

REPORT

Innsbruck, Austria
25 June 2008

European Commission
on Agriculture

Thirty-fifth Session

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

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

Report of the

Thirty-fifth Session of the

European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

Innsbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Budapest, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirty-fifth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held in Innsbruck, Austria, on 25 June 2008 under the Chairpersonship of Mr Jean-Jacques Soula (France).
2. The List of Participants is given in Appendix I to this Report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

3. The Chairperson opened the Session and recalled that the Session was taking place within the context of a revised mandate, as adopted by the 119th Session of the FAO Council, and its new role as a technical preparatory meeting for the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC). He also recalled that the technical items of the Agenda, particularly Items 4 and 5 had been defined by the European Regional Group and that a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the Session would be submitted to the 26th FAO Regional Conference for Europe meeting the following day.

4. On behalf of FAO, Ms Maria Kadlecikova, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Austria for its hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Session. She emphasized the importance of Agenda Items 4, 5 and 6, for the European and Central Asian rural sector, stressing that knowledge exchange and relevant capacity-building were major areas where FAO was offering technical assistance in the Region. Moreover, FAO's engagement in the Delivery as One initiative within the United Nations System reform as well as in strengthening the work of the three Rome-based agencies in the Region was considered important for enhancing FAO's contribution to the reform process. Furthermore, the activities of the ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development would be an important contribution to rural development in the Region.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Commission adopted its Agenda, as given in Appendix II to this Report. In this connection, the Chairperson indicated that considering the fact that the duration of the Commission's Session had been reduced to one day, time constraints might not allow for the Commission to adopt its Report. The Commission therefore endorsed the Chairperson's proposal that, if necessary, and depending on the timing of the Commission's debate, at the conclusion of Item 10 of its Agenda, the Commission would suspend its Session for approximately one hour in order to allow the Rapporteur to draft a summary of the conclusions of the day's deliberations on which he/she would seek the Commission's endorsement. In view of time limitations, this summary of conclusions would be prepared in English only. The summary would form the basis of an oral report to be made to the 26th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe by the Commission's Rapporteur during the afternoon of the subsequent day (26 June 2008).

APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

6. Ms Agnes van der Hoeven-van Ardenne (Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations in Rome) was appointed Rapporteur of the Session.

THE ROLE OF FAO IN KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION¹

7. This Item was introduced by Mr Anton Mangstl, Director of the Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building Division (KCE), FAO Headquarters. He underlined that development of a knowledge management strategy was under consideration in order to better coordinate and implement FAO's knowledge-based activities. Attention was also being directed towards enhancing the flow of knowledge and information between Western European countries and the Economies in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
8. The Commission welcomed the document and recognized the important role of FAO as a knowledge organization. Emphasis was given to the view of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE), that the role of FAO in knowledge exchange and capacity-building was the strongest comparative advantage of the Organization, particularly for Europe and Central Asia countries.
9. The Commission underlined that a significant amount of knowledge input was dependent on the activities of Member Nations and involvement of the private sector. Therefore, the Commission encouraged the continuation of the progress made by FAO in the field of knowledge exchange and capacity-building in the Region, especially in collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating agriculture-related information and the gradual transformation towards a more active form of knowledge management.
10. Member Nations noted the use of best practices in knowledge exchange programmes and stressed the importance of subregional collaboration. Particularly, special attention to multilingual information tools and portals and the FAO-supported information exchange projects was welcomed.
11. The Commission stressed that an important development was the exchange of knowledge and information between developed countries of the European Union and countries in transition in the European Region including the five Central Asia countries covered by the Subregional Office in Ankara, and urged that FAO play a leading role both as a facilitator of this exchange and as a provider of knowledge.
12. It was noted that WAICENT had been successful in facilitating digital access to multilingual information on agriculture and rural issues, and that the information exchange platforms such as AgroWeb could serve as important models for successful cooperation. Emphasis was given to the importance of the availability of remote editing and updating of Web information through the management of centralized collaboration platforms and other research networks as in the case of ESCORENA. Information exchange platforms and networks could serve as a good example for the promotion of international collaboration including the strengthening of the activities of NGOs and the empowerment of civil society in potential unstable regions within Europe and Central Asia.
13. Member Nations opted for adjusting FAO's work to the new institutional model and for adopting a more integrated approach with special emphasis on action.
14. The Commission endorsed the following recommendations:
- a) FAO should strengthen capacity-building and development skills on the basis of the assessed needs of individual countries;
 - b) Capacity-building programmes should be prepared on the basis of documented good practices and private sector experience;

