



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

ECA/44/25/REPORT

# REPORT

## **Forty-fourth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture**

**Budapest, Hungary**

**2-3 October 2025**

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 Valletta, 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
38. Thirty-seventh Session Baku, Azerbaijan, 17-18 April 2012
39. Thirty-eighth Session Bucharest, Romania, 1-2 April 2014
40. Thirty-ninth Session Budapest, Hungary, 22-23 September 2015
41. Fortieth Session Budapest, Hungary, 27-28 September 2017
42. Forty-first Session Budapest, Hungary, 1-2 October 2019
43. Forty-second Session Budapest, Hungary, 19-21 January 2022
44. Forty-third Session Budapest, Hungary, 27-28 September and 27 November 2023
45. Forty-fourth Session Budapest, Hungary, 2-3 October 2025

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## I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. The Forty-fourth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held on 2 and 3 October 2025 in Budapest, Hungary.
2. The ECA session was attended by 93 delegates from 47 Member Countries, one Member Organization (the European Union). Ten observers representing international governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, research, and academia were in attendance.

## OPENING OF THE SESSION

3. Ms Lidija Popandonova, Chairperson of the European Commission on Agriculture, opened the Forty-fourth Session of the ECA and welcomed the delegates. She also thanked the Government of Hungary for hosting the ECA once again in a physical modality.
4. Mr Oszkár Ökrös, Deputy State Secretary for International Relations, Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary, welcomed delegates to Budapest for the 44th Session of the ECA. He highlighted the importance of this year's meeting, marking the fifth occasion of the ECA in Budapest since 2015, as well the 80th anniversary of FAO's founding. Emphasizing the central theme of balancing productivity and sustainability in agrifood systems transformation, the Deputy State Secretary emphasized that agrifood systems should be transformed in a way that combines high productivity and long-term sustainability, which is not only of economic importance but also a strategic and moral responsibility. In this regard, the Deputy State Secretary referred to Hungary's comprehensive, long-term strategy, focusing on the sustainable and inclusive transformation of its agricultural economy. This entails the promotion of organic and agroecological farming, reducing the environmental impact of food production and supporting local production. He also highlighted the importance of digital transformation in shaping modern agriculture and attracting youth. In addition, he mentioned the importance of adequate financing, environmental and social governance and innovative partnerships. The Deputy State Secretary reiterated the commitment of Hungary to supporting small- and medium-sized farms in sustainable transformation and reaffirmed also that sustainable agrifood systems are central to economic competitiveness and social and environmental responsibility.
5. On behalf of FAO, Mr Viorel Gutu, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed participants and expressed gratitude to the Government of Hungary for its excellent cooperation and for hosting the 44th Session of the ECA. He noted the special significance of 2025, being the 80th anniversary year of FAO, and emphasized the central theme of balancing productivity and sustainability in transforming agrifood systems in the region. In this regard, he added that this shouldn't be a choice, but productivity and sustainability should both be achieved. He highlighted the importance of inclusive agrifood policies, digital solutions, resilient investment, gender equality, biodiversity, the situation of rural youth and FAO's response to multiple crises, as also reflected in the agenda. He underlined that the guidance received from Members would be essential in orienting the work of FAO in the region for the 2026–2027 biennium and in preparing for the Regional Conference for Europe in 2026.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

6. The Commission adopted the Agenda, as given in Appendix A of this report, and the Timetable, with the change requested by Members of the Commission prior to the ECA regarding Agenda item 9, "FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia", to move it from the written correspondence procedure to discuss the agenda item live during the Session.

## ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEURS

7. Ms Katarzyna Kowalska (Poland) and Ms Isabelle Vreeke (Netherlands) were elected as Rapporteurs of the Forty-fourth ECA Session.

## II. MAIN TECHNICAL THEME: BALANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN DRIVING AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

8. The document ECA/44/25/3<sup>1</sup> sets out the technical focus of the Forty-fourth ECA session and highlighted three mutually reinforcing enablers for achieving agrifood systems that are productive, resilient, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive: (i) strategic policies and approaches providing coherent, systems-based frameworks that align crop productivity with environmental and climate objectives (ECA/44/25/4); (ii) digitalization leveraging farmer-centred tools to enhance productivity, sustainability and adaptive decision-making (ECA/44/25/5/Rev1); and (iii) sustainable and inclusive finance that mobilizes public and private resources, enabling investment and expanding financial inclusion (ECA/44/25/6).

