

REPORT

**Bucharest, Romania
1-2 April 2014**

**European Commission
on Agriculture**

Thirty-eighth Session



Previous sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (known as the European Committee on Agricultural Technology from 1949 to 1952 and as the European Committee on Agriculture until 1956) are as follows:

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| 1. Preparatory Meeting | Paris, 27–28 June 1949 |
| 2. First Session | Rome, 26-30 September 1949 |
| 3. Second Session | Geneva, 27-30 March 1950 |
| 4. Third Session | Rome, 25-28 June 1951 |
| 5. Fourth Session | Rome, 3-6 June 1952 |
| 6. Fifth Session | Rome, 26-29 May 1953 |
| 7. Sixth Session | Rome, 14-18 June 1954 |
| 8. Seventh Session | Rome, 20-24 June 1955 |
| 9. Eighth Session | Rome, 7-11 May 1956 |
| 10. Ninth Session | Rome, 17-21 June 1957 |
| 11. Tenth Session | Rome, 19-23 May 1958 |
| 12. Eleventh Session | Rome, 25-29 May 1959 |
| 13. Twelfth Session | Rome, 15-19 May 1961 |
| 14. Thirteenth Session | Rome, 13-18 May 1963 |
| 15. Fourteenth Session | Rome, 17-21 May 1965 |
| 16. Fifteenth Session | Rome, 15-20 May 1967 |
| 17. Sixteenth Session | Rome, 23-26 October 1968 |
| 18. Seventeenth Session | Rome, 7-11 September 1970 |
| 19. Eighteenth Session | Rome, 8-12 May 1972 |
| 20. Nineteenth Session | Rome, 17-21 June 1974 |
| 21. Twentieth Session | Rome, 17-23 June 1976 |
| 22. Twenty-first Session | Rome, 19-23 June 1978 |
| 23. Twenty-second Session | Rome, 23-27 June 1980 |
| 24. Twenty-third Session | Rome, 21-25 June 1982 |
| 25. Twenty-fourth Session | Innsbruck, Austria, 18-22 June 1984 |
| 26. Twenty-fifth Session | Chania, Greece, 8-12 June 1987 |
| 27. Twenty-sixth Session | Porto, Portugal, 23-26 May 1989 |
| 28. Twenty-seventh Session | Herrsching, Germany, 1-5 July 1991 |
| 29. Twenty-eighth Session | Valletta, Malta, 27 September – 1 October 1993 |
| 30. Twenty-ninth Session | Bled, Slovenia, 2-6 October 1995 |
| 31. Thirtieth Session | Nitra, Slovakia, 8-11 October 1997 |
| 32. Thirty-first Session | Rome, 12-14 October 1999 |
| 33. Thirty-second Session | Rome, 7-8 March 2002 |
| 34. Thirty-third Session | Rome, 1-2 March 2004 |
| 35. Thirty-fourth Session | Riga, Latvia, 7 June 2006 |
| 36. Thirty-fifth Session | Innsbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008 |
| 37. Thirty-sixth Session | Yerevan, Armenia, 11-12 May 2010 |
| 38. Thirty-seventh Session | Baku, Azerbaijan, 17-18 April 2012 |

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirty-eighth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held in Bucharest, Romania on 1-2 April 2014.
2. Representatives from 46 member countries and one member organization participated in the ECA session. Observers from four United Nations member states, eight civil society organizations, and three intergovernmental organizations were in attendance, as well as three representatives from the private sector.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

3. Mr Balázs Hamar, Chair of the European Commission on Agriculture opened the 38th Session of the ECA and welcomed the delegates of the ECA session. He thanked the Government of Romania for hosting the ECA. He reiterated that the ECA serves the European Regional Conference (ERC) as a technical preparation meeting.
4. Mr Daniel Constantin, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania, welcomed the delegates of the 38th Session of the ECA and noted that the topics to be discussed are very pertinent for the Region
5. On behalf of FAO, Mr Vladimir Rakhmanin, Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and expressed his gratitude to the Government of Romania for its hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Session. This was supported by all delegations. He reminded delegates of the diverse nature of the region and stressed the need to learn from each other's experiences. He thanked the members for supporting the transformation process that FAO is going through under the guidance of the Director-General, which focuses on results, demand driven work and further decentralization.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Commission adopted its Agenda as given in Appendix A of this Report.

APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

7. Ms Hedwig Wögerbauer (Austria) and Mr Damien Kelly (Ireland) were appointed as rapporteurs of the ECA.

PRIORITIES FOR FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION¹

8. The Thirty-eighth Session of the European Commission of Agriculture (ECA) considered the report on Priorities for FAO Activities in the Europe and Central Asia Region, covering achievements in 2012-13 and the proposals for 2014-15 and beyond.

¹ ERC/14/7 Rev. 1

9. The Commission:

- a) appreciated the major actions carried out by FAO to address the regional priorities during the 2012-13 biennium, including actions taken in response to the recommendations of the previous Session;
- b) took note of the lessons learned from this experience, particularly the pilot regional initiative on agrarian structures in 2013;
- c) endorsed the relevance of the existing regional priorities for FAO's work in the region also for 2014-15, noting the close alignment of regional priorities with FAO's new Strategic Objectives;
- d) supported the two Regional Initiatives: i) Empowering small holders and family farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction; and ii) Agri-food trade and regional integration, as a means to further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and for resource mobilization within the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-2015 and the Medium-Term Plan 2014-2017. FAO's work on trade-related issues in the region requires a cautious and balanced approach.
- e) supported the other major areas of work in the region; including: i) control of animal disease, plant pests and food safety hazards and emergencies; ii) natural resource management including fisheries and forestry, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as iii) conservation of plant and animal genetic resources for sustainable use;
- f) emphasized FAO's important role as a neutral and inclusive forum for policy discussions and technical advice based on sound knowledge;
- g) underlined the need for continuity in the strategic direction and leadership of the Organization in order to realize the full impact of the reviewed Strategic Framework;
- h) appreciated the substantial increase in extra-budgetary funds utilized for implementation during 2012-13 and emphasized the need to mobilize additional resources in the region to implement the Regional Initiatives and the Country Programming Frameworks, including their finalization. The Commission stressed that all extra-budgetary funds should be used in line with the new Strategic Framework and the Regional Priorities;
- i) looked forward to being kept informed of resource allocations and achievements in the region during the course of the biennium;
- j) called on FAO to concentrate on the identified focus countries and ensure efficient use of resources by working together with other organizations, civil society and building public private partnerships;
- k) requested that FAO address food security more prominently, including food security assessments, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to adequate Food in the context of National Food Security and recalled the importance of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security

l) Stressed the importance of capacity development of all actors along the value chain, including vulnerable groups, women and rural youth, and making documents and material available in the Russian language.

BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND FAIR VALUE CHAINS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: COOPERATIVES AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES²

10. The Commission considered mechanisms to build inclusive and fair value chains in the Region that include smallholder farming and increasing the income of small farms.

11. The Commission:

- a) encouraged FAO to provide legislative policy advice on cooperatives and to develop the capacities of farmers, processors, politicians and other relevant stakeholders in relation to cooperatives and their benefits, with the ultimate goal of building sustainable value chains in Europe and Central Asia;
- b) noted the difficulties related to developing cooperatives and Members' experience in overcoming these difficulties;
- c) encouraged FAO to collaborate with the private sector, successful cooperative movements, and countries with long standing experience in the development of different types of cooperatives.

AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS FOR BETTER NUTRITION IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA³

12. The Commission examined how agriculture and food systems in Europe and Central Asia affect nutrition outcomes, as well as how agri-food policies can be shaped to ensure better nutrition in the region.

