

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

39/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

23 February 2022

(Online meeting)

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chairperson of ECA (Mr Marios GEORGIADIS) opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Executive Committee (the ExCom) to the first meeting after the 42nd Session of the ECA. He congratulated the Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the ExCom on having been elected.

Welcome to the participants

Mr Nabil GANGI, the Deputy Regional Representative, welcomed the participants and congratulated the elected members of the Executive Committee. Mr GANGI emphasized the importance of the ECA in the overall governance in the region and called the attention of the members to make this year a year of extra-ordinary.

Presentation of participants

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.

Adoption of the agenda¹

The meeting agenda was adopted with two requests made by Mr Piotr WŁODARCZYK, the Secretary of ECA. One was to move agenda item 4 "Update on the main themes and the status of preparations for the 33rd Session of ERC (Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022)" as the first item after the adoption of the agenda. The other request was to add an item under AOB: "Overview of the process of preparation of background documents for the 43rd Session of the ECA".

The adopted meeting agenda is presented in Annex 2.

2. Update on the main themes and the status of preparations for the 33rd Session of ERC (Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022)

Mr GANGI presented the status of the preparations for the 33rd Session of ERC (Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022) to the members of the ExCom. He noted that the final decision on the modality of the ERC is to be made at a later stage, in consultation with the Host Government and FAO Members (current indications are for a hybrid meeting). He added that the second preparatory mission of the ERC Secretariat to the venue is scheduled for the first week of March.

¹ Document number ECA_ExCom_39/1-1
(https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/reu/europe/documents/Events_2022/excom39_1/agenda.pdf)

He mentioned the consultation of the civil society organizations, which is scheduled back-to-back with the ERC33, which will be held as hybrid event, while the Private Sector Consultation will be held as a virtual event in April.

He also added that the preliminary date of the publication of the background documents for the Session of the ERC is 29 March 2022. Invitation letters are to be sent until mid-March 2022, nominations from Members to attend the ERC are accepted until 11 April, the registration is to be opened on 11 April. The deadline for registration for in-person attendance is 22 April and for virtual participation is 6 May.

In order to streamline the proceedings of the Regional Conference, a written consultation procedure will be implemented to discuss selected items prior to the Session. Members and observers will be requested to submit any inputs and statements on the selected documents from 1 April until 25 April, the Secretariat's responses will be provided by 2 May, Members' statements and Secretariat's responses published in four languages by 9 May.

Update on the specific logistical issues will be provided by the ERC Secretariat following the second preparatory mission in March (the venue – Double Tree by Hilton in Łódź, accommodation, transportation, visas).

After Mr GANGI's presentation, the Chairperson opened the floor for comments.

Mr GEORGIADES brought to the attention of the participants comments made by Permanent Representatives of the European Union and France (the EU Council Presidency) on the provisional agenda for the 33rd Session of the ERC. They had suggested that the title of item 10 "Regional Results, Priorities, the Four Betters, and the Sustainable Development Goals", be rephrased to "Regional Results, Priorities, FAO's Strategic Framework, and the Sustainable Development Goals". They believed that it would be more accurate if the title referred to the Strategic Framework as the link between the regional priorities and the SDGs. The ERC Secretariat informed that a reply had been sent to the ERG Chairperson explaining that the title was uniform for all regional conferences to facilitate consistent inputs from the regions.

Moreover, the Representatives sought more information on the ERC agenda items 11 "Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change" and 12 "The outline and roadmap of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy." They noted that by the time ERC 33 discusses these items, the documentation for the Programme Committee will already have been finalized, and requested a clarification on how the views expressed at ERC 33 would feed into the discussions of the Programme Committee and the Council. The ERC Secretariat had replied to the ERG Chairperson clarifying that the recommendations of ERC 33 will be submitted for consideration by the 169th Session of the Council through the Programme Committee. Due to the short timeline between meetings, this may be dealt with by means of addenda or appendices, as appropriate.

Mr GEORGIADES considered that these comments represent a positive sign of engagement through ECA and wishes to facilitate this to grow awareness and involvement in ECA/ExCom.

