

September 2002



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (ECA)

**ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN
AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Fribourg, Switzerland, 14-17 October 2002

**REPORT ON THE ADDITIONAL REU WID/GENDER
PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES 2000-2002**

by Dr Alenka Verbole

I. THE REGIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION: MAIN FEATURES AND TRENDS

1. The European Region embraces 43 Member Nations and one Member Organization¹ and is characterized by its heterogeneity. The reality of women and men living in rural areas throughout the European Region is being influenced and transformed by the wider socio-economic and political context they live in and various processes (i.e. privatization, decentralization, Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform, EU pre-accession policy) taking place within this context.
2. Rural women in the European Region constitute a heterogeneous population. Their socio-economic situation and their roles differ depending on the characteristics of the subregion (i.e. Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of the Independent States, European Union and Western Europe), household and farm structure and personal characteristics such as level of education, age and marital status. In many Member Nations of the Region, rural and farm women are not necessarily the same social groups. They differ not only in their involvement with agricultural production and lifestyle, but also in their level of participation in public and political spheres. Therefore, in this paper, the term "rural women" refers to all women living in rural areas, while the term "farm women" refers to women who are actively involved in agricultural production or are supported by an agriculturally active person.

¹ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The FYR of Macedonia, Turkey, Yugoslavia and the EU.

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3. As both farm and rural women are vital and viable actors in the sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas, it is essential that the impacts of different processes and additional specific variables influencing their socio-economic situation and participation in public and political life are analysed and taken into consideration by researchers, planners and decision-makers (i.e. transformation of the supporting agricultural and rural development institutions).

The main features and trends

4. The CEE and CIS countries, on one hand, are engaged in the privatization and structural reform of agriculture and food systems, whereas the EU countries and other Western European countries are attempting to achieve a balance between agriculture and environmental quality, nature conservation, food safety, farm diversification and human development. Problems of poverty and relative food insecurity persist among vulnerable populations throughout Europe, especially in Southern Europe and are on the increase in certain countries in transition.

5. Women in the Region are extensively involved in agriculture as female farm heads, co-owners, and family farm workers. They are also employees of farm enterprises, often in a professional or skilled capacity. A large number of farm women are actively involved in off-farm activities.

6. Throughout the Region, transformations in agriculture and rural areas are having multiple and divergent effects on farm women, on the one hand, pushing them out of farming or reducing their farm level responsibilities and increasing the precariousness of their livelihood; and on the other hand opening up new possibilities for professionalization and independence.

7. Whether women work full or part-time in agriculture or not, they tend to be classified as family workers rather than employers or self-employed. The data collected show women's frequent marginalization in the management of agricultural enterprises, as well as the social and cultural definition of women as family caretakers even when they play a major role in farm production and management. In general, rural women's work is also more insecure and more often not covered by legislative protection, with fewer opportunities for career advancement.

8. In the more marginalized areas of the EU as well as in CEE countries, there are two developments affecting farm women: from one side there is noticeable out migration, especially of young women. On the other side, feminization of agriculture has been observed in some countries.

9. The situation of women in CEE and CIS countries has been deteriorating at an alarming rate since transition started in the 1980s and many benefits women had enjoyed prior to the transition have been lost. In most countries women and men legally enjoy equal rights, however, this *de jure* guarantee does not exist *de facto*. There is also substantial evidence to suggest that farm women have been especially affected by rising levels of unemployment, decreases in the provision of social services and reduced levels of social security and hence poverty and its social, political and economic consequences. Gender relations, especially those which determine that women are mainly responsible for domestic work and child care and have lower levels of education and skill, are working to farm women's detriment both in the short and long term, making them more vulnerable to poverty.

10. One of the cross-cutting concerns in many CEE and CIS countries is that the concept of gender mainstreaming is new and often not well understood. It has been noted that in many countries little or no research has been done on the impacts of the current socio-economic and political transition processes and measures on rural population, on how these influenced the socio-economic situation of rural women. The need for gender-sensitive research on rural populations was identified.

11. The impacts of the processes taking place in the Region on the socio-economic situation of farm and rural women, level of income, economic dependence, social isolation, limited access to ownership of resources and to social security and services, poor access to extension services and credit, low level of participation in public affairs at local and national level, deterioration of health conditions and education, are among the areas that need to be addressed. One of the negative trends is the increasing trafficking of rural women in CEE countries. Additionally, women in some Member Nations are facing problems that have resulted from war devastation.