¹ ECA/35/08/2

- c) The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia should take a leading role by enhancing the cooperation of regional universities and research institutions as well as in facilitating and improving the work of extension service staff in member countries;
- d) FAO should also consider twinning arrangements in the distribution of information and in knowledge exchange;
- e) The local knowledge exchange system in the Region should therefore focus on local focal points, and local scientists and information experts in order to incorporate good practices from the past in the Region and to identify local/regional centres of expertise.

FAO's ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REFORMS²

15. The Item was introduced by Mr Raimund Jehle, ECA Secretary, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. He outlined that following the launch of the report of the High-Level Panel (HLP) on UN System-wide Coherence in November 2006, and particularly the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE), the collaboration of FAO within the “*Delivering as One*” initiative was considered important. This was particularly related to the strengthening of collaboration among the three Rome-based agencies: (FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) as a major contribution to enhancing FAO's input in the United Nations System reform process.

16. The Commission highlighted that the United Nations System of operational activities was perceived as unique in its mandate that included poverty and hunger eradication, sustainable development, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation and peace building. The active role of FAO in the United Nations reform process together with the ongoing reform process based on the findings of the IEE was welcomed and considered essential in order to reinforce the role of food security and agriculture in the multilateral system.

17. Member Nations stressed that FAO has a strong comparative advantage in key areas of its activities, particularly in the provision of basic global data, and statistics; support in defining policies, adapted to the situation of each country; work in emergencies and rehabilitation and in determining standards; and support for global conventions on agricultural issues and food safety.

18. The Commission highlighted that FAO was envisaged as a key partner and the reference point in the United Nations System in the field of sustainable agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. The United Nations reform process was considered as an opportunity to further increase cooperation among the three Rome-based United Nations agencies including Bioversity International, and to combine their respective comparative advantages and complementarities, wherever possible.

19. Member Nations recognized the progress made in identifying areas of collaboration among the three agencies although further efforts should be made in the light of new emerging needs, for instance with increasing food prices in rural areas.

20. The Commission endorsed the list of recommendations as outlined in paragraphs 41 and 42 of the document ECA 35/08/3 which were then to be forwarded to the Regional Conference for Europe.

² ECA/35/08/3

STATUS OF THE ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT³

21. The Item was introduced by Mr Tomasz Lonc, Secretary of the Regional Conference for Europe, Subregional Office for Europe and Central Asia. He drew attention to the unique platform that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) offered in the Europe and Central Asia Region since it was the only FAO statutory body in the European Region which specifically addressed gender issues. He also outlined actions to improve the themes and organization of the expert meetings (EMs).

22. The Commission unanimously recognized that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development was an important forum due to it being the only statutory body addressing gender issues in the Region. It emphasized the important commitments undertaken by FAO as part of the United Nations System to mainstream gender into projects and policies.

23. The Commission supported the continuation of the WPW activities. However there was disagreement regarding the funding resources to be used for the continuation of the activities. It was noted that the availability of non-staff resources from the Regular Programme, the multi-donor trust fund and the provision of a Junior Technical Officer financed by Hungary would contribute to the revival and expansion of the WPW activities.

24. Some Member Nations supported the proposal to focus the WPW Sessions and Expert Meetings on selected priority areas and, specifically, to shorten their duration.

25. The Commission welcomed the possibility of enhancing communication by approaching institutions and ministries beyond the Ministry of Agriculture.

26. Member Nations underlined the importance of FAO's involvement in gender focused rural development projects and activities in the Central and Eastern European subregion and requested the expansion towards Central Asian countries.

27. The Commission requested the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development to take advantage of the introduction of the Russian language as one of the official languages of FAO since this would open up further opportunities for many people.