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

The ECA Secretary, Mr WŁODARCZYK briefed the members of the ExCom on the mandate, tasks and work modalities of the ExCom. He noted that the work modalities of the ExCom are based on the Rules of Procedure of ECA (RoP) and are explained in more detail in the Executive Committee Information Document. He emphasized that the RoP was an overall legal framework for the Commission and for the ExCom, while the Executive Committee Information Document described and clarified the arrangements and working modalities relating to the ExCom. He stressed that the Information Document was a living document, which could be updated by the ExCom when needed. He added that both documents will be publicly available on the website of the ExCom.

Mr Georgiades mentioned that a revision of the Rules of Procedure may be needed during this biennium.

4. Review and endorsement of the workplan and meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of ECA for 2022-2023

The ECA Secretary presented the draft work plan and meeting schedule of the ExCom for the current biennium up to the 43rd Session of ECA, which is preliminarily planned to be held on 26-28 September 2023.

Mr WŁODARCZYK introduced the draft work plan and invited the Committee to review and endorse the document. He explained that the draft workplan contained 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. He further informed that the draft workplan provided for eight meetings during the biennium. He reminded that the workplan can be amended at any time by the ExCom.

Mr JÍLEK made a comment on task 6 of the ExCom “Review and recommendations on the REU work programme 2022-2023 Selected technical areas”. He suggested that when reviews of the technical work in the region are presented, they include a list of related projects implemented by the Regional Office in the countries of the region.

The workplan was reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Committee.

5. Outcomes of the 42nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (19-21 January 2022)²

Mr WŁODARCZYK provided a brief summary on the outcomes of the 42nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture. The Session was held on 19-21 January 2022, hosted by Hungary and was the first ever Session of ECA held online. Under the main technical theme “Transforming food systems to address all forms of malnutrition in Europe and Central Asia” three sub-topics were discussed:

- Transforming food systems in Europe and Central Asia for improved nutritional outcomes
- Better production to increase access to diverse, nutritious foods
- Territorial approaches and community development to drive local change and prevent all forms of malnutrition

² The Report from the 42nd Session of the ECA is available at <https://www.fao.org/3/ni198en/ni198en.pdf>

Other topics on the agenda:

- Advancing gender equality in the region: update on the progress made
- Progress made by the FAO REU on the main recommendations of the 41st Session of ECA
- Election of the ECA Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the Executive Committee
- AOB: FAO's role in supporting SDG monitoring in Europe and Central Asia

The Session adopted recommendations relating to:

- the technical sub-areas discussed
- advancing gender equality in the region.

The Secretariat informed that the Report of the 42nd Session of the ECA is now available online in four FAO official languages.

The ECA ExCom expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing a successful Session. The Secretariat thanked Mr Andreas FABIAN for his work as a Rapporteur. Mr GEORGIADES, Mr JÍLEK and Mr ANTYUKHIN recommended that for the next session of the ECA the technical topics should be deeper, more focused and more specific.

6. Any other business

Overview of the process of preparation of background documents for the 43rd Session of the ECA

Mr WŁODARCZYK presented the schedule of the preparation of the technical background documents for the next ECA Session. He reminded the decision of the ExCom to open a call for the main technical theme of the next ECA session, which would be open for all Members of the region. Since the timeframe for posting the background documents for the Session is strict (30 days prior to the session), and the preparation of the background documents is a long process, it would be very important to start the process early enough. According to the schedule presented by Mr WŁODARCZYK, the proposed date for opening the call for proposals for the main technical theme would be 30 April, and the deadline for submitting the proposals would be 30 June. The review of the proposals would take place from September to November so that a final decision on the main technical theme can be made until 31 December 2022. The overview of the process for the preparation of documents is presented in Appendix 1.

Mr GEORGIADES supported the idea of a schedule regarding the preparation of the technical documents and added that REU could make some proposals in advance for the Members in order to provide guidance and facilitate the process. He added that collecting the main technical themes of the previous ERC and ECA Session and providing this information to the Members would be a great support in the selection of the theme of the next Session.