9. The Commission commended FAO for the main technical theme and the comprehensive background documents prepared for the subsequent items that provided, *inter alia*, a broad spectrum of policies and approaches and served as a valuable reference for examples of national and regional policies and approaches.

10. The Commission commended FAO for implementing the food systems approach in the analysis of and support for the implementation of policies and approaches aimed at strengthening both productivity and sustainability, and supporting the process of agriculture and food systems transformation.

## STRATEGIC POLICIES AND APPROACHES TOWARDS MORE EFFICIENT, INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURE TO IMPROVE CROPPING SYSTEMS' PRODUCTIVITY, NATURAL RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

11. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/4.<sup>2</sup>

12. The Commission recommended that Members:

- a) **Continue** transforming agrifood systems into more efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient systems by pursuing integrated, coherent and multilevel policy approaches.
- b) **Integrate** agriculture, environment, water, energy, trade and rural development policies using a systems approach. Aligning these sectors will eliminate contradictory incentives, such as subsidies that encourage unsustainable practices, and unlock synergies that enhance resource efficiency, resilience and competitiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns064en>

<sup>2</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns065en>

- c) **Ensure** that national strategies are combined with decentralized, locally adapted solutions. Local governance and community-level innovation are essential to ensure that policies reflect the diverse agroecological and socioeconomic context of the region. Empowering smallholders, women and youth in decision-making will strengthen inclusiveness and ensure that transformation benefits those who depend the most on agriculture for their livelihoods.
  - d) **Promote** regional coordination mechanisms to address transboundary challenges such as water scarcity, land/soil degradation and biodiversity loss. Shared platforms and cooperative mechanisms can harmonize approaches, facilitate cross-border learning and enhance collective resilience to climate and market shocks.
  - e) **Strengthen** monitoring and data systems to provide a robust evidence base for policymaking. Investment in digital platforms, harmonized indicators and regional data-sharing arrangements will enable countries to track progress, anticipate risks and design adaptive strategies.
  - f) **Create** enabling incentives for sustainable practices. Repurposing subsidies, payment for ecosystems services, carbon markets and green insurance schemes can make sustainability economically attractive, and mobilizing targeted public and private investment will accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions.
  - g) **Emphasise** capacity development and scaling mechanisms. Farmer Field Schools, innovation labs and farmer networks should be expanded to spread integrated practices such as climate-smart agriculture, agroecology and regenerative approaches. Embedding these practices into National Adaptation Plans and nationally determined contributions will further mainstream sustainability into broader development strategies.
13. The Commission recommended FAO to:
- a) **Provide** policy advice and technical assistance to align national agricultural, climate and environmental frameworks and nutrition frameworks with FAO's four betters, the Rio Conventions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes integrating climate risk assessments, biodiversity objectives, nutrition and dietary quality considerations, circular economy principles and sustainable input management into national sectoral strategies, ensuring that productivity targets and long-term sustainability and access to healthy diets through sustainable food systems are balanced.
  - b) **Strengthen** governance and inclusiveness by facilitating multistakeholder dialogues at national and regional levels, enabling smallholders, women and youth to contribute to the shaping of agrifood policies and the development of governance mechanisms that connect local issues with national strategies and foster regional cooperation, ensuring that decision-making is transparent, participatory, accountable and equity focused and that local voices and community-based knowledge are integrated.
  - c) **Strengthen** institutional and human capacities using systems approach by scaling up Farmer Field Schools, innovation policy labs, vocational training, and extension and advisory services to promote integrated farming practices such as climate-smart agriculture, agroecology, regenerative practices, integrated pest and nutrient management, efficient water-use technologies and nature-inspired, community-based and frugal innovations. Capacity building should prioritize smallholders, women and youth, ensuring that training and innovation are inclusive and context adapted.
  - d) **Facilitate** intersectoral coordination by supporting multistakeholder platforms – such as the Regional Technical Platform on Green Agriculture and the Regional Land Degradation Neutrality Decision Support System – that connect the agriculture, water, environment, nutrition

and rural development sectors, fostering integrated approaches to address challenges such as water scarcity, land degradation and biodiversity loss.

