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YOUTH

Second Regional Rural Youth Forum for Europe and Central Asia

Concept Note and Agenda
11-13 June 2025
Budapest, Hungary

Languages: English and Russian

Venue: Radisson Blu Béke Hotel

43 Teréz körút, 1067 Budapest, Hungary



International Year
of Cooperatives



United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



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Concept Note

Rural youth¹ in Europe and Central Asia face several challenges, including access to knowledge, training, natural resources, in particular land, as well as financial resources. They also have limited access to markets, decent employment opportunities, engagement in policy processes, and much more. At the same time their role in the revitalization of rural areas is globally acknowledged. During recent years, the issues of youth have been integrated into global processes, such as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, and the Youth2030 Strategy².

Young women and men can be catalysts for economic growth and development in rural areas. However, there are still gaps in understanding the specific economic, social and cultural issues that affect their aspirations, livelihoods, well-being and integration into local economies. Given this, more dialogue is needed for the formulation of effective policies and interventions to support rural youth in building their livelihoods, empowering them, creating employment opportunities fit to their aspirations, and ensuring the generational renewal of family farming and sustainability of rural communities.

Therefore, it has been a priority for the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) to establish a platform for youth and about youth. After a series of online consultations, the First Regional Rural Youth Forum was organized in November 2023 with physical presence.

Built on the outcomes of the first Forum and FAO's priorities in Europe and Central Asia region, the Second Regional Rural Youth Forum, which also commemorates FAO's 80th anniversary by highlighting its commitment to empower rural youth in the region, will be held in Budapest with the aims to:

- Discuss and obtain information from rural youth regarding their situation, challenges, and pathways in the Region;
- Provide a platform for exchange among youth actors, policy makers, and representatives of international partners;
- Raise awareness on the importance of generational sustainability of family farming;
- Discuss policy options to empower youth to ensure equitable agrifood livelihoods and sustainable rural development; and
- Establish or further enhance partnerships among governments, civil society, academia, private sector, and international organizations with interest in rural youth and young farmers.

The participants are expected from youth organisations, youth networks, and other civil society organisations, governments, academia, private sector, international organizations working with or representing rural youth as well as FAO REU Country Offices.

We are looking forward to welcoming all partners in Budapest.

To follow via Zoom, please register at

https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Vm_lwRtCSFucQhhRYLaDgg

¹ In 1995, the UN General Assembly defined youth as those aged 15 to 24 but noted that the age range varies among countries and societies. However, for policy purposes, "youth" can be defined differently. For instance, farmers in the European Union younger than 40 are defined as "young farmers".

² For more information, please follow the link: <https://www.un.org/youthaffairs/en/youth2030/about>.

Agenda

Wednesday, 11 June 2025	
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants
Session 1: Opening and setting the scene <i>Moderator: Regina Kistler, International Specialist on Youth and Rural Development, FAO REU</i>	
09:00 – 09:20	Welcoming words and reflection on the importance of rural youth in the region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Viorel Gutu, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia</i> • <i>Kazuki Kitaoka, Director of the FAO Office of Youth and Women (video message)</i>
09:20 – 09:30	Overview of the programme <i>Katalin Ludvig, Regional Youth Focal Point, FAO REU</i>
09:30 – 09:50	Getting to know each other - Icebreaker activity
09:50 – 10:30	Rural youth for agriculture and rural development – Marketplace of participating countries
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee and tea break
Session 2: Understanding the landscape - Situation and needs of rural youth <i>Moderator: Marianna Bicchieri, Gender Officer, FAO REU</i>	
11:00 – 11:20	Study on the situation and needs of rural youth in Central Asia: <i>Kanat Tilekeyev, Senior Research Fellow of University of Central Asia, KYRGYZSTAN</i>
11:20 – 12:10	Panel discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Natalija Bogdanov, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, SERBIA</i> • <i>Kanat Tilekeyev, Senior Research Fellow of University of Central Asia, KYRGYZSTAN</i> • <i>Alessia Musumurra, Policy Analysis Coordinator, EU CAP Network, BELGIUM / ITALY</i>
12:10 – 12:30	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
12:30 – 12:50	Group photo
12:50 – 14:10	Lunch
Session 3: Generational renewal of family farming: access to land, business services and investments <i>Moderator: Bradley Paterson, International Land Tenure Specialist, FAO REU</i>	
14:10 – 14:25	Presentation: Access to land, secure land rights and land markets: <i>Morten Hartvigsen, Land Tenure Officer, FAO REU</i>
14.25 – 14.35	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
14:35 – 14:50	Presentation: Enhancing youth responsible investment in agriculture by increasing access to business advisory services and incentives -

