

February 2008



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
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Organisation  
des  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
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## EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

### Thirty-fifth Session

Innbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008

### RULES OF PROCEDURE

*The Rules of Procedure of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) have been reissued taking into account the amendments agreed upon by the Commission at its previous Sessions.*

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Rule I      Membership

1. Membership in the European Commission on Agriculture is open to Member Nations of the European Region of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as "the Organization") in accordance with the provisions of Article IV, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the Organization. The Commission shall comprise such eligible Member Nations as have notified the Director-General of their desire to be considered as Members.

2. Each Member of the Commission shall communicate to the Director-General the name of its representative who should, as far as possible, participate in the sessions of the Commission in a continuing capacity and have responsibilities related to the formulation or implementation of national agricultural policy in his country.

Rule II      Officers

1. The Commission shall elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among the representatives. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be elected for a term of office of four years and shall not be eligible for re-election thereafter, provided that the Vice-Chairman shall be eligible for election as Chairman. Elections shall take place at the end of a regular session.

2. The Chairman, or in his absence the Vice-Chairman, shall preside at the sessions of the Commission and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Commission.

3. The Commission may elect one or more rapporteurs from among the representatives.

4. The Director-General shall appoint from among the officers of the Organization a Secretary who shall be administratively responsible to him.

Rule III      Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman of the Commission as *ex officio* members and *(five)* **six** other members elected by the Commission from among the representatives. The term of office of the elected members shall be for a period of two years and they shall be eligible for re-election for up to two additional two-year terms. Elections shall take place at the end of a regular session. In order to ensure both rotation of members and continuity of service, when electing members of the Executive Committee, due consideration shall be given to the desirability of replacing no more than *(three)* **four** members at the same time, and avoiding that the **overall** term of office of an individual, **irrespective of the nature of his/her mandate, should exceed eight years.**

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2. The Chairman of the Commission shall preside over the Executive Committee. In his absence, the Vice-Chairman shall preside at the meetings of the Executive Committee and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate the work of the Executive Committee.

3. The Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Commission between sessions of the Commission, of which it is the executive body. In particular, it shall submit to the Commission proposals concerning the general orientation of the Commission's activities and its programme of work; it shall investigate particular problems and help to ensure implementation of the programme approved by the Commission. It shall periodically inform all Members of the Commission, through the Director-General, of any decisions taken. Such decisions shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission at its next session. The Director-General may convene the Executive Committee as often as required, after consulting with the Chairman. The Executive Committee shall meet whenever the Commission holds a session.

4. The Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies established by the Commission may be invited by the Chairman of the Commission to participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee for consultation regarding the coordination of activities. The Members of the Executive Committee may attend in this capacity the meetings of the subsidiary bodies.

5. When the Executive Committee deals with special problems, its Chairman may, in agreement with the Vice-Chairman, invite the representatives of not more than two Members of the Commission to attend in an advisory capacity the meetings of the Committee at which such special problems are considered.

#### Rules IV      Sessions

1. The Commission shall hold one regular session every two years. Special sessions may be convened at the request of a majority of the Members of the Commission or when considered necessary by the Director-General.

2. The sessions of the Commission and of the Executive Committee shall be convened, and the place where they are to be held shall be determined, by the Director-General, in agreement with the Chairman of the Commission.

3. Notice of the date and place of each session shall be communicated to the Members of the Commission at least 60 days before the session.

4. Subject to the provisions of Rule VII, Paragraph 3, of these Rules, the Director-General may invite international organizations to attend sessions of the Commission in an observer capacity.

5. Each Member of the Commission shall have one representative who may be accompanied by an alternate and advisers. The alternate and advisers shall not have the right to vote except when substituting the representative.
6. Meetings of the Commission shall be held in public unless the Commission decides otherwise.
7. A majority of the representatives shall constitute a quorum.