- e) **Support** the scaling up of innovations and technologies through technical cooperation projects, demonstration farms and South-South cooperation, enabling the transfer and adaptation of precision agriculture tools, renewable energy solutions, stress-tolerant crop varieties and nature-based solutions. Expanding Farmer Field Schools, innovation labs and living labs will accelerate the adoption of integrated practices such as climate-smart agriculture, agroecology and regenerative farming.
- f) Work with the Members to **enhance** data and monitoring systems. By supporting the development of agri-environmental and nutrition-sensitive monitoring frameworks, harmonizing indicators and building inclusive digital platforms, countries can be supported to track resource use, climate risks, sustainability outcomes and nutrition impacts. Regional knowledge exchange and capacity development in data collection and analysis will further strengthen evidence-based, participatory and adaptive decision-making.

## HARNESSING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

- 14. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/5/Rev1.<sup>3</sup>
- 15. The Commission recommended that Members and FAO:
  - a) **Promote** the use and scaling of digital solutions and services that support small-scale, low-input and agroecological approaches and encourage climate-smart, resource-efficient practices – such as precision input use, soil and water monitoring, and early warning systems and tools for reducing food loss and waste – to simultaneously increase yields and reduce environmental impacts.
  - b) **Expand** affordable, high-quality rural connectivity through inclusive public–private partnerships to close the digital rural divide and ensure equitable access to digital services across all agrifood actors, including smallholders, cooperatives and marginalized communities.
  - c) **Strengthen** Agrifood Innovation Systems, research and education by funding advisory services that prioritize farm productivity and environmental sustainability, agroecological practices and nutrition outcomes, and innovation hubs and farmer networks alongside building digital skills for farmers and extension agents and involving them in knowledge co-creation of context-specific, scalable solutions.
  - d) **Mainstream** digital agriculture within national policies, with a clear focus on both productivity gains and environmental outcomes, while establishing robust data governance and artificial intelligence (AI) ethics frameworks guided by foresight.
  - e) **Embed** gender- and age-sensitive and socially inclusive approaches in digital strategies to ensure that women, youth and marginalized communities can benefit equally from new technologies, finance and services. This should include behaviourally informed approaches to shift norms and practices, strengthen trust and support adoption in small-scale and low-input systems while overcoming gender- and resource- related barriers.

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<sup>3</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns066en>

- f) **Develop** inclusive financial mechanisms and investment tools to enable smallholders and marginalized groups to participate fully in digital transformation by lowering the cost of adopting digital technologies with sustainability and nutrition co-benefits, such as subsidies for digitally enabled water-saving tools or other climate-smart solutions.
  - g) **Support** on-farm experimentation with new digital technologies via farmer-led trials and demonstration plots aligned with long-term environmental stewardship, lowering adoption costs and partnering with research institutions and extension services to generate localized evidence on their benefits and usability and their impacts on food security and nutrition.
  - h) **Design** digital solutions and public services, including early warnings, that are farmer centric and locally adapted, disseminating them through trusted intermediaries such as cooperatives and community leaders to maximize uptake and impact among diverse users.
  - i) **Invest** in integrated e-government systems, including registries and AI-driven forecasting, to enhance transparency, food safety and resilience against systemic shocks, including in redirecting agriculture subsidies towards innovation and the building of rural information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.
  - j) **Promote** open-source and open-innovation approaches, including the development and use of digital public goods, to close inclusivity gaps and strengthen collaboration between public and private actors.
  - k) **Establish** monitoring and evaluation systems to track both the adoption of digital technologies and their sustainability outcomes – including effects on productivity, input efficiency, environmental performance, nutrition and food loss reduction – to inform adaptive policy and ensure accountability.
16. The Commission recommended FAO to:
- a) **Support** countries in designing and implementing digital transformation pathways that balance productivity, sustainability and inclusion.
  - b) **Focus** on strengthening national capacities to integrate digitalization into agricultural and rural development policies, including the development of dedicated digital agriculture strategies and action plans. This may involve technical support for mainstreaming climate-smart digital solutions, developing inclusive financing mechanisms, and enhancing agrifood innovation systems to deliver sustainability-focused digital advisory services.
  - c) **Support** the design and delivery of targeted digital skills programmes for farmers, extension agents and local and national institutions to ensure meaningful and equitable adoption.
  - d) **Provide** technical assistance in designing e-government systems and digitalizing public services in a farmer-centric and inclusive manner, ensuring that they are accessible, trusted and responsive to user needs.
  - e) **Facilitate** the convening of multistakeholder innovation platforms that foster collaboration among governments, the private sector and rural communities.

