

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE

38/2 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 April 2020

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chairperson of ECA (Mr Paul KIERNAN) opened the meeting and welcomed the Members of the Executive Committee to the second meeting after the 41st Session of the ECA, which was held virtually. Furthermore, the Chairperson thanked the Members and the Secretariat for their flexibility and availability in these difficult times.

The participants list is presented in Annex 1.

Adoption of the agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted with one additional item raised to be discussed under AOB.

The adopted meeting agenda is presented in Annex 2.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the December 2019 ExCom meeting (38/1)

The Minutes of the 38/1 meeting of the ExCom was adopted with the proposed changes sent in the written form to the Secretariat before the meeting.

Action:

The ECA Secretariat is requested to prepare the final version of the document, circulate among Members of ExCom and web post on the ExCom web page.

3. Update on the status of preparations for the 32nd Regional Conference for Europe (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Mr Nabil GANGI informed the ExCom that, in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) – and the Consultation of the Civil Society Organizations – continue to be postponed to the second half of 2020. He noted that the postponement was communicated to all invitees, including Members of the region, Observers and Associate Members, UN Agencies and Inter-Governmental Organizations.

He added that whereas meeting documents will continue to be web posted on the website of the 32nd Session of the ERC (<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/erc32/en/>), and as the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving, and as its implications are not yet known, some of the published documents may need to be further amended to reflect the new developments.

In an answer to the questions of the ExCom, the ERC Secretariat reassured the Members that FAO is under the process of an ongoing, corporate review of maintaining effective governance in the time of COVID-19. This covers issues which include the readjustment of the calendar of meetings, as well as possible modalities of their operation. Beyond that, such review is also couched in the overall considerations for future innovation in processes and ways of working of the Organization.

Members expressed their appreciation to the ERC Secretariat for their efforts to include relevant sections in the background documents of ERC to refer to the current COVID-19 crisis, especially in the main document “Sustainable Food Systems and Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia”.

Action:

ERC Secretariat to update Members at the next meeting, and the Europe Regional Group (ERG) upon request.

4. Discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the ExCom in relation to ECA and ERC

Mr Nabil GANGI started the discussion on the item with summarizing the key factors and elements of FAO Governance, including the FAO Regional Commissions and their roles and responsibilities. He explained that ERC session documents are intended to be background documents prepared by the FAO Secretariat with support from the FAO technical officers. He added that such background documents are not reviewed by Members ahead of the ERC including the ECA or its ExCom. Instead, documents are made available directly to all Members well ahead of the meeting for internal (Member) consultations.

Mr Raimund JEHLE highlighted the importance of Regional Conferences, as discussion fora on specific topics at the ministerial level. He emphasized that the key result of the debate of the ERC was the adopted report with the relevant recommendations. He also drew the attention of the Members to the following key documents, which provide the framework for the key role of the Executive Committee as an important intersession instrument in the Europe and Central Asia Region facilitating the dialogue between the Secretariat and the Members:

- [Rules of Procedure of ERC](#);
- [Rules of Procedure of ECA](#);
- Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of ERC (as [adopted](#) at ERC31 in 2018, with its [background document](#), and the Multi-year Programme of Work in the ERC32 2020 document [ERC/20/7](#)).

All three documents made reference to the ECA and the ExCom and are thus explaining their respective roles. This is also documented in the Rules of Procedure (RoP of the ERC (the ERC is the only Regional Conference, which has its own RoPs). The reference to the ExCom is outlined in Rule IV, Agenda and Documents, Paragraph 1):

“At least six months prior to the proposed date for the Regional Conference, the Regional Representative of the Organization in the region, after consultation with the Chairperson and the Vice Chairpersons, the elected rapporteur, and the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture, shall send a communication to the Members of the Regional Conference. The communication shall contain a brief outline of the programmes of the Organization of interest to the region and of the outcome of the previous session of the Regional Conference and invite Members to review suggestions made concerning the organization of the next session of the Regional Conference, with particular reference to a draft agenda of the session.”

Further discussion touched upon the following points:

- The Chairperson of ECA would inform the ERG about the results of the discussion of the Executive Committee Session as part of the facilitation of the dialogue with the members.
- Membership in the ERC and the ECA goes beyond the membership of the ERG. It includes countries from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

Therefore, the communication between the ExCom and ERG would still leave a grey area, which needs to be solved.

Members agreed that a complementary paper be prepared on the topic to have a common understanding for the future and address the raised points, including:

- how the ExCom operates on day to day basis, including specific workflows;
- structure of Governing Bodies in the region;
- preferred interactions between the regional bodies and the processes or workflows guiding these interactions;
- clear guidance on how to reach the Central Asian countries that are not the members of the ERG, for successful engagement in regional communications.

Action:

The ECA Secretariat, together with the ERC Secretariat, to draft an information document on the roles and responsibilities of the ExCom in relation to the regional Governing Bodies (ECA and ERC), the ERG and Members of the region.

ExCom Members to share with the ECA and ERC Secretariats the questions and issues to be touched upon in the information document.

5. Results of the review of the Rules of Procedure of ECA

Mr Piotr WLODARCZYK, the Acting-Secretary of the ECA, summarized the results of the review initiated at the previous ExCom meeting by the ExCom Members. In discussing the issue Members agreed that:

- there is no immediate necessity to amend the RoP of ECA;
- the process, set up last year before the 41st Session of the ECA, to collect nominations for the election of Members of the ExCom could be used in 2021;
- nominated representatives should be available on the ECA dates to join an ExCom meeting at site, if elected to be Members of ExCom at the Session.