	lessons learned and ways forward: <i>Yannick Fiedler, Capacity Development Officer, FAO HQ</i>
14:50 – 15:00	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
15:00 – 15:20	<p>Panel discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ana Benoliel Coutinho, CSO Facilitation Committee / Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Movement in ECA, MOLDOVA</i> • <i>Aleksandre Shakhnazarovi, Head of the Agricultural Cooperatives and Rural Development Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, GEORGIA</i> • <i>Oliver Stefanovski, Associate, IPARD Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, NORTH MACEDONIA</i>
15:20 – 15:40	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
15:40 – 16:10	Coffee and tea break
<p>Session 4: Generational renewal of family farming: access to knowledge and access to policy Moderator: <i>Anna Korzenszky, Partnerships Officer, FAO HQ</i></p>	
16:10 – 16:20	Generational sustainability of family farming under the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028: <i>Anna Korzenszky, Partnerships Officer, FAO HQ</i>
16:20 – 16:40	<p>Panel discussion on generational turnover, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and gender equity in family farming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Miklós Weisz, Senior Policy Advisor and former Co-President of the Hungarian Association of Young Farmers (AGRYA) and Head of the Young Farmers' Section of the National Chamber of Agriculture, HUNGARY</i> • <i>Madina Sadirdinova, CSO Facilitation Committee / Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Movement in ECA, KYRGYZSTAN</i> • <i>Pavle Djordjevic, young farmer and Board Member of the National Association “Serbia Organica”, SERBIA</i>
16:40 – 16:50	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
16:50 – 17:00	<p>Closing of the day <i>Regina Kistler, International Specialist on Youth and Rural Development, FAO REU</i> <i>András Kovaloczy, Junior Technical Officer, Rural Development, Family Farming, and Youth, FAO REU</i></p>
From 18:00	<p>Joint organized dinner Location: <i>VakVarjú Restaurant</i> <i>Paulay Ede u. 7, 1061 Budapest, Hungary</i></p>