## UNLOCKING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FINANCE AND STRENGTHENING PUBLIC–PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATIONS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

17. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/6.<sup>4</sup>
18. The Commission recommended that Members:
  - a) **Develop** a more robust evidence base through detailed national agrifood system finance assessments that examine policy and enabling environments, **review** meso-level financial infrastructure, and **assess**, at the micro level, the availability and appropriateness of financial products and services for different agrifood system actors. These assessments should be combined with public expenditure reviews of agriculture and related sectors and aligned with True Cost Accounting to identify financing gaps, opportunities and leverage points for scaling inclusive, sustainability-aligned finance. The resulting evidence should guide the prioritization of policy reforms, including subsidy repurposing where appropriate, as well as institutional strengthening, capacity development and investment planning.
  - b) **Develop** evidence-based and targeted action plans and integrated policy frameworks to enhance agrifood system finance, inclusive finance and sustainable finance through multistakeholder and multisectoral dialogue platforms.
  - c) **Take targeted action** to incentivize private-sector financing by (re)designing policy instruments to de-risk and crowd in private finance while using public finance in a more strategic and catalytic way, considering innovative financing and structuring approaches such as blended finance to mobilize additional private finance for green transformation and social inclusion.
  - d) **Strengthen** meso-level frameworks and institutional capacities and reduce the risks and transaction costs of agrifood system finance, including through public–private partnerships (including clear safeguards and inclusiveness criteria) and blended finance, which also should be considered to address critical rural infrastructure gaps.
  - e) **Strengthen** the capacities of national financial service providers to design and deliver a broader range of demand-driven, customer-centric financial services at lower costs to address the operational, investment and risk-management needs of agrifood system actors, with heightened attention on smallholder farmers, women, youth and agricultural small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
  - f) **Encourage** the responsible adoption of ICT and digital innovations, including artificial intelligence, to reduce delivery costs, improve risk management and drive financial product and service innovation.
  - g) **Take targeted action** to improve the “bankability” of small-scale agricultural producers, agricultural SMEs, women and youth by integrating financial literacy, nutrition-sensitive and sustainable agriculture and business advisory training into national mechanisms for delivering training and capacity building to agricultural sector actors.
  - h) **Ensure** that the specific needs of rural and agricultural sector actors are duly reflected when designing and implementing national financial inclusion strategies.
  - i) **Mainstream** the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems principles into policy, regulatory and legal frameworks for responsible investment.

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<sup>4</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns067en>

- j) **Establish** clear frameworks, standards and taxonomies to define, track and verify sustainable finance and investment in agrifood systems while ensuring transparency, accountability and comparability across countries and adapting to national contexts and capacities.
- k) **Repurpose** subsidies to ensure full alignment with the broader sustainability agenda of agrifood system transformation.

19. The Commission recommended FAO to:

- a) **Support** Members in implementing recommendations through its policy dialogue, normative work and capacity building and by leveraging its convening power in support of sustainable, inclusive and healthy agrifood systems.
- b) **Strengthen** the evidence base on agrifood system finance in the region, promote knowledge sharing and analyse innovations and good practices, including through tools and programmes such as the flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative.
- c) **Collaborate** with countries and a growing network of knowledge and financing partners to provide tailored investment and finance solutions for strategic planning, public and private investment, and innovative finance.
- d) **Increase** coordination among FAO, other United Nations agencies (in particular the Rome-based agencies) and international financial institutions, capitalizing on their comparative advantages to deliver more efficient and impactful financial services, particularly in a constrained fiscal space, while avoiding overlaps.
- e) **Facilitate** access to global environmental and climate financing facilities such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environmental Facility, supported by related capacity-building initiatives.

