

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE 40/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

19 March 2024

(Online meeting)

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chairperson of ECA (Ms Lidija POPANDONOVA) opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Executive Committee (the ExCom) to the first meeting after the 43rd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture. She congratulated the Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the ExCom on having been elected. She has also taken the opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed Assistant Director General/Regional Representative (ADG-RR), Mr Viorel GUTU on his assignment.

Mr Viorel GUTU, welcomed the participants and congratulated the elected members of the Executive Committee. He emphasized that the agrifood systems transformation of the Region under the impression of the multiple crisis requires attention. He highlighted that the UN Food Systems Summit +2 in July 2023 in Rome as well as the SDG Summit in September 2023 confirmed the potential of the agrifood systems in accelerating the achievement of the 2030. In addition, referred to the importance of the FAO Strategic Framework and particularly the aspiration principles of the 4 Betters will be in this context a significant contribution to work holistically and to address the challenges for the agrifood systems in the region in a multisectoral modality involving a wide range of stakeholders. He also has made reference to the upcoming 34th Session of the Regional Conference and the COP 29 in Azerbaijan being important for an exchange on the agrifood systems.

As this was the first meeting of the newly elected ECA Executive Committee and some of the members and participants did not have an opportunity to meet before, the Chairperson invited all to introduce themselves briefly.

The list of participants is presented in Annex 1.

The meeting agenda was adopted without any further additional items.

The adopted meeting agenda is presented in Annex 2.

2. Briefing of the new members of the ECA Executive Committee on its mandate, tasks and working modalities

The acting Secretary of the ECA, Mr JEHLE briefed the members of the ExCom on the mandate, tasks and working modalities of the ExCom. He noted that the working modalities of the ExCom are based on the Rules of Procedure of the ECA (RoP) and are explained in more details in the Executive Committee Information Document. He emphasized that the RoP is an overall legal framework for the Commission and for the ExCom, while the Executive Committee Information Document describes and clarifies the responsibilities, arrangements and working modalities relating to the ExCom. He stressed that the Information Document is a living document, that the Secretariat is about to update for the next meeting of the ExCom. He added that both documents will be publicly available on the website of the ExCom.

ACTION: The Secretariat to update the ExCom Information Document regularly

3. Review and endorsement of the workplan and meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of the ECA for the years 2023-2025

Ms ILLES as a member of the ECA Secretariat presented the draft workplan and meeting schedule of the ExCom for 2024-2-25 up to the 44th Session of ECA, which is preliminarily planned to be held between 30 September and 3 October 2025.

Ms ILLES introduced the draft workplan. She explained that the draft workplan contains reviews on preparation of the Sessions of the ERC and the ECA, as well as the Informal Consultation, and the review of the technical work of the Regional Office. She further informed that the draft workplan provides seven meetings during the biennium. She reminded that the workplan can be amended at any time by the ExCom. She invited the Committee to review and endorse the document

The workplan was reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Committee.

ACTION: The Secretariat to finalize the workplan and meeting schedule of the ExCom and to publish to the website of the ExCom.

4. Review of the outcomes of the 43rd Session of the ECA¹

Mr JEHLE provided a brief summary on the outcomes of the 43rd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture. The Session was held on 27-28 September and 27 November 2023 in Budapest hosted by the Government of Hungary. The main goal of the session was on one hand to encourage collaboration and coordination among the actors, potentially leading to integrate land and water policies and regulations across sectors and countries, on the other hand to identify and promote practical solutions and recommendations to improve land and water governance and achieve land degradation neutrality in the region.

The main outcomes of the 43rd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture were noted by the ExCom.

5. Review of the status of preparation for the 34th Session of the ERC (2024)

Mr GANGI in his capacity as Secretary of the ECR presented¹ the status of the preparations for the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe. The conference would be held in Chişinău, the Republic of Moldova, between 14-17 May 2024 in hybrid modality. Prior to the ERC, a consultation of the civil society and consultation of the Private Sector would be held.

In relation to the technical background documents for the conference he added that the preliminary date of the publication was the beginning of April. Invitation letters have been dispatched to Members and nominations to attend the ERC would be welcomed until 12 April,

He informed that the registration would be opened on 1 April. The deadline for registration for in-person attendance would be 30 April and for virtual participation 6 May. On conference logistics (the venue, accommodation, transportation, etc.), detailed information would be provided in the Information Note that would be available on the website of the ERC.

¹ The Report from the 43rd Session of the ECA is available at: <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/43rd-session-of-the-european-commission-on-agriculture/en>

Moreover, he highlighted that in order to streamline the proceedings of the Regional Conference, a written consultation procedure would be implemented to discuss selected items prior to the Session. Members and observers would be requested to submit any inputs and statements on the selected documents from 1 April until 30 April, followed by response from the Secretariat until 6 May. Members' statements and Secretariat's responses will be published in four languages until 14 May.

Furthermore, he mentioned the wide range of high-level special events would be organized as side events during the conference. Among them he referred to a one day Investment forum organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Moldova where particularly private sector partners are expected.

In his conclusion he requested the ExCom Members to consult with other ERG members regarding the nominations for the election of the the First and Second Vice-Chairpersons, the (two) Rapporteur(s), which were important officers position for the 34th FAO Regional Conference for Europe. In addition, member would also provide proposals for the hosting of the the 35th ERC in 2026.