13. The Commission:

- a) noted that the discussion paper provides a good overview of the challenges faced by member countries in the area of nutrition;
- b) supported the policies presented to improve the nutritional impact of food systems in the region and highlighted the need for multisectoral and interdisciplinary approaches;
- c) noted that the predominant nutrition related issues in the region are obesity and malnutrition, although undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are still a problem in some countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and in relation to undernutrition highlighted that particular attention should be given to prenatal balanced diets and postnatal feeding practices;
- d) recommended that consumer policies and appropriate nutrition labeling, which enable consumers to make informed decisions, should be developed as outlined in the ECA document, which should facilitate citizens staying healthy and well-nourished

² ECA 38/14/2 REV 1

³ ECA 38/14/3

e) considered the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of National Food Security as a suitable framework for the assessment of nutrition issues in the region;

f) disagreed with the statement that industries which produce fast food and soft drinks “may provide cheap nutrients that contribute to the alleviation of under-nutrition”.

TOWARDS RISK-BASED DROUGHT MANAGEMENT IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA⁴

14. The Commission considered the current and future challenges related to increasing the resilience of livelihoods to droughts in Europe and Central Asia.

15. The Commission:

a) stressed the need to develop and implement policies, strategies and action plans on drought risk management at national and river basin levels;

b) noted that agriculture, as a major user of water resources, is the sector that is most vulnerable to drought;

c) highlighted the need for targeted investments and strategically planned and implemented measures for reducing drought risks, combating land degradation and coping with water scarcity (e.g. modernization of irrigation systems), which would contribute to food security and support environmental benefits.

d) agreed with the conclusions and the way-forward presented in the paper, supported better integration of drought risk management and climate change aspects and multi-sectoral collaboration for effective drought management policies, and welcomed closer co-operation in the Region on drought related issues;

e) encouraged FAO and other organizations to collaborate effectively in supporting national and regional capacity development programmes and to participate actively in regional platforms dealing with drought monitoring and early warning systems (e.g. European Drought Observatory);

f) welcomed the support offered by research partners to increase the use of the scientific progress in drought monitoring and impact assessment, particularly in agriculture and related sectors.

A FOCUS ON GENDER STATISTICS IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL SECTOR: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES AND THE REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS FUTURE⁵

16. The Commission took note of the results of the country gender assessment conducted in the Region (i.e. Albania, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova) and:

a) recognized that the lack of rural/agricultural sex-disaggregated data (SDD) is an obstacle for effective work in the Region, which leads to sub-optimal planning, implementation and

⁴ ECA 38/14/4

⁵ ECA 38/14/5 and ECA 38/14/6

evaluation. In light of this, member states should be encouraged to develop capacities in SDD to better collect, disseminate and analyse relevant agri-rural data;

b) strongly supported the mainstreaming of gender in all activities;

c) strongly noted the existing gender gap in access to land, resources and extension services;

d) recognized the need to have targeted training for women involved in the agricultural sector;

17. As requested at its 37th Session and as follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, the Commission considered an alternative mechanism to the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) and:

a) supported the alternative approach proposed by the Secretariat for mainstreaming gender activities in the Region in an efficient and cost-effective manner within FAO's new Strategic Framework, in which gender features as a cross-cutting theme across all Objectives;

b) endorsed the abolition of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development;

c) supported the new regional gender-focal point network and its composition and encouraged its strengthening and enlargement, including involving other ministries and institutions in addition to the Ministries of Agriculture.

FUTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE⁶

18. As requested by the 146th Session of the FAO Council as follow-up to the Evaluation of the FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia, the Commission reviewed proposals for the organization of sessions of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) and the European Commission on Agriculture.

19. The Commission:

a) endorsed the proposal of the Secretariat to hold the ECA and the ERC sessions separately in alternate years with the ECA being held at least six months in advance of the ERC in order to enhance the ECA preparatory activities and technical support in preparation for the ERC;

b) agreed to hold the next session of the ECA in 2015 at the seat of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and to review the situation after this session without prejudging any future locations, in order to determine whether the objectives to revitalize the ECA have been achieved;

c) requested that the Secretariat provide at the ECA in 2015 a report with financial data comparing the costs of holding the ECA in Budapest, Rome and Ankara.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

⁶ ERC/14/9

20. The Commission elected Ms Natalie Feistritz as Chair of the Executive Committee for a period of four years.
21. Mr Vasily Lavrovskiy was re-elected for a third term of two years while the new members elected are:
- Mr Siim Tidemann
 - Mr Damien Kelly
 - Mr Mirosław Drygas
 - Ms Marietta Okenkova and
 - Mr Hilmi Erin Dedeoglu.
22. The Chair of the ECA thanked the outgoing members of the Executive Committee, Ms Marina Calvino, Ms Makbule Koçak, Mr Fuad Farzalibayov and Mr Hans-Jörg Lehmann for their intensive collaboration in the Executive Committee over the past years.
23. The Commission thanked the outgoing Chair, Mr Balázs Hamar, for his dedication and efforts to re-invigorate the ECA.