### **ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE REGION: UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS MADE**

20. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/7.<sup>5</sup>

21. The Commission recommended that Members:

- a) **Reaffirm** and **strengthen** their commitment to gender equality by taking concrete, targeted actions that address the specific needs and priorities of rural women – the largest group at risk of being left behind. These efforts must be inclusive and intersectional, recognizing the compounded marginalization experienced by young and elderly rural women.
- b) **Adopt** and systemically **integrate** gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches in national agricultural, rural development and social protection policies; community engagement; public campaigns; and large-scale programmes to improve rural women’s equitable access to resources and influence societal attitudes. Structural barriers – such as discriminatory norms and the burden of unpaid care work – must be dismantled by involving women of all ages directly in the design and implementation of programmes.

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<sup>5</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns068en>

- c) **Invest** in disaggregated data collection and analysis (by sex, age, ethnicity, disability and location) to better understand and address disparities, **guide** evidence-based decisions, **strengthen** institutional capacity and promote multisectoral dialogue to integrate the gender perspective.
  - d) **Empower** rural women as leaders in their households, in agriculture and in governance at all levels. Strategic planning and decision-making must actively include rural women from diverse backgrounds.
  - e) **Target** economic policies and inclusive value chains to provide rural women with diverse and viable income-generating opportunities. These efforts should focus on decent work, entrepreneurship, closing gender gaps in pay, unpaid workloads, and access to assets and resources.
  - f) **Invest** in rural infrastructure reflecting the intragenerational needs of rural women. Improved transport, child care, education and health care services can alleviate the care burden, enhance mobility and improve access to markets.
  - g) **Address** the needs of rural women – especially those in informal, seasonal and part-time jobs – through social protection measures. Recognizing and reducing unpaid domestic and care work is critical for equitable participation in economic and public life.
  - h) **Include** in all interventions explicit actions to close gender gaps and empower women and girls. Transformative approaches at both community and national levels are key to challenging discriminatory gender norms and driving lasting change.
  - i) **Bridge** the gap between rural communities and decision-makers by ensuring greater synergy among civil society organizations focused on women’s rights and gender equality, those working in agriculture, small business development, environmental protection and climate change mitigation.
  - j) **Encourage** the private sector to further contribute by expanding rural women’s access to knowledge, extension services, technologies and finance by actively promoting women’s empowerment through inclusive business practices.
22. The Commission recommended FAO to:
- a) **Promote** women’s empowerment and gender equality as an essential pillar for the implementation of human rights and the right to adequate food and to support the achievement of the SDGs.
  - b) **Facilitate** the implementation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Youth Engagement and the FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030<sup>6</sup> and develop and adopt a new Regional Gender Strategy and Action Plan to promote gender-transformative approaches (including in crises contexts).
  - c) **Continue** promoting and strengthening gender mainstreaming across FAO, including at Regional Office and Country Office levels, to enhance capacities and knowledge for implementing gender-transformative approaches.
  - d) **Strengthen** collaboration with Rome-based agencies and United Nations system partners to expand transformative approaches that address structural barriers to gender equality.

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<sup>6</sup> The FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030 is available at <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1375135/>

- e) **Promote** decent work, inclusive value chains and entrepreneurship for rural women to support their economic empowerment as leaders in agrifood system transformation and as key agents of household food security.
- f) **Invest** in gender-sensitive social protection and job creation in agrifood systems.
- g) **Integrate** gender in disaster preparedness, conflict recovery and climate resilience programmes.

### **PROGRESS MADE BY THE FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA ON THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FORTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**

23. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/8.<sup>7</sup>
24. The Commission took note of the progress made by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on the main recommendations of the Forty-third Session of the ECA and:
- a) **Welcomed** FAO's systematic work promoting sustainable land use and effective water management.
  - b) **Noted** the significant contribution to the development of science-based approaches, support for transboundary cooperation, the implementation of digital solutions and the promotion of youth participation in agrifood systems.
  - c) **Noted** that the integrated approach to natural resource management, including the water–energy–food–ecosystems nexus (WEFE), has demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing water scarcity and climate pressures.
  - d) **Appreciated** the engagement of FAO in specific regional projects and proposed general recommendations for the region that could be adapted for its use in national contexts.
  - e) **Commended** FAO's support to governments in Central Asia on transboundary water governance and soil degradation, including assessments of hydrological impacts, agrochemical contamination risks and sustainable land-use planning.
  - f) **Valued** FAO's capacity-building programmes in water management, including workshops and webinars on irrigation and governance, and encouraged FAO to continue promoting water governance transparency and compliance with water-related guidelines.
  - g) **Acknowledged** FAO's support for climate adaptation strategies and water efficiency measures through conducting regional assessments and support for climate-related data collection and analysis.
  - h) **Appreciated** FAO's efforts to strengthen evidence-based decision-making tools to prevent land degradation and promote land governance and support countries in moving towards land degradation neutrality (LDN) in line with their commitments under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and welcomed the integration of agroecological principles in soil and water management practices, including participatory mapping and community-based training.

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<sup>7</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns451en>

- i) **Endorsed** FAO's commitment to integrated land and water management through programmatic initiatives such as the Water–Land Nexus in Central Asia Programme, which mobilizes resources and promotes collaborative approaches.
- j) **Noted** the relevance of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) in FAO's regional work on integrated land and water management and requested greater visibility of WASAG's work in the region.
- k) **Supported** FAO's promotion of dialogue platforms and knowledge sharing through the Regional Technical Platform on Green Agriculture. Digital tools such as pesticide registration systems and soil maps should be further promoted.
- l) **Recognized** FAO's promotion of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Youth Engagement. Country Gender Assessments have provided valuable evidence to support the development of inclusive agricultural policies. The Regional Rural Youth Forum has fostered dialogue to empower rural youth.
- m) **Emphasized** the importance of ensuring balanced consideration of the interests of all countries in transboundary water governance, while also strengthening river basin and water governance reforms, and **called** for continued attention to science- and evidence-based technical information and production issues alongside social dimensions.
- n) **Commended** FAO's efforts to mobilize innovative financing and investment frameworks. These resources contribute to climate-resilient agriculture and energy security.

## FAO'S RESPONSE TO THE MULTIPLE CRISES IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

- 25. The Commission discussed the document ECA/44/25/9/REV1.<sup>8</sup>
- 26. The Commission:
  - a) **Commended** FAO and its Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia for their work in the region over the last biennium in response to multiple crises and **appreciated** the comprehensive background document.
  - b) **Agreed** that, in order to address the risks and challenges for the region's agricultural and food systems, accelerated action is needed to strengthen the resilience of agricultural and food systems and improve the affordability and accessibility of nutritious food for all.
  - c) **Acknowledged** FAO's efforts to help countries cope with these challenges and **welcomed** the initiatives undertaken by FAO to help the countries in the region deal with the escalating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, including through the promotion of climate-smart and organic agriculture, sustainable land and water management, and biodiversity conservation in the region.
  - d) **Highlighted** FAO's role in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus to address food insecurity, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations, and **reiterated** the importance of FAO's assessments and studies to promote understanding of the impacts of the multiple crises in the region, including relevant information provided on markets and trade.

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<sup>8</sup> This document is available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns070en>