II. PRIORITY ISSUES OF THE GENDER/WID PROGRAMME IN THE REGION

12. The activities of the Regional WID Programme are closely linked to developments in rural areas in the European Region. FAO's Regional Office for Europe (REU) has in cooperation with the Gender and Development Service (SDWW) within its WID/Gender Programme, which is based on the Beijing Platform for Action and FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development (1996-2001) and GAD POA (2002-2007)², through its various activities, strived for recognition of rural women's contribution to development and for their empowerment in the public and political spheres.

13. The dissemination of methodologies to increase awareness on gender issues in agriculture and rural development, promotion of gender mainstreaming into policies, programmes and projects, regional and national capacity building and facilitation of international exchanges of experiences represent the main components of FAO's activities in the Region. The most important issues and areas that FAO has been working in and that require further action are mentioned below:

- Farm and rural women's participation in decision-making: an important activity that REU supported, and continues to support, has been the preparation and implementation of National Action Plans (NAP) for Integration of Rural Women in Development (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia);
- Extension programmes in rural areas: FAO/REU has been participating in the formulation of a project that addresses gender issues in relation to the rural extension programmes that have been poorly adapted to the increased feminization of agriculture in many countries in the Sub-region. Neither did they take into account the outcomes of agrarian and rural development policy reforms;

² FAO GAD PoA (2002-2007) (C 2001/9) was approved by the FAO Conference in November 2002. The Plan promotes the removal of obstacles to women and men's equal and active participation in, and enjoyment of the benefits from, agricultural and rural development. It further emphasises that a transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is an essential condition for people-centred sustainable agricultural and rural development. Its objectives are to promote gender equality in:

- access to sufficient, safe and nutritionally adequate food;
- access to control over and management of natural resources, and agricultural support services;
- policy and decision-making processes at all levels in the agricultural and rural sector; and
- opportunities for on and off-farm employment in rural areas.

- Gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis: the lack of data on rural areas and on farm and rural women, in particular, was identified and FAO supported the gathering of mainly quantitative statistical data on the socio-economic situation of rural women in CEE countries. A set of instruments for data collection and analysis was developed and checked through a pilot-study “*Men and women in Bulgarian agriculture: Division of labour, decision-making and access to resources*” in Bulgaria. It is expected that the instruments will be adapted in some of the CEE and CIS countries to collect specific gender-pertinent data on rural development processes in these countries;
- Gender mainstreaming in the EU-accession countries: in view of the changes taking place in the Region FAO/REU has been actively assisting EU-accession countries. The European Union Programmes for rural development give primary importance to improving the economic and social conditions for rural men and women, and in particular to providing the conditions for equal opportunity for rural women. Within this context, the gender issues in agriculture and rural development are becoming high on the governments’ agenda. FAO is offering assistance in tackling the challenge of engendering the main stream socio-economic development plans to ensure that rural development policies, programmes and projects are sustainable, participatory and integrating the needs and interests of rural men and women in development.
- Field Programme development: FAO/REU has been active in the Field Programme development resulting in several gender project ideas and proposals (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia).

Below are listed some of the main activities in the period 2000-2002.

Workshops

- ***National Workshop on Rural Women in Development, Sofia, Bulgaria, 30 March – 3 April 2000***

14. The Workshop was jointly organized with the Institute of Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and brought together 50 participants representing various ministries, local authorities, research institutions, NGOs. An important and positive outcome of the Workshop was the significant and broad high-level participation that also included statements of political commitment to the implementation of the national action plan for integration of rural women in development. FAO’s high-level and active participation in the workshop was especially important with a view to giving visibility to the process of elaboration and adoption of the plan and lobbying for political support to its institutionalization and implementation. The Ministry of Agriculture offered to integrate the Plan in the overall national plan for agricultural development for 2000-2006, which focuses on multi-functionality of agriculture, diversification of rural economies, alternative and off-farm employment generation and application of new technologies for modernizing agriculture.

➤ ***Regional Follow-up Workshop on the Formulation and Integration of Rural Women in Development, Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia, 13-19 May 2000***

15. The Workshop was organized jointly by the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture and Agency for Rural Development, and FAO. The objective of the Workshop was to reflect on the current situation concerning National Action Plan for Rural Women in Development (NAP for RWID) in the FAO European Region and to develop and/or revise the respective action plans, on the basis of lessons learnt. The Workshop was fourth in the line of the workshops on preparation and implementation of national action plans organized by FAO³. The event brought together 21 participants from the FAO European Region representing various ministries, local authorities, research institutions, NGOs. Overall, the Workshop provided a great opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas on the use of various tools and methods in different socio-economic and political environments in the European Region and on how to use SEAGA framework to improve the socio-economic situation of rural women and insure their involvement in various phases of the rural development process through the development and implementation of the NAPs for RWID.