OTHER BUSINESS

24. No other business was discussed.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

25. The thirty-ninth session of the Commission will be held in Budapest in 2015 with the date to be determined by the Executive Committee in collaboration with REU.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS PRESENTED BY THE RAPPORTEUR

26. An oral summary of the conclusions was presented by the Rapporteurs on the deliberations of the debate regarding Items 3-11. The summary was endorsed by the Commission.

Appendix A

AGENDA

Opening of the Session

1. **Adoption of the Agenda for decision (ECA 38/14/1 Rev. 2)**
2. **Appointment of the Rapporteur for decision**
3. **Priorities for FAO Activities in the Region for discussion as preparation for the 29th ERC (ERC/14/7 Rev. 1)**

The item will consider how FAO activities have addressed previously agreed regional priorities during 2012-13, and will provide guidance on areas of regional priority for 2014-15 and 2016-17 for consideration by the 29th Session of the ERC. The members will be informed on the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-19, Medium-Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15 approved by the FAO Conference in June 2013; priorities and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions; a synthesis of Country Programming Frameworks; and the plans and priorities of partners, such as Regional Economic Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector. The document will take into consideration the consultation process with member countries regarding the priorities in the Region prior to the ERC.

4. **Building inclusive and fair value chains in Europe and Central Asia: Cooperatives and their alternatives for discussion and decision (ECA 38/14/2 Rev. 1)**

The agenda item was proposed by the 28th Regional Conference for Europe 2012. The purpose of the item is to provide information on how to build value chains in the Region that include smallholder farming and raise the incomes of small farms. Typically, the farm-processor or farm-green market value chain is handled (1) by private intermediaries, (2) by farmer cooperative groups, (3) by direct contracting by processors or (4) by individual farmers bringing their produce to market or to the processor. The intention of the study is to propose how the first three alternative mechanisms can be made more farmer-friendly, in order to both include small farmers in the value chain and to maintain a good bargaining position for farmers in that chain. The analysis will also consider cross-cutting issues, such as gender and its implications. Cooperatives are not an end in themselves. They are more a tool for achieving a more inclusive food value chain and increased rural incomes for small farmers. The background documentation will provide policy recommendations for member countries, as well as proposals. It is expected that member countries review the recommendations for consideration by the 29th Session of the ERC.

5. **Agri-Food Systems for Better Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia for discussion and decision (ECA 38/14/3)**

The agenda item was suggested by the 28th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe-2012. *Agri-Food Systems for Better Nutrition* will examine how agriculture and food systems in Europe and Central Asia affect nutrition outcomes, as well as how agri-food policies can be shaped to ensure better nutrition in the region. The analysis will refer to the 2013 SOFA report. It will assess the economic and social costs of malnutrition, describe the relationship between nutrition outcomes and development in the Region, and provide the framework for a discussion of policies to address the “triple burden” of malnutrition in the Region. The document will prepare recommendations for the member countries’ discussions and consideration. It is expected that member countries review the recommendations for consideration by the 29th Session of the ERC.

6. Towards risk-based drought management in Europe and Central Asia *for discussion and decision (ECA 38/14/4)*

A shift from a reactive crisis management to a more pro-active risk management approach would increase societal resilience to drought, but governments continue to respond to droughts in a reactive mode. Formulating and adopting effective drought policies is the way forward and, during the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (Geneva, March 2013), Heads of State and Government representatives invited FAO to assist governments in the development of National Drought Management Policies and their implementation. In collaboration with Headquarters, the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia is currently conducting a national drought situation analysis (drought characterization and management) in each country. The regional synthesis will be used to develop guidelines on drought preparedness (adapted to Central Asia). Member countries will have the opportunity to review these guidelines and recommendations during the discussion under this agenda item. It is expected that member countries review the recommendations for consideration by the 29th Session of the ERC.

7. A focus on gender statistics in the agricultural and rural sector: progress and challenges and the Review of the Work of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development and its future *for discussion and decision (ECA 38/14/5 and ECA 38/14/6)*

Gender statistics in agriculture are crucial to understand the gender gaps that may undermine agricultural productivity and/or sustainability. Gender statistics enable decision-makers to develop evidence-based, gender-sensitive policies taking into account women's contribution to rural development and food security. In addition, they are essential to monitor and evaluate the impacts of policies on livelihoods of women and men.

This paper builds upon past work of FAO on gender statistics and gender-specific information. A core set of gender indicators in agriculture was identified by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and endorsed at the ERC 2012. This was followed by a joint exercise (REU and FAO Statistics Division -ESS) to take stock of the sex-disaggregated data (SDD) collected and reported/analyzed by the agricultural censuses in different focus countries. Moreover, country gender assessments have been carried out to guide the work of REU on gender mainstreaming by identifying the main gender issues in selected focus countries - particularly with regards to the priorities adopted by the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs).

In light of the findings of the analysis of the census questionnaires and of the gender assessments in Albania and Armenia, the current paper examines whether sufficient SDD is being collected and analyzed, highlighting the gaps between the collected and actually reported/analyzed SDD. The paper also provides practical suggestions on reporting/dissemination SDD in agriculture and rural sector through an example of Gender Leaflet produced from agri-census data. The member countries will be invited to discuss what aspects of rural gender issues are not being captured and/or reported in the census questionnaire, as well as adequate ways to ensure coverage of missing data.

The secretariat will prepare a proposal for the future work of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development. It is expected that member countries review the recommendations for consideration by the 29th Session of the ERC.

8. Future Organization of the European Commission on Agriculture *for discussion and decision (ERC/14/9)*

Following the evaluation of the European Region and the discussion of the evaluation report in the programme and finance committee, the Council requested that the European Region discuss governance issues at the next European Regional Conference in April 2014 in Bucharest, Romania. Particular emphasis has been given to the role of the European Commission on Agriculture. Based on the evaluation for the European Region and given the interest in a dedicated technical body for the Region, the ECA's technical role should be reinvigorated. The

item will discuss a proposal presented by the secretariat for the future organization of the ECA, which has been subject of discussions in the Executive Committee meetings of the ECA. The results of the discussion will be then also presented to the ERC for its endorsement.

- 9. Election of members of the Executive Committee *for decision***
- 10. Other Business**
- 11. Date and Place of the Thirty-ninth Session**
- 12. Summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur ⁷**

Closing of the Session

⁷ In line with para. 32 of the Report of the 33rd Session, the drafting of the final report is entrusted to the Secretariat and the Rapporteur. The Rapporteur will make an oral presentation of the outcome of the session to the 29th FAO Regional Conference for Europe and main conclusions and recommendations on items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 will be submitted to the Regional Conference as LIM documents for endorsement.

Appendix B**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

ECA 38/14/1 Rev. 2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ECA 38/14/2 Rev 1	Agricultural Cooperatives in Eurasia
ECA 38/14/3	Agri-Food Systems for Better Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia
ECA 38/14/4	Towards risk-based drought management in Europe and Central Asia
ECA 38/14/5	The Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW): An alternative way forward
ECA 38/14/6	The Gender Gap in Agriculture in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Results of Recent Country Rural Gender Assessments
ERC/14/7 Rev 1	Priorities for FAO Activities in the Region
ERC/14/9	Overview of FAO Governance in the Region: Proposals for the organization of the Regional Conference for Europe and the European Commission on Agriculture

INF SERIES

ECA 38/14//INF/1 Rev.2	Provisional Timetable
ECA 38/14/INF/2 Rev 1	Provisional List of Documents
ECA 38/14/INF/3	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Union (EU) and its Member States