- e) **Expressed** deep concern over the troubling rise in the magnitude of conflicts and wars worldwide and the inability of the international community to secure and uphold the right to food as a universal human right.
- f) **Stressed** particularly the human-caused consequences of conflicts in terms of global food security, and in this context **reiterated** its great concern over the hugely disruptive impact of the illegal war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its devastating impact on agriculture and food systems, which represents a paramount obstacle to ensuring the resilience of agrifood systems and transformation in the region.
- g) **Recalled** the decisions adopted by the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe, the 176th and 177th Sessions of the FAO Council and the report of the 44th FAO Conference, which stressed the severe implications of the war of aggression against Ukraine for agriculture and food systems in the region and globally. It **emphasized** the importance of ensuring consistency with these governing body decisions when assessing root causes and guiding FAO's response to multiple, overlapping crises in Europe and Central Asia.
- h) **Referred** to the decisions adopted by the 33rd and 34th sessions of the European Regional Conference, which specifically state that the actions "by the Russian Federation and Belarus have been characterized by the FAO Council as incompatible with the objectives and purposes of the Organization and therefore amount to a violation of Member Nation obligations under the FAO Constitution" and **called on** FAO to continue its work in the region in line with the guidance provided in these documents.
- i) **Thanked** FAO for its efforts to monitor the consequences of the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine for global availability and price levels of food commodities and **urged** FAO to continue its monitoring work (including of trade disruption and its impact) and to continue providing Members with regular updates, including on reconstruction and rehabilitation costs in the Ukrainian agricultural sector incurred by loss and damage resulting from the aggression of the Russian Federation.
- j) **Called on** FAO to continue implementing measures aimed at mitigating the disruptive impact of the war and assistance plans to restore the food-producing potential of Ukraine as well as to continue developing plans to address the global food security implications of the war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, including emergency response plans and medium- and long-term assistance plans and policy advice.
- k) **Reaffirmed**, in its majority, solidarity with Ukraine, recognizing the country's efforts to sustain agricultural production under conditions of war, and **underlined** FAO's and Members' commitments to supporting the recovery of Ukraine, especially in agriculture and its role in global food security, and its integration into regional and global markets.
- l) **Recognized** overlapping shocks – including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-related extremes and earthquakes – that have further compounded these negative effects, contributing to high inflation, food price volatility, disrupted trade and logistics, and displacement of populations.
- m) **Commended** FAO's continued efforts to respond to these challenges – including in Ukraine, Türkiye, the Republic of Moldova and other affected countries – through emergency interventions, land demining as an essential precondition for restoring agricultural production in Ukraine, rehabilitation of logistics and storage infrastructure, and support to smallholders and vulnerable groups.

- n) **Recognized** FAO's resource mobilization efforts since 2022 to support Members in crisis response and recovery and encouraged further partnerships with the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Union and other partners.
- o) **Encouraged** FAO to continue aligning its crisis response with longer-term objectives.
- p) **Recalled** the imperative of ensuring the protection of all civilians, including humanitarian workers, at all times, as well as of civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools and United Nations premises.
- q) **Expressed** deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with catastrophic levels of acute hunger and food insecurity, and called on Israel to fully lift the blockade and allow humanitarian assistance at scale into Gaza, while strongly condemning Hamas and its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks.
- r) **Expressed** grave concern at the growing acute hunger and food insecurity in all countries and regions affected by escalating conflicts and humanitarian crises, from Sudan (the) to the Democratic Republic of Congo, from Yemen to Afghanistan to Haiti, and called on all parties to strictly respect international humanitarian law and human rights.

27. The Commission recommended that Members:

- a) **Enhance** coordination and collaboration among relevant international actors in their efforts in addressing multiple crises, including through joint programmes, the closer alignment of services – especially in areas such as data and analysis, transport, safety and security, logistics and infrastructure – and the development of joint monitoring tools.
- b) **Establish** monitoring and evaluation frameworks with continuous, localized data collection to track food security, manage shocks and enable rapid response. Early warning systems provide timely analysis, support coordination and guide policy and operational decisions.
- c) **Strengthen** permanent preparedness frameworks and **expand** inclusive social and humanitarian protection systems to build resilience, especially for vulnerable groups such as refugees, displaced people, smallholders, women, children, the elderly and at-risk youth.
- d) **Strengthen** intersectoral coordination and adopt flexible approaches (e.g. cash assistance) to enhance food security under stress. **Expand** the role of strategic grain reserves beyond emergencies to support price stabilization and grain loans while ensuring transparent, cost-effective management to retain private-sector confidence.
- e) **Develop** and implement national agriculture and food systems transformation strategies that link immediate recovery with long-term resilience, prioritizing healthy diets, sustainability and the needs of vulnerable groups, especially children and pregnant or lactating women.
- f) **Strengthen** agrifood trade resilience by diversifying imports, improving transparency, and aligning with food safety standards. Leverage platforms such as the G20's Agricultural Market Information System and the European Union agri-food chain Observatory to share real-time data, coordinate policies, stabilize markets and safeguard food security.
- g) **Avoid** export restrictions, diversify import sources, and **maintain** strategic reserves while upholding open, rules-based trade. **Align** with CFS policy recommendations and the G20 Action Plan on food security and sustainable food systems through coordinated action and investment in smallholders, rural development and resilience to reduce volatility and protect food-importing countries.