A proposal was made that the newly elected Members of the ExCom could attend the ExCom meeting held when the ECA Session takes place via electronic means. After Mr GANGI's explanation that it might be premature to make such decisions, as they should fit into the overall approach of the Organization, which has not been decided yet, no decision was taken.

Action:

ECA Secretariat to include in the ExCom information document the procedure of collecting nominations for the elections of the ExCom membership.

6. Review and recommendations on the REU Work Programme 2020-2021: RI2: Food Loss and Waste

Mr Robert VAN OTTERDIJK presented the agenda item and responded to questions from Members. He noted that discussions with potential partners, including UNECE, have contributed to the identification of synergies and possibilities for collaboration on solutions to reducing food loss and waste in the region, also taking into consideration the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

Members expressed their appreciation to Mr VAN OTTERDIJK for the interesting presentation, especially that it touched upon the possible responses to COVID-19.

Action:

ECA Secretariat to share with the Members the presentation of Mr VAN OTTERDIJK.

7. Draft work plan and meeting schedule of the ECA Executive Committee for 2019-2021

The Acting-Secretary of ECA presented the updated version of the draft work plan and meeting schedule of the ExCom for the current biennium, based on the inputs received at the ExCom meeting in December.

Overall, Members expressed their agreement with the work plan and meeting schedule and stated the following:

- Due to the postponement of the 32nd Session of the ERC to a later date, the task “Review of the status of preparations for the 32nd ERC (2020)” should be added to the upcoming ExCom meetings’ agendas until the ERC will take place;
- Consideration should be given to re-scheduling the 38/3 meeting of the ExCom, planned to take place in May, for a later date in June or July.

Action:

ECA Secretariat to add the task “Review of the status of preparations for the 32nd ERC (2020)” to the upcoming meetings’ agendas of the ExCom and will keep the possibility open for re-scheduling the next ExCom meeting to early summer.

8. Any other business

Process of adoption of the ExCom meetings’ minutes:

The ExCom Members underlined the necessity of the prompt preparation of the ExCom’s meeting minutes by the ECA Secretariat and requested that this is addressed. ECA Secretariat was requested to draft a paper describing the procedures/timeline for the adoption of the ExCom meetings’ minutes, for the information and clarity of the Members and explore the possibility of incorporating this piece of information in the information document on the roles and responsibilities of the ExCom in relation to the regional Governing Bodies (ECA and ERC), the ERG and Members of the region.

Action:

The ECA Secretariat to prepare a draft document on the procedures/timeline for the adoption of the ExCom meeting minutes and submit it to the Chairperson within two weeks after the meeting, for comments.

9. Closing of the meeting

The Chairperson thanked the ExCom Members for their participation and contribution, as well as the ECA Secretariat for the good preparation of background documents and their support throughout the meeting, and closed the meeting.

Annex 1**EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE****38/2 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

21 April 2020
Online meeting

PARTICIPANTS LIST

	Role	Country/Organization	Name	Present/Absent
1.	ECA Chairperson	Ireland	Mr Paul KIERNAN	Present
2.	ECA 1st Vice-Chairperson	Slovak Republic	Ms Zora WEBEROVA	Present
3.	ECA 2nd Vice-Chairperson	Cyprus	Mr Marios GEORGIADIS	Present
4.	ExCom Member	Albania	Ms Lorena PULLUMBI	Present
5.	ExCom Member	Czechia	Mr Jiří JÍLEK	Present
6.	ExCom Member	Georgia	Ms Ekaterine ZDIADADZE	Absent
7.	ExCom Member	Hungary	Ms Lilla EGRI	Present
8.	ExCom Member	Italy	Ms Graziella ROMITO	Absent
9.	ExCom Member	Serbia	Ms Daria JANJIĆ	Absent
10.	Deputy Regional Representative, Secretary of the ERC	FAO REU	Mr Nabil GANGI	Present
11.	Regional Programme Leader	FAO REU	Mr Raimund JEHLE	Present
12.	Senior Field Programme Officer, ERC Secretariat	FAO REU	Mr Goran STAVRIK	Present
13.	Agro-Industry Officer	FAO REU	Mr Robert VAN OTTERDIJK	Present
14.	Food Loss and Waste Consultant	FAO REU	Ms Oksana SAPIGA	Present
15.	Acting Secretary of ECA	FAO REU	Mr Piotr WLODARCZYK	Present
16.	ERC-ECA Secretariat	FAO REU	Ms Zsafia HORVÁTH	Present

Annex 2**EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE****38/2 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

21 April 2020

14.00-16.00 hrs (Rome time)

Online meeting

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

No.	Agenda Item Title	Document No./Link	Presenter
	Opening of the meeting	-	KIERNAN
1.	Adoption of the agenda	ECA_ExCom/38/2-1	EXCOM MEMBERS
2.	Adoption of the Minutes of the December 2019 ExCom meeting (38/1)	ECA_ExCom/38/1-3	EXCOM MEMBERS
3.	Update on the status of preparations for the 32nd Regional Conference for Europe (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)	ECA_ExCom/38/2-2	GANGI / STAVRIK
4.	Discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the ExCom in relation to ECA and ERC	-	GANGI / JEHLE
5.	Results of the review of the Rules of Procedure of ECA	ECA_ExCom/38/2-3, Rules of Procedure of ECA (http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu352e.pdf)	WLODARCZYK
6.	Review and recommendations on the REU Work Programme 2020-2021: RI2: Food Loss and Waste	ECA_ExCom/38/2-4	VAN OTTERDIJK
7.	Draft work plan and meeting schedule of the ECA Executive Committee for 2019-2021	ECA_ExCom/38/2-5	WLODARCZYK
8.	Any other business	-	PARTICIPANTS
	Close of the meeting	-	KIERNAN