Rule V      Agenda

1. The Director-General, in agreement with the Chairman of the Commission, after having examined all proposals of the Executive Committee, shall prepare a provisional agenda for each session.
2. The first item of the provisional agenda shall be the adoption of the agenda.
3. Any Member of the Commission may request the Director-General, at least three months before the opening of the session, to include specific items in the provisional agenda.
4. The provisional agenda shall be circulated by the Director-General to all Members of the Commission at least 60 days before the opening of the session.
5. Any Members of the Commission, and the Director-General, may, after the dispatch of the provisional agenda, propose the inclusion of specific items in the agenda with respect to matters of an urgent nature. These items shall be placed on a supplementary list which, if time permits before the opening of the session, shall be dispatched by the Director-General to all Members of the Commission, failing which the items shall be communicated to the Chairman for submission to the Commission.
6. By a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, the Commission may amend the agenda it has adopted by deleting or modifying certain items or by adding new items; but it may not withdraw from the agenda matters referred to it by the Conference or the Council of the Organization.
7. Documents for the session of the Commission shall be sent by the Director-General to the Members of the Commission and the other Member Nations of the Organization attending the session, as well as to the non-Member States and international organizations invited to the session, at the time the agenda is dispatched or at the latest 30 days before the opening of the session, failing which the item of the agenda to which such documents refer shall not be considered at that session of the Commission except in cases of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 5 and 6 of this Rule.

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Rule VI      Voting and procedure

1. Each Member of the Commission shall have one vote.
2. Decisions of the Commission shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast.
3. Any Member of the Commission may request a roll-call vote, in which case the vote of each Member shall be recorded.
4. The Commission may decide to vote by secret ballot.
5. Election shall be decided by secret ballot, except that in the case of an election in which there are not more candidates than vacancies, the Chairman may submit to the Commission that the appointment be decided by clear general consent.
6. Formal proposals concerning items of the agenda and amendments to such proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Chairman who shall provide for circulation of these texts to the representatives.
7. In addition, the provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule VII      Observers

1. Any Member Nation or Associate Member of the Organization that is not a Member of the Commission but has a special interest in the work of the Commission may, upon request submitted to the Director-General, attend as an observer the sessions of the Commission and of its subsidiary bodies, as well as *ad hoc* meetings. It may submit memoranda to the Commission and participate without vote in the discussions.
2. States which are not Member Nations or Associate Members of the Organization but are Members of the United Nations, of one of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations or of the International Atomic Energy Agency, may, upon their request and subject to the provisions adopted by the Conference of the Organization relating to the granting of observer status to nations, be invited to attend in an observer capacity sessions of the Commission, its subsidiary bodies and *ad hoc* meetings. The status of States invited to such sessions or meetings shall be governed by the relevant provisions adopted by the Conference of the Organization.
3. Participation of international organizations in the work of the Commission and the relations between the Commission and such organizations shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization, as well as by the provisions adopted by the Conference on relations with international organizations. The Director-General shall deal with all such relations.

Rule VIII    Records and Reports

1. At each session, the Commission shall approve a report embodying its views, recommendations and decisions, including, when requested, a statement of minority views **or, as may be decided by the Commission, a summary of conclusions presented by one or more rapporteurs**<sup>1</sup>. Such other records for its own use as the Commission may on occasion decide, in consultation with the Secretariat, shall also be maintained.
  
2. At the close of each session the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission shall be transmitted to the Director-General who shall circulate them to the Members of the Commission and to the non-Member States and international organizations that were represented at the sessions for their information and, upon request, to other Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization.
  
3. Recommendations having policy, programme or financial implications for the Organization shall be brought by the Director-General to the attention of the Conference or the Council of the Organization for action. At the request of the Commission, or on his own initiative, the Director-General shall communicate to the Committee on Agriculture information concerning the activities of the Commission undertaken in collaboration with countries outside the European Region.
  
4. The Director-General, on the advice of the Executive Committee, may request Members of the Commission to supply information in order to keep the Commission informed on action taken on the basis of the recommendations made by the Commission.

Rule IX    Subsidiary Bodies and Ad Hoc Meetings

1. The Commission may establish sub-commissions on problems of major importance or general interest, or working parties for the study of problems of a more specialized nature. Sub-commissions may request the Commission to establish working parties.
  