- h) **Empower** family farms and small-scale producers by promoting land consolidation, secure tenure and functioning land markets while ensuring tailored support through access to finance, markets, inputs and advisory services.
- i) **Strengthen** veterinary services and disease surveillance through investments in infrastructure, training and capacity; promote sustainable livestock practices; and **enhance** regional cooperation on transboundary disease prevention.
- j) **Improve** access to and consumption of healthy diets by repurposing public support, coordinating intersectoral policies, promoting local and seasonal foods, and addressing barriers such as convenience, affordability and the prevalence of unhealthy foods.
- k) **Promote** agricultural processing and value addition by investing in infrastructure, technologies, skills development and supportive regulations to increase incomes, create jobs and enhance rural resilience.
- l) **Strengthen** sustainable resource management and climate action by promoting climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, resilient crop varieties, integrated land- and water-management, and regional knowledge sharing to enhance productivity and environmental sustainability.
- m) **Accelerate** climate action by scaling up climate-smart agriculture, reducing emissions, managing land and water sustainably, protecting biodiversity, promoting circular bioeconomy solutions, and aligning policies with climate goals to ensure resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

## **ELECTION OF THE ECA CHAIRPERSON, THE VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

28. The Commission elected Mr Michel Leveque (France) as the Chairperson of the European Commission on Agriculture, Mr Serkos A. Haroutounian (Greece) as the First Vice-Chairperson, and through a secret ballot<sup>9</sup>, Mr Andrea Angeli (Italy) as the Second Vice-Chairpersons of the ECA.

29. The Commission elected Ms Marina Deur (Croatia), Mr Roman Diatka (Czechia), Ms Evelin Lantos (Hungary), Ms Natalia Bulgar (Republic of Moldova), Ms Polina Ivashchenko (Ukraine), and Mr Sandy McCleery (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as members of the Executive Committee.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

30. The Commission made no additional comments on the Information Notes under Any Other Business, and noted the presented Information Notes as stated in ECA/44/25/INF/4<sup>10</sup> and ECA/44/25/INF/5<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix C: Secret ballot vote result sheet.

<sup>10</sup> The document 'Addressing all forms of malnutrition through agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia – Information on FAO's work on nutrition in the region' is available here: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns452en>

<sup>11</sup> The document 'Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems in Europe and Central Asia – Information on the FAO's work in the region' is available here: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ns453en>

## **DATE AND PLACE OF THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE ECA**

31. The Commission welcomed the offer of Hungary to host the Forty-fifth Session of the ECA in Budapest in 2027. The Session should be held at least six months prior to the 36th Regional Conference for Europe in 2028.

## **REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SESSION**

32. The report of the Session was adopted *en bloc*<sup>12,13</sup> with editorial changes under paragraph 12.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Roll call vote with total votes cast: 35, majority required: 18, votes for: 33, votes against: 2, abstentions: 2.  
Appendix D: Roll call vote Results Sheet.

<sup>13</sup> Roll call vote with total votes cast: 32, majority required: 17, votes for: 31, votes against: 1, abstentions: 2.  
Appendix E: Roll call vote Results Sheet.

<sup>14</sup> The statement delivered by the Russian Federation after report adoption is included under Appendix F.

**APPENDIX A****ANNOTATED AGENDA****I. Introductory items**

- 1. Adoption of the Agenda and the Timetable**
- 2. Election of the Rapporteurs**

**II. Main technical theme**

The main technical theme of the Forty-fourth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) is “Balancing productivity and sustainability in driving agrifood systems transformation”.

**3. Balancing productivity and sustainability in driving agrifood systems transformation**

Agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia are under increasing pressure from environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change and geopolitical instability.<sup>15</sup> The region is highly diverse in terms of landscape, climate, biodiversity and levels of socioeconomic development. This diversity also influences levels of natural resource management, crop production, environmental protection and vulnerability to climate change. In many countries, the cropping system often relies on monoculture and unsustainable farming practices, which disrupt the ecological balance and contribute to biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water scarcity, chemical pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The region’s sustainable agrifood systