

ECA/37/12/REPORT

REPORT

Baku, Azerbaijan

17 and 18 April 2012

European Commission

on Agriculture

Thirty-seventh Session



Previous sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (known as the European Committee on Agricultural Technology from 1949 to 1952 and as the European Committee on Agriculture until 1956) are as follows:

1.	Preparatory Meeting	Paris, 27–28 June 1949
2.	First Session	Rome, 26-30 September 1949
3.	Second Session	Geneva, 27-30 March 1950
4.	Third Session	Rome, 25-28 June 1951
5.	Fourth Session	Rome, 3-6 June 1952
6.	Fifth Session	Rome, 26-29 May 1953
7.	Sixth Session	Rome, 14-18 June 1954
8.	Seventh Session	Rome, 20-24 June 1955
9.	Eighth Session	Rome, 7-11 May 1956
10.	Ninth Session	Rome, 17-21 June 1957
11.	Tenth Session	Rome, 19-23 May 1958
12.	Eleventh Session	Rome, 25-29 May 1959
13.	Twelfth Session	Rome, 15-19 May 1961
14.	Thirteenth Session	Rome, 13-18 May 1963
15.	Fourteenth Session	Rome, 17-21 May 1965
16.	Fifteenth Session	Rome, 15-20 May 1967
17.	Sixteenth Session	Rome, 23-26 October 1968
18.	Seventeenth Session	Rome, 7-11 September 1970
19.	Eighteenth Session	Rome, 8-12 May 1972
20.	Nineteenth Session	Rome, 17-21 June 1974
21.	Twentieth Session	Rome, 17-23 June 1976
22.	Twenty-first Session	Rome, 19-23 June 1978
23.	Twenty-second Session	Rome, 23-27 June 1980
24.	Twenty-third Session	Rome, 21-25 June 1982
25.	Twenty-fourth Session	Innsbruck, Austria, 18-22 June 1984
26.	Twenty-fifth Session	Chania, Greece, 8-12 June 1987
27.	Twenty-sixth Session	Porto, Portugal, 23-26 May 1989
28.	Twenty-seventh Session	Herrsching, Germany, 1-5 July 1991
29.	Twenty-eighth Session	Valetta, Malta, 27 September – 1 October 1993
30.	Twenty-ninth Session	Bled, Slovenia, 2-6 October 1995
31.	Thirtieth Session	Nitra, Slovakia, 8-11 October 1997
32.	Thirty-first Session	Rome, 12-14 October 1999
33.	Thirty-second Session	Rome, 7-8 March 2002
34.	Thirty-third Session	Rome, 1-2 March 2004
35.	Thirty-fourth Session	Riga, Latvia, 7 June 2006
36.	Thirty-fifth Session	Innsbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008
37.	Thirty-sixth Session	Yerevan, Armenia, 11-12 May 2010

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirty-seventh Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 17 and 18 April 2012.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr Ilham Guliyev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Azerbaijan opened the Session and considered the topics to be discussed as being very pertinent for Azerbaijan and the Region, in particular land reform and gender issues. He also highlighted the need to ensure sufficient, high quality and healthy food for the growing global population.

3. On behalf of FAO, Ms Fernanda Guerrieri, Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Azerbaijan for its hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Session. This was supported by all delegations. She recalled that the regional Programme of Work and Budget for 2012–13 and regional priority areas of action 2014–15 had been presented and discussed at the Informal Consultation Meeting, which had been held on 26 and 27 January 2012 in Budapest. She emphasized the importance of the technical items on the Agenda of the ECA, as the technical preparatory body for the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), and underlined that the ECA and the ERC would deliberate on the priorities of FAO's work programme with a mandate to provide guidance to the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) as well as to the Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC).

4. In the absence of the elected Chairperson (Mr Zohrab Malek) and Vice-Chairperson (Ms Daniela Rotondaro) it was necessary to elect a Chairperson for the session from the member countries present. In consultation with the Chairperson of the European Regional Group, Ms Hedwig Wögerbauer (Austria) was proposed and elected as Chairperson of the 37th Session of the ECA.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Commission adopted its Agenda, as given in Appendix A to this Report.

II. APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

6. Mr Alessandro Villa, First Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of the European Union Delegation to the Holy See, the Sovereign Order of Malta and the United Nations Organizations in Rome, was appointed as Rapporteur of the ECA.

III. Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010–2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012–2013 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014–15¹

7. The Commission appreciated the lessons learned from implementation of the regional programme of work in the previous biennium and considered areas of priority action for FAO in the Europe and Central Asia Region for the current and future biennia in the context of global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization.

8. The Commission confirmed the regional results under the PWB 2012–13. In order to better align the priorities with the results in view of limited resources available it was recommended to indicate areas proposed to be de-emphasized.