➤ ***Sub-regional SEAGA Training of Trainers Workshop (TOT), Warsaw, Poland, 4-14 July 2000***

16. The Workshop in Poland was organized within the framework of FAO programmes of assistance to Member Nations in support of national activities concerning the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995. It was carried out within the framework of the FAO Partnership Programme with Academic and Research Institutions signed with the Warsaw Agricultural University. The Workshop specifically aimed at training participants (majority were agricultural extension officers) in the Socio-economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) methodology with the view of disseminating the approach that allows for recognition of rural men's and women's contribution to development, their empowerment and for their active participation in public and political life.

17. An important issue was raised at the Workshop, namely the need for adaptation of SEAGA to the context of the FAO European Region. As a follow-up to this, REU WID/Gender Programme initiated, coordinated and backstopped the preparation of the SEAGA case studies from the FAO European Region (Armenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain).

➤ ***Expert Consultation on Gender and Participatory Research Methods for Central and Eastern European countries, Borovets, Bulgaria, 19-23 June 2001***

18. The Consultation, organized jointly by the Institute of Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and FAO, brought together 25 experts from nine countries in the FAO European Region; namely Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. It provided a meeting place for social scientists, agricultural economists and other researchers, policy-makers and representatives of NGOs working in the field of gender in agriculture and rural development and FAO. The main purposes of the Consultation were to: evaluate the methods for gender-disaggregated data (GDD) collection developed in the framework of the pilot study conducted in Bulgaria and lay the basis for gender and

³ Three previous workshops on preparation and implementation of the national action plan have been organized: Budapest, Hungary, 4-6 May 1995, Wageningen, The Netherlands, 18-20 January 1996 and Ljubljana, Slovenia, 23-25 October 1997.

participatory research approaches to be used in follow-up studies throughout the Sub-region; produce methodological guidelines appropriate to the study of gender issues in agriculture and rural development in the Sub-region, based on the experiences and lessons learned from the Bulgarian pilot study and the research activities of participants; formulate joint action plans by participants for follow-up activities on gender issues based on the guidelines produced by the Consultation; exchange experiences; and enhance cooperation among different stakeholders at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

19. The Consultation also touched upon issues such as the nature of data, ethical questions in applied social research, role of qualitative and quantitative methods and “translation” of research data into policies and programmes and dissemination strategies. It has been observed that within the regional context both quantitative and qualitative data do exist but often in a form of site-specific studies. Furthermore, data (in particular raw data) are often difficult to access, and still contain gaps.

20. It has been further noted that gender-disaggregated data are essential for development of the relevant development policy programmes and projects both within national as well as regional context. In particular in the countries in the EU accession process, gender in agriculture and rural development is emerging as one of development key issues (i.e. SAPARD Programme).

➤ ***Workshop on Gender-Disaggregated Data (GDD) for Central and Eastern European countries, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 15-21 October 2001***

21. This Workshop was a follow-up to the earlier-mentioned Expert Consultation held in Bulgaria and built upon its results and recommendations, in particular with a view to the development of gender-responsive data bases and information within the Region using SEAGA and GDD methodology.

22. The main objective of the Workshop was to increase the availability, accuracy and use of quantitative and qualitative data and information on the gender dimension of agriculture and rural development in Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, the event was organized to achieve a certain number of programmes; to promote interdisciplinary collaboration in the production and use of agricultural and rural development statistics in the Region; to enhance the capacity of regional social scientists to conduct policy-relevant applied social research on issues in gender and agriculture; and to initiate a process towards the establishment of a gender-disaggregated data base in the Region by providing training and practical experience in data re-tabulation and analysis to regional statisticians and policy analysts. Further, the adapted training materials in gender and statistics developed under the FAO Integrated Program (IP) were tested with the view to possible wider use in the Eastern and Central European and CIS countries.

23. The Workshop, jointly organized by the Institute of Socio-Human Research of Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca Branch and FAO, brought together 23 participants (half of them hand-picked) from 6 countries in the FAO European Sub-region; namely: Bulgaria (1), Czech Republic (1), Hungary (1), Romania (12), Slovakia (2) and Slovenia (2).

➤ ***Inter-regional SEAGA TOT Workshop, Anzio, Italy, 4-15 February 2002***

24. This TOT was designed for people involved in training from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. The aim was to develop local pools of trainers who will be called upon to conduct SEAGA training in their home or neighbouring countries. The objective of the TOT was to strengthen participants' practical skills and knowledge on understanding and integrating gender into their work for sustainable agricultural practices, household food security, and rural development.

25. The Workshop brought together 34 participants from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Near East. Among these 8 participants (5 women and 3 men) were from the FAO European Region, namely Albania (1), Armenia (1), Estonia (1), Italy (1), Portugal (2) and Romania (2).
26. In relation to the above-mentioned SEAGA and GDD based (and related) activities, and in particular with the view to the future WID/Gender Programme activities in the Region it should be noted that since the introduction of the SEAGA approach to Region in 1997, much progress has been made in implementing it in various activities. It has been used to formulate national action plans that are gender sensitive (Bulgaria, Slovenia and Hungary); to introduce gender sensitive agricultural planning reform (Spain); to create a network of gender experts; to support rural development reform; and to help people understand the necessity of collecting, assessing and publishing gender-sensitive data at the national level and similar.
27. There are now many materials available that reflect the current situation in the Region, but they need to be tested and updated (i.e. through regional or sub-regional TOTs) to reflect political, economical and social changes that are taking place in the Region. In addition, the national capacities on gender in agriculture and rural development need to be further strengthened.
28. The issue of providing GDD training in the Region is of equal importance. As previously outlined there is a need to address not only issues such as access to education and social welfare services, access to decision-making and information, access to resources within the household, legislation and in particular the enforcement of the legislation, the gender division of labour within the rural economy, reproductive versus productive work and violence against women, but also gender sensitive analysis of rural diversification, off-farm activities, and community development.
29. It is only by producing and making available data, that reflect the actual situation of men and women in rural communities (who does what, who controls what etc.) at the national level, that issues of sustainable local development and food security and safety can be addressed accurately.

Other Activities

- Coordination and backstopping the implementation of the project GCP/INT/662 (FIN) "***Farm Household Resource Management (Home Economics) for Rural Family Development***" in Poland (including the supervision of the technical paper presented at the International Federation of Home Economics World Congress in Ghana in the year 2000);
- Assistance to Member Nations in formulating and implementing projects, including TCP;
- Preparation of documents for various FAO's external meetings and consultations (e.g. Note for the ECE Meeting in Geneva, Beijing 5+, COWID, etc).

III. FUTURE GOALS AND ORIENTATION OF GENDER/WID PROGRAMME IN THE FAO EUROPEAN REGION

30. In the coming years, in addition to the issues and areas mentioned earlier, the priorities in the European Region related to gender and rural women should be:

- gender mainstreaming in Member Countries;
- capacity building at national and regional levels;
- continuing to promote rural women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels;
- promoting equal access of rural men and women to ownership of land and other resources;
- improving the knowledge-base on local initiatives for development in rural areas, especially those focusing on farm and rural women;
- promoting the building of a solid quantitative and qualitative database on rural women in order to gain better knowledge of their specific contribution to the rural economy and assist the formulation of more accurate policies and strategies and to measure improvements resulting from development programmes (programme monitoring and evaluation);
- following-up on existing international and national plans of action and supporting the formulation of plans in countries that do not have one yet;
- monitoring the evolution of such crucial processes such as the ageing population, the ageing-related feminization of agricultural activities (in some countries) and out-migration of youth and its impacts on food security;
- setting-up gender-sensitive monitoring system on the influence of poor infrastructure and low spending power including new requirements and pressures on rural areas;
- investigating the issue of decentralization and its impact on participation of men and women in decision-making;
- monitoring rural women's working position in formal and informal sectors (social security issues) and stimulating development of alternative activities for rural women (i.e. small scale enterprises, organic agriculture; aquaculture, small scale processing industries, agri-tourism);
- investigating how existing and potential international rural women's and related networks can support national and local networks and how they can be reinforced throughout the Region;
- investigating the role NGOs can play in the advancement of rural women in society;
- continuing to provide assistance to the promotion of World Rural Women's Day throughout the Region.

31. In this context, WPW is invited to continue to actively participate in developing strategies and work programmes and projects that will benefit rural women in the FAO European Region. The synergy will provide a higher visibility to the proposed WPW activities and will ensure a higher level of coherence as activities are linked together and mutually reinforcing working towards a common goal.

32. The WPW is also invited to provide full support to the implementation of the FAO GAD PoA in the European Region as a coherent overall framework for gender mainstreaming into agriculture and rural development.