In response to the presentation the following comments and feedback was received from the members of the Ex Com: Mr LEVEQUE on behalf of France intervened and to the attention of the participants the decision of the 33rd ERC Session and related to this he delivered the following message:

“Recalled the deliberations of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe at its 33rd session on under the item entitled “Implication on the world food security and agriculture arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine”, and the decision taken by the Regional Conference, as reflected in paragraph 30 m) of the report, to “to add this matter to the agenda of the next regular session of the European Regional Conference ».

Noted the absence of such an item on the provisional agenda of the 34th session of the ERC and recommended that the draft agenda should be amended so as to reflect the clear and unambiguous decision of the European Regional Conference in this respect”.

He also informed that the message had been sent to both the Chair of the ECA Ex Com and the ECA Secretariat by email on 19 March in the morning.

Mr DIATKA supported the intervention of Mr LEVEQUE. Mr GRYNEVETSKYI added that the two agenda items should be separated from each other, so one would be *“Implication on the world food security and agriculture arising from the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine”* while the other is *“FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia”*. He mentioned that on the FAO Council also separate items are applied.

The ECA secretariat took note of the interventions and informed that the proposal would be further reviewed. In addition, Mr GANGI informed the background document related to agenda item 11 – FAO Response to the multiple crisis in Europe and Central Asia” of the draft preliminary agenda of the 34th Session of the ERC contains the information related to the the war in Ukraine.

The ECA secretariat also stressed that based on the decision of the 33rd session of the ERC in 2022, the Regional Office followed the recommendation and reported regularly on the implications of the war in Ukraine for the agrifood sector in the Region as an agenda item of the subsequent governing body meetings, the Informal Consultation, the ECA Executive Committee meetings as well as on the Agenda

of the European Commission on Agriculture, and now on the upcoming ERC Session under Agenda item 11.

The Secretariat has taken note of the inputs and of the discussion.

ACTION: The Secretariat to review the recommendations regarding the adjustment of the agenda item 11 of the ERC and to seek relevant guidance from the respective services in HQ as required.

6. Any other business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

7. Closing of the meeting

The Chairperson thanked the ExCom members for their participation in the first meeting and expressed her hopes for an active and fruitful cooperation in the next two years, and closed the meeting.

Annex 1

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**40/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

19 March 2024

14.30-16.30 hrs (Rome time)

Online meeting

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Role	Country/Organization	Name	Present/Absent
1.	ECA Chairperson	North Macedonia	Ms Lidija POPANDONOVA	Present
2.	ECA Vice-Chairperson	Greece	Mr Serkos A. CHAROUTOUNIAN	Present
3.	ECA Vice-Chairperson	Italy	Mr Andrea ANGELI	Present
4.	ExCom Member	Czechia	Mr Roman DIATKA	Present
5.	ExCom Member	France	Mr Michel LEVEQUE	Present
6.	ExCom Member	Hungary	Ms Evelin LANTOS	Present
7.	ExCom Member	Republic of Moldova	Ms Liliana MARTIN	Absent
8.	ExCom Member	Slovakia	Ms Terézia KRAMOLIŠOVÁ	Present
9.	ExCom Member	Ukraine	Mr Yuriy GRYNEVETSKYI	Present
10.	Assistant Director General/Regional Representative, FAO Europe and Central Asia	FAO REU	Mr Viorel GUTU	Present
11.	ERC Secretary / Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Europe and Central Asia	FAO REU	Mr Nabil GANGI	Present
12.	Acting Secretary of the ECA / Regional Programme Leader	FAO REU	Mr Raimund JEHLE	Present
13.	National Professional Officer (Programme Coordination and Planning)	FAO REU	Ms Erzsebet ILLES	Present
14.	Natural Resources Officer	FAO REU	Mr Jeremy SCHLICKENRIEDER	Present

	Role	Country/Organization	Name	Present/Absent
15.	Programme Coordination Specialist and Country Analyst	FAO REU	Ms Cholpon ESENBKOVA	Present
16.	Executive Programme Management Specialist / ERC-ECA Secretariat	FAO REU	Ms Zsofia HORVÁTH	Present
17.	Programme and Meeting Assistant / ERC-ECA Secretariat	FAO REU	Ms Eniko KOTI	Present

Annex 2

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**40/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

19 March 2024

14.30-16.30

Online (Zoom)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

No.	Title of the Agenda Item	Document No./Link	Presenter
	Opening of the meeting and welcome to the participants and the revised ECA Secretariat	-	Chairperson
	Welcome address of the new FAO Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia	-	Assistant Director General / Regional Representative
	Introduction of participants and short background by each of them	-	ExCom
1.	Adoption of the agenda	ECA_ExCom/40/1-1	ExCom
2.	Briefing of the new Members of the Executive Committee on its mandate, tasks and working modalities	Rules of Procedure of the ECA ExCom Information Document	ECA Secretary
3.	Review and endorsement of the workplan and meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of the ECA for the years 2023-2025	ECA_ExCom/40/1-2	ECA Secretary
4.	Review of the outcomes of the 43rd Session of the ECA	Report of the 43rd Session of the ECA	ECA Secretary
5.	Review of the status of preparation for the 34th Session of the ERC (2024)	-	Deputy Regional Representative
6.	Any other business	-	ExCom
	Close of the meeting	-	Chairperson