Thursday, 12 June 2025	
09:00 – 09:20	Opening activity: participants' reflections on the first day
Session 5: Policy options for the empowerment of rural youth Moderator: Regina Kistler, International Specialist on Youth and Rural Development, FAO REU	
09:20 – 10:05	5a: Country cases on policies for empowering rural youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>GEORGIA: Aleksandre Shakhnazarovi, Head of the Agricultural Cooperatives and Rural Development Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</i> • <i>UZBEKISTAN: Khadicha Suyarova, Leading Specialist, Department of Development of Science, Innovations and Education, Ministry of Agriculture</i> • <i>TÜRKIYE: Cavit Caglar Çankaya, Member of the Youth Council under the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</i> • <i>MONTENEGRO: Milena Krasic, Senior Advisor for Programming, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management</i> • <i>BELARUS: Aliaksandr Sharenka, Head of the Finance Sector, Institute of System Researches in Agro-Industrial Complex of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus</i>
10:05 – 10:20	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
10:20 – 10:50	Coffee and tea break
10:50 – 11:50	5b: Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Piroska Kállay, European Economic and Social Committee, HUNGARY</i> • <i>Shalala Hasanova, WFF Youth Policy Board member, AZERBAIJAN</i> • <i>Madina Sadirdinova, CSO Facilitation Committee / Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Movement in ECA, KYRGYZSTAN</i> • <i>Spyros Papadatos, Secretary General Rural Youth Europe, BELGIUM / GREECE</i>
11:50 – 12:10	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
12:10 – 13:30	Lunch break
Session 6: Collective action to empower rural youth Moderator: Viktorya Ayvazyan, International Rural Development Specialist, FAO REU	
13:30 – 13:40	Presentation: <i>Agnieszka Maliszewska, Vice-President of COPA-COGECA, European sectorial member of Cooperatives Europe, POLAND</i>
13:40 – 14:40	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mariam Gabrielyan, Head of Strategic Planning & External Relations at Farm Credit Armenia UCO CC; Executive Director at RuralCoop Support Foundation; Board Member at Cooperatives Europe, ARMENIA</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agnieszka Maliszewska, Vice-President of COPA-COGECA, European sectorial member of Cooperatives Europe, POLAND</i> • <i>Petar Nikolic, Vice-President of the Youth Agripreneurs Network, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</i> • <i>Arsen Rysdauletov, Almaty Region Apple Growers Association, KAZAKHSTAN</i>
14:40 – 15:00	Questions, comments, and reflections from the audience
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee and tea break
Session 7: Group work on ideas and initiatives to support youth inclusion in agriculture and policy processes <i>Moderator: Katalin Ludvig, Regional Youth Focal Point, FAO REU</i>	
15:30 – 16:30	Group work
16:30 – 17:00	Reporting back and closing of the day

Friday, 13 June 2025

Session 8: Rebranding agriculture and rural areas

Moderator: Bianka Laskovics, Regional Priority Programme Coordination and Rural Development Specialist, FAO REU

09:00 – 09:20	<p>Presentation of young entrepreneurs and innovators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emma Khachataryan, organic producer, Bari Farm, ARMENIA</i> • <i>Veaceslav Burlacu, General Manager, SRL Svirol-Agro. MOLDOVA</i> • <i>Arnita Veliu, Agricultural Development Service Advisor, Managing Director, BOTANIC L.L.C, KOSOVO</i>
09:10 – 10:10	<p>Panel discussion on income diversification, entrepreneurship and innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Veaceslav Burlacu, General Manager, SRL Svirol-Agro, MOLDOVA</i> • <i>Arnita Veliu, Agricultural Development Service Advisor, Managing Director, BOTANIC L.L.C, KOSOVO</i> • <i>Tokhtar Bolyssov, non-staff Advisor to the Minister of Science and Higher Education, KAZAKHSTAN</i> • <i>Mario Stojcevski, Special Advisor to the Minister for youth and policies targeting young farmers, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, NORTH MACEDONIA</i>
10:10 – 10:30	Questions and reflections from the audience
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee and tea break
<h3>Session 9: Green agriculture: Youth engagement for a better tomorrow</h3> <p><i>Moderator: Gulmira Urmanbetova, Project Coordinator for Green Agriculture Initiative, FAO REU</i></p>	
11:00 – 11:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreaker • Input: Shaping the future with Green Agriculture • Video: Shades of Green, Advancing agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia
11:25 – 11:30	<p>Questions and answers</p> <p><i>Tania Santivanez, Agricultural Officer, FAO REU</i></p>
11:30 – 12:00	<p>Group work</p> <p><i>David Dorward, Intern, Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, FAO REU</i></p>
12:00 – 12:20	<p>Reporting back and reflections</p> <p><i>Timea Abueisa, Environmental Sustainability and Operational Specialist, FAO REU</i></p>
<h3>Session 10: Wrap-up and closing of the Forum</h3> <p><i>Moderator: Regina Kistler, International Specialist for Youth and Rural Development, FAO REU</i></p>	
12:20 – 12:45	Reflections and key takeaways from the Forum
12:45 – 13:00	Closing of the Forum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia</i>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch