38_5_6.pdf

Annex 1. The timeline for the amendment of the RoP

The table below presents stages of the process for the amendment or revision of the RoP of ECA, and their approximate timeframes.

| No. | Stage of the process | Timeframe |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | ExCom agrees on the need for a revision of the RoP, determines its scope and provides justification | January |
| 2. | ECA Secretariat drafts the revision of the RoP, prepares its track-change version, submits the proposed adjustment to FAO LEG for review, liaises and agrees with them on the adjustments, and presents it to the Director-General for review and consideration | February-April |
| 3. | The Secretariat, in agreement with the Chairperson of the Commission, puts the revision of the RoP on the agenda of the ECA Session (Rule V.1) | May |
| 4. | ECA Secretariat makes the draft revision of the RoP available to the Members of ECA at least 30 days prior to the Session of ECA, as a Session document (Rule V.7) | 31 August |
| 5. | ECA Session adopts the revision of the RoP by a two-thirds majority of its Members (Rule XII.1) | September/October |