9. The Commission welcomed the broad and inclusive strategic thinking process launched by the Director-General in January 2012 to determine the future strategic direction and priorities of the Organization. The Commission emphasized the importance of focusing the work of FAO on key challenges faced by countries so as to achieve measurable progress through the effective and efficient use of available resources on a limited number of activities, aligned with FAO's comparative advantage.

10. The Commission confirmed that the main global challenges are consistent with the conditions in the Region, and agreed with the regional trends and challenges. It supported the six priorities for work in the Region and requested that these be taken into account in reviewing the FAO Strategic Framework and preparing the Medium Term Plan 2014–17:

- a. strengthening food and nutrition security;
- b. policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification for small farms;
- c. natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- d. control of animal, plant and foodborne pests and diseases;
- e. policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade, standard-setting and political-economic organizations;
- f. supporting and building global and regional public goods through applied research in the areas of food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

11. In reviewing the challenges and priorities for the Region, the Commission emphasized: support to smallholder agriculture while managing natural resources in a more sustainable manner; more attention to fisheries and forestry issues; work on land degradation and improved land use; addressing nutrition and climate change; and mainstreaming gender in all activities.

12. The Commission urged FAO to further focus its work based on its comparative advantage, particularly in providing global public goods and policy advice based on its normative and analytical work. It underlined the essential functions of advocacy, communication, capacity development and knowledge-sharing.

13. The Commission requested FAO to prepare Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) as a tool for effective delivery of assistance and country-specific capacity development, where relevant coordinated with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

¹ ECA 37/12/2, ECA 37/12/5 and ERC/12/INF/15

and in close collaboration with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), civil society and the private sector. It encouraged FAO to facilitate increased collaboration at regional and subregional level, including through cooperation and partnerships with public and private organizations, on transboundary pests and diseases, food safety, sustainable management of natural resources, and food price volatility and integration of smallholder farmers in value chains.

14. The Commission encouraged the ongoing implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, as well as the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests once formally adopted.

IV. Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20 year perspective²

15. The most striking feature of land reform in the post-Soviet states has been the overall shift from collective to individual land tenure in agriculture, generally accompanied by privatization of legal land ownership. Individualization of farming has been one of the main factors that acted to arrest the initial transition decline and led to agricultural recovery in the Region. In countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the recovery point for agricultural growth is closely linked with the observed watershed dates for individualization of farming. Furthermore, the rate and the attained level of recovery are higher in countries in regions that pursued decisive individualization policies (the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia), while in countries with less sweeping individualization reforms (European CIS) the recovery has been sluggish.

16. In addition to resumption of agricultural growth, land reform and individualization have also led to significant improvements in agricultural productivity due to the higher incentives in family farming. Greater production and higher productivity have contributed to significant poverty reduction observed since 2000. Rural incomes rise with the increase of the land allotments in family farms and with the increase of the share of output that farms are able to sell. To ensure continued improvement of rural family incomes and poverty mitigation, policy measures should be implemented that facilitate enlargement of very small family farms and encourage the access of small farms to market channels and services. Enlargement of small farms requires development of land markets both for buying and selling of land and for land leasing. Improvement of market access requires development of services for sale of products (collection, sorting, packing, quality control), availability of competitive processing plants, and rental arrangements for farm machinery and mechanical services.

17. Further productivity improvements require re-establishment of extension and advisory services, attention to animal health through modern veterinary services, and introduction of artificial insemination for higher-yielding breeds. FAO was requested to engage in shaping these policies and provide technical assistance in respective areas of expertise including policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification of production for small farms.

18. Member countries took note of the role of smallholder agriculture in their countries and recommended that FAO:

² ECA 37/12/3

- (i) continues efforts to promote the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure in the Region;
- (ii) assists member countries in drafting laws for agricultural cooperatives, and advises countries on programmes for development of farm cooperatives;
- (iii) assists countries in developing other farm services for smallholders; and
- (iv) collaborates with ministries of agriculture to develop their capacity to promote a level policy playing field for smallholders.

19. Civil society organizations drew the attention of the ECA to concrete instances of land grabbing and the uneven position of smallholders in defending their tenure rights, emphasizing the need to ensure access to land for the rural population.

V. Women in Agriculture - Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The Activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development³

20. The Secretariat presented the results of extensive research on the socio-economic status of rural women and men in the Region and acknowledged the constraints on providing a comprehensive analysis due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data in the agricultural sector. A brief report on the activities of the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) in the 2010–11 biennium was also included. It was noted that the gender gap refers to the unequal access to assets, resources, and opportunities in addition to the unequal access to legal recourse and to the existence of discriminatory pay practices.