Action:

The Secretariat will update the list of main technical themes of the previous ERC and ECA Session, as supporting information for the call for the main technical theme.

The Secretariat will present the draft invitation for the call at the next ExCom meeting.

7. Closing of the meeting

The Chairperson thanked the ExCom members for their participation in the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee, expressed his hopes for an active and fruitful cooperation in the next two years, and closed the meeting.

Annex 1

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**39/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

23 February 2022

10.00-11.30 hrs (Rome time)

Online meeting

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Role	Country/Organization	Name	Present/Absent
1.	ECA Chairperson	Cyprus	Mr Marios GEORGIADES	Present
2.	ECA Vice-Chairperson	North Macedonia	Ms Lidija POPANDONOVA	Present
3.	ECA Vice-Chairperson	Russian Federation	Mr Kirill ANTYUKHIN	Present
4.	ExCom Member	Czechia	Mr Jiří JÍLEK	Present
5.	ExCom Member	Greece	Mr Serkos A. CHAROUTOUNIAN	Present
6.	ExCom Member	Hungary	Ms Lila EGRI	Absent
7.	ExCom Member	Serbia	Ms Vedrana ILIĆ	Absent
8.	ExCom Member	Slovakia	Mr Andreas FABIAN	Present
9.	ExCom Member	Uzbekistan	Mr Nuriddin KUSHNAZAROV	Present
10.	Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Europe and Central Asia	FAO REU	Mr Nabil GANGI	Present
12.	National Professional Officer	FAO REU	Ms Erzsebet ILLES	Present
13.	Acting Secretary of ECA	FAO REU	Mr Piotr WŁODARCZYK	Present
14.	Executive Programme Management Specialist	FAO REU	Ms Zsafia HORVÁTH	Present
15.	ERC-ECA Secretariat	FAO REU	Ms Eniko KOTI	Present

Annex 2

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**39/1 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

23 February 2022

10.00-11.30 hrs

Online (Zoom)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

No.	Agenda Item Title	Document No./Link	Presenter
	Opening of the meeting	-	CHAIRPERSON
	Welcome to the participants	-	GANGI
	Introduction of participants	-	PARTICIPANTS
1.	Adoption of the agenda	ECA_ExCom/39/1-1	EXCOM
2.	Briefing of the new members of the Executive Committee on its mandate, tasks and working modalities	Rules of Procedure of ECA (http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu352e.pdf) ExCom Information Document (ECA/42/21/INF/3)	WLODARCZYK
3.	Review and endorsement of the workplan and meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of ECA for 2022-2023	ECA_ExCom/39/1-2	WLODARCZYK
4.	Update on the main themes and the status of preparations for the 33 rd Session of ERC (Łódź, Poland, 10-13 May 2022)	-	GANGI
5.	Outcomes of the 42 nd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (19-21 January 2022)	Report from the 42 nd Session of ECA	PARTICIPANTS
6.	Any other business: - Overview of the process of preparation of background documents for the 43 rd Session of the ECA	-	WLODARCZYK
	Close of the meeting	-	CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 1

Overview of the process for preparation of technical background documents for the 43rd Session of the ECA.

No.	Step	Proposed timeframe/deadline
1.	43 Session of ECA	26-28 September 2023 (tbc)
2.	Documents for the Session posted (En, Es, Fr, Ru)	26 August 2023
3.	Documents translated into languages	August 2023
4.	Documents approved internally in REU	July 2023
5.	Documents finalized by REU's technical officers	30 June 2023
6.	Documents reviewed by FAO HQ departments	15 June 2023
7.	Documents reviewed and revised within REU	20 May 2023
8.	Documents drafted by REU's technical officers	30 April 2023
9.	REU's officers assigned to develop the background papers	31 January 2023
10.	The main technical theme with sub-topics agreed (ECA Chair - FAO ADG)	31 December 2022
11.	Proposals for the main technical theme reviewed and the recommended theme identified, along with sub-topics (ExCom, REU)	September-November 2022
12.	Summer break	July-August 2022
13.	Proposals for the main technical theme collected	30 June 2022
14.	A call for proposals for the main technical theme opened	30 April 2022