

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE
38/8 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

19 July 2021

(Online meeting)

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 8th meeting after the 41st Session of the ECA and last before the 42nd Session. On this occasion, the Chairperson thanked the members for their flexibility and availability, and REU for their support.

The participants' list is presented in Annex 1.

Adoption of the agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted with one additional item added under AOB: Roles and responsibilities of the ExCom in relation to ECA and ERC.

The adopted meeting agenda is presented in Annex 2.

2. Update on the outcomes of the 2021 Informal Consultation (12-15 July 2021)

Mr Raimund JEHLE, the Regional Programme Leader (RPL), summarized the main outcomes of the Informal Consultation for Europe and Central Asia 2021 and lessons learnt in relation to the modality and structure of the Consultation.

The first Informal Consultation organized in a virtual format brought together 35 Members from the region and ten non-state actors, including from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector, resulting in a total of 106 participants.

Among others Mr JEHLE highlighted that the consultation:

- Gave clear emphasis that FAO needs to strengthen its holistic approach in addressing the transformation of the food systems and particularly the agri-food system. A multi-sectoral approach and a multi-partnership approach was required;
- the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) should be taken into consideration when future FAO priorities are developed in the region; and that innovations and new technologies and their comprehensive risk analysis be considered in the national and regional contexts

Related to the priority areas of the region he summarized key issues:

- Regarding the areas of smallholders support and family farming, the debate emphasized the role of cooperatives in enhancing market access and local production/processing, including supporting collective actions and cooperation between farmers and businesses, as well as that women's empowerment needed to remain an important element in the national strategic frameworks. In addition, it was stressed that the biggest concern of digitalization from smallholder perspective lies in data ownership

- Regarding food systems transformation, it was highlighted that there was a need to recognize the ongoing changes in consumer behaviours and the meeting gave emphasis to better understanding the consumer needs, as well as the impacts on the agri-food chain. Moreover, it was underlined that better education and knowledge to improve consumer awareness needs to be provided.
- Regarding the priority related to climate change and natural resource management, the IC stressed that the development of national legislation and capacity-building platforms should be the foundation of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) support, including a multi stakeholder's dialogues and national policy harmonization procedures aimed towards NBS mainstreaming in the region.
- Regarding the priority related to food security and nutrition, it was noted that holistic, systems approaches including working along the farm to fork continuum, through nutrition-sensitive value chains are required to address all forms of malnutrition.

The ExCom thanked REU for the interesting discussions and great organization of the Consultation and confirmed their dedication to working together with FAO in the future along the lines of the UNFSS.

Action:

Secretariat to share Mr JEHLE's Power Point presentation and the final Summary Notes of the IC with the ExCom members.

3. Identification of topics in preparation of the 33rd ERC (2022)

Ms HORVÁTH informed the ExCom that the proposed three topics presented at the last ExCom meeting by Mr GANGI, Secretary of the ERC, were shared with all Members of the region through the Informal Consultation. The next step in the process to identify the main topic(s) of the ERC will be the Europe Regional Group meeting in September.

Ms HORVÁTH further clarified, that after close consultation with Poland (the Host Country) the foreseen dates of the ERC were moved from 2-6 May 2022 to 10-13 May 2022.

Action:

N/A

4. Preparation to the 42nd Session of ECA (2021)

Mr WŁODARCZYK presented an update on the current state of preparations to the Session of ECA and summarized the main points requiring decision or approval from the ExCom.

Mr WŁODARCZYK informed the ExCom, that on the previously agreed dates for the Session (20-22 October 2021) the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG), which is a partner organization with FAO, is organizing a regional event, namely the Agricultural Policy Forum 2021. To facilitate high level attendance at the ECA Session without clashing with other important regional events, the ExCom decided to postpone the ECA Session to 27-29 October 2021.¹

¹ Taking into account other relevant FAO Governing Body Sessions organized on the week of 25-29 October, the ECA Secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson of the ECA decided to further discuss the final dates for the session.

Following a confirmation from the Government of Hungary on its continued commitment to host the 42nd Session of the ECA, the ExCom discussed the possible modality options for the Session and decided to start the necessary preparations for a hybrid, three-day session. When more information is available on the pandemic situation and travel restrictions within the region, a decision could still be taken to shift from a hybrid session to a full-physical or a full-online meeting.

The ExCom noted that the explanatory note on the role of rapporteurs at ECA sessions will be sent out to all Members of the region during the current week.

Furthermore, the ExCom agreed, that a reminder message including a deadline extension to all Members in the region will be necessary in July in relation to submitting nominations for the functions of the Chair of ECA, Vice-Chairs of ECA and other members of the ExCom.

Action:

The ECA Secretariat to start the preparatory work for a hybrid 42nd Session of the ECA to be held in Budapest, Hungary.

The ECA Secretariat to send a message to all Members in the region with the explanatory note on the role of rapporteurs at ECA sessions.

The ECA Secretariat to send a message to all Members in the region about the extension of the deadline for submitting nominations for the positions of the Chair of ECA, Vice-Chairs of ECA and other members of the ExCom.

5. Any other business

The Secretariat brought to the attention of the ExCom the current version of the ECA ExCom Information document and requested the advice of the ExCom on the way forward.

Taking into account the huge work done to develop the document and the value it represents for future members of the ExCom, the ExCom requested the Secretariat to investigate how and in which format the document could be formalized as an ECA document (Annex to the Rules of Procedure, stand-alone document, etc.).

The ExCom further agreed that it would be beneficial to publish the document online and present it during the 42nd Session of the ECA after the legal advice received.

Action:

Secretariat to investigate what are the possible ways for the developed document to become an official ECA information paper and whether it should be presented at the upcoming ECA Session.

6. Closing of the meeting

The Chairperson thanked the ExCom members for their participation and contribution throughout the two year-long term, as well as the ECA Secretariat for good preparation of background documents and support, wished everyone a healthy and relaxing holiday season, and closed the meeting.

Annex 1

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**38/8 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

19 July 2021

14.00-15.30 hrs (Rome time)

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 GEORGIADES	Present
4.	ExCom Member	Albania	Ms Lorena PULLUMBI	Absent
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.	Regional Programme Leader, FAO Europe and Central Asia	FAO REU	Mr Raimund JEHLE	Present
11.	Acting Secretary of ECA	FAO REU	Mr Piotr WŁODARCZYK	Present
12.	ERC-ECA Secretariat	FAO REU	Ms Zsafia HORVÁTH	Present

Annex 2

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**38/8 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

19 July 2021

14.00-15.30 hrs (Rome time)

Online meeting

AGENDA

No.	Agenda Item Title	Document No./Link	Presenter
	Opening of the meeting	-	KIERNAN
1.	Adoption of the agenda	ECA_ExCom/38/8-1	PARTICIPANTS
2.	Update on the outcomes of the 2021 Informal Consultation (12-15 July 2021)	-	JEHLE
3.	Identification of topics in preparation of the 33rd ERC (2022)	-	GANGI/HORVATH
4.	Preparation of the 42nd Session of ECA (2021)	ECA_ExCom/38/8-2	WŁODARCZYK
5.	Any other business	-	PARTICIPANTS
	Close of the meeting	-	KIERNAN