28. The Commission endorsed the conclusion and recommendation of the Chairperson that a special ECA WPW meeting should be convened by the end of 2008 in Rome to review and make recommendations on WPW matters recognizing the importance of gender issues in agricultural and rural areas in the European Region. This meeting should be organized by the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in order to review the form and organization of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, and propose measures for improvements, including better communication between the WPW, the ECA and the WPW Secretariat in the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.

ADOPTION OF REVISED RULES OF PROCEDURE⁴

29. The Chairperson recalled that at its 34th Session in 2006, the Commission requested the Executive Committee to review the Rules of Procedure of the ECA adopted at its 29th Session in 1995, in order to reflect the increase of Member Nations and to increase the composition of the Executive Committee. In addition, the Chairperson recalled that an amendment to Rule VIII was requested to reflect the actual reporting practice that the summary of conclusions were orally presented by the Rapporteur and the report prepared by the Secretariat.

30. The Commission endorsed the revision of the Rules of Procedure regarding Rule III and Rule VIII as presented in the document ECA 35/08/5, increasing the members of the Executive

³ ECA/35/08/4

⁴ ECA/35/08/5

Committee to six and allowing the preparation of summary conclusions instead of a draft report where necessary.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR A TERM OF OFFICE OF FOUR YEARS (2008-2011) AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

31. In accordance with Rule III of its Rules of Procedure, the Commission unanimously elected Mr Zohrab V. Malek, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to FAO, as Chairperson of the ECA for a term of four years. Ms Daniela Rotondaro, Permanent Representative of the Republic of San Marino to FAO was elected unanimously as Vice-Chairperson for a term of four years.

32. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for another term of two years, not eligible for re-election:

- Ms Daniela Moyzesová (Czech Republic)
- Mr Soren Skafte (Denmark)
- Ms Rita Mannella (Italy)

33. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for up to one additional two-year term:

- Russian Federation (the name of the person replacing Mr Vershinin would be provided to the Chairperson in due course)

34. The Commission unanimously elected the following new members to the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for two additional two-year terms:

- Mr Emmanuel Manoussakis (Greece)
- Mr Fazil Düsünceli (Turkey)

DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

35. The Chairperson informed the Commission that the proposal made by the Republic of Armenia during the Thirty-fourth Session to host the Thirty-sixth Session of the ECA together with the 27th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan, Armenia, had been endorsed by the Director-General of FAO. The Session would continue to meet back-to-back with the Regional Conference for Europe.

36. The Commission took note of the proposal of the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the Thirty-seventh Session of the ECA and the 28th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe in 2012 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OR SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS PRESENTED BY THE RAPPORTEUR

37. The presentation of the summary of conclusions by the Rapporteur on the deliberations of the debate regarding Items 4, 5 and 6 was unanimously endorsed by the Commission.

CLOSING OF THE SESSION

38. In closing the Session, the Chairperson warmly thanked the Austrian authorities (Ministries and services, the Tyrol Region and the City of Innsbruck). He also thanked all the participants for their contribution. In particular, he expressed appreciation to those

Member Nations that had sent delegations from their capitals. Furthermore, he thanked on his own behalf and that of the Commission, the outgoing members of the Executive Committee. He also warmly welcomed the newly-elected Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission and the new members of the Executive Committee and wished them every success in guiding the Commission's future activities. In addition, he expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat for the support provided during his four-year term as Chairperson. The Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia thanked the participants for their contribution, and welcomed the lively debate, fruitful discussions and excellent recommendations for endorsement by the Regional Conference for Europe

**APPENDIX I
ANNEXE I
APÉNDICE**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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**APPENDIX II
ANNEXE II
APÉNDICE II****AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Appointment of Rapporteur
4. The role of FAO in knowledge exchange and capacity building in the Europe and Central Asia Region
5. FAO's Engagement in the United Nations System Reforms
6. Status of the ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development
7. Adoption of revised Rules of Procedure
8. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for a term of office of four years (2008-2011) and election of members of the Executive Committee
9. Other Business
10. Date and Place of the Thirty-sixth Session
11. Adoption of the Report or summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur
12. Closing of the Session