2. Membership in these subsidiary bodies shall be open to Members of the Commission which have notified the Director-General of their desire to belong to them or to Members of the Commission chosen by it, or to persons appointed in an individual capacity.
  
3. The representatives of Members in a subsidiary body shall, as far as possible, participate in the activities on a continuing basis and shall be specialists in the fields of activity of the respective bodies.
  
4. The Commission may recommend to the Director-General the convening of *ad hoc* meetings, either of Members of the Commission or of experts appointed in an individual capacity in order to prepare long-term plans which might call for the establishment of a

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<sup>1</sup> The reference to one or more rapporteurs is intended to ensure consistency with Rule II, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure

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subsidiary body or to study matters that are too specialized to be usefully discussed during the regular sessions of the Commission. The Commission shall designate those of its Members who will attend such *ad hoc* meetings; in the case of *ad hoc* meetings of experts appointed in an individual capacity, the Commission shall decide whether they shall be designated by the Commission or by the Director-General.

5. The Commission may propose to the Director-General the establishment of joint working parties with the Economic Commission for Europe. It may recommend the creation of cooperative research networks among national research institutes, and may promote the admittance to these networks of research institutes from countries outside the European Region, particularly from developing countries.

6. When the Commission establishes sub-commissions or working parties, or when it recommends the convening of *ad hoc* meetings, the Commission shall determine the terms of reference of such sub-commissions and working parties and may suggest the terms of reference of *ad hoc* meetings.

7. The establishment of subsidiary bodies and the convening of *ad hoc* meetings shall be subject to the availability of funds in the relevant chapter of the approved budget of the Organization. The availability of such necessary funds shall be determined by the Director-General. Before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the administrative and financial implications thereof.

8. Sub-commissions and working parties of the Commission and *ad hoc* meetings shall report to the Commission. The Commission also examines the reports of the working parties established by the Organization jointly with the Economic Commission for Europe concerning questions within the competence of the Commission.

9. Subsidiary bodies of the Commission shall normally hold one regular session every two years. Special sessions may be convened by the Director-General. In addition, the convening of special sessions of subsidiary bodies may, at the request of a majority of their Members, be recommended to the Director-General in agreement with the Commission, or the Executive Committee between sessions of the Commission.

10. At the end of each regular session, subsidiary bodies elect their Board composed of a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen from among the representatives of their Members. A subsidiary body may also elect one or two additional members to serve on the Board if this is considered necessary to facilitate the work of the body concerned. The Board of a newly-established subsidiary body is elected at the beginning of its first session. In all other cases, the Board shall take office at the end of the session at which it has been elected and shall remain in office until the election of a new Board. The Members of the Board may be re-elected, but they cannot serve in the same capacity more than two successive terms.

11. The Rules of Procedure of the Commission shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to its subsidiary bodies and *ad hoc* meetings.

Rule X      Expenses

1. Expenses incurred by representatives, their alternates and their advisers when attending sessions of the Commission, the Executive Committee, sub-commissions and working parties and *ad hoc* meetings, as well as expenses incurred by observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.
2. Expenses incurred by experts invited to attend meetings in a personal capacity shall be borne by the Organization.
3. Any financial matter relating to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies shall be governed by the provisions of the Financial Regulations of the Organization.

Rule XI      Languages

1. The working languages of the Commission shall be English, French, Russian and Spanish.
2. The Commission may decide, in consultation with the Secretariat, which of these languages will be used by its subsidiary bodies or at the *ad hoc* meetings. Any representative using another language shall provide for interpretation in one of the working languages.

Rule XII      Amendments to and Suspension of Rules of Procedure

1. The Commission may, by a two-thirds majority of its Members, adopt amendments or additions to these Rules of Procedure, provided that twenty-four hours' notice has been given of the draft amendment or addition. Amendments or additions to these Rules shall come into force upon approval by the Director-General.
2. By a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and provided that twenty-four hours' notice has been given regarding a proposal to this effect, the Commission may suspend any of the above Rules other than Rules I.1, II.4, IV.2 and 7, V.6, VI.2, VII, VIII.3 and 4, IX.7 and X. Such twenty-four hours' notice may be waived if no representative objects.