21. The Commission expressed support for FAO's proposed core set of gender indicators in agriculture. Furthermore, it was recommended to increase the visibility of the WPW and urged governments to increase self-financing of participatory activities in the Working Party. Gender-specific indicators and targets should be established in formulating and assessing policies, programmes and projects.

22. The Commission:

- a. Noted that, in line with the findings of the FAO State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2010-11 report, closing the gender gap in agriculture may raise yields significantly, and thus contribute to poverty alleviation; however the general lack of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture hinders the full understanding of the status of rural populations.
- b. Urged member countries to cooperate with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) on awareness-raising and capacity development in the ministries of agriculture and national statistical offices in the field of sex-disaggregated data.
- c. Within the framework of revitalizing the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development, urged member countries to further review and discuss the proposals of:
 - the creation of a National Gender Focal Point in the ministry or relevant national institution;
 - the revised roles and responsibilities of the Board and Secretariat of the WPW; and

³ ECA 37/12/4 rev.1

- a new name for the WPW.

23. Civil society highlighted the fact that women globally produce more than half of the food, yet are the majority of the undernourished. It was pointed out that this is a direct result of the lack of institutional support for smallholder farms. It was also noted that women lagged behind in all but one Millennium Development Goal.

VI. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the ECA and the members of the Executive Committee

24. In accordance with Rule III of the Rules of Procedure, a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson needed to be elected. The Session Chairperson thanked the outgoing Chairperson (Mr Zohrab Malek) and Vice Chairperson (Ms Daniela Rotondaro) for their commitment and collaboration over the previous four years in guiding the work of the Commission in close collaboration with member countries.

25. The Commission unanimously elected Mr Balázs Hamar, Permanent Representative of Hungary to FAO, as Chairperson of the ECA for a term of four years and Ms Alina Popescu, Alternate Permanent Representative of Romania to FAO was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairperson for a term of four years.

26. The Chairperson recalled that during the 36th Session of the Commission six members had been elected to the Executive Committee. Of these six members, four put their candidature forward for an additional term. The Chairperson thanked both Ms Christina Pitta (Cyprus) and Mr Fazil Düsünceli (Turkey) for their collaboration in the Executive Committee during the last two and four years respectively.

27. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for another term of two years, eligible for re-election for up to one additional two-year term:

- Ms Natalie Feistritzer, Austria
- Ms Marina Calvino, Italy
- Mr Vasily Lavrovskiy, Russian Federation
- Mr Hans-Jörg Lehmann, Switzerland, and

The Commission unanimously elected the following new members to the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for two additional two-year terms:

- Mr Fuad Farzalibayov, Azerbaijan
- Mr Makbule Koçak, Turkey.

VII. Other Business

28. No other business was discussed.

VIII. Date and Place of the Thirty-eighth Session

29. Romania confirmed their invitation to host the 38th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture to be held back to back with the 29th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe and the related events. The Commission took note of this proposal and will bring this to the attention of the FAO Director-General for consideration and decision.

IX. Summary of Conclusions presented by the Rapporteur

30. The presentation of the summary of conclusions by the Rapporteur on the deliberations of the debate regarding Items 3, 4 and 5 was unanimously endorsed by the Commission.

Closing of the Session

31. Before closing the session the Chairperson expressed concern that, despite of the generous time allocated for these important topics during the session, not more delegations participated in the discussions on the topics contributing to a more lively discussion. She hoped that the preparations for future ECA Sessions will lead to a more comprehensive and multi participatory discussion. In closing the Session, the Chairperson warmly thanked the Azerbaijan authorities for hosting the 37th ECA Session. She also thanked all the participants for their contributions. Furthermore, she expressed her appreciation to the outgoing and new members of the Executive Committee. The Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia extended her thanks to the participants for their constructive contributions, and welcomed the debate, fruitful discussions and excellent recommendations for endorsement by the Regional Conference for Europe.

Appendix A

Agenda

Opening of the Session

1. **Adoption of the Agenda:** *for decision* (ECA 37/12/1 rev.2)
2. **Appointment of Rapporteur:** *for decision*
3. **Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012-2013 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014-15, taking into account the discussions and recommendations from the Regional Technical Commissions:** *for discussion as preparation for the 28th ERC* (ECA37/12/2 and ECA 37/12/5 and ERC/12/INF/15)
4. **Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20 year perspective:** *for discussion and decision* (ECA 37/12/3)
5. **Women in Agriculture - Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The**
6. **Activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development:** *for discussion and decision* (ECA 37/12/4 Rev.1)
7. **Election of members of the Executive Committee:** *for decision*
8. **Other Business**
9. **Date and Place of the Thirty-eighth Session:** *for decision*
10. **Summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur**

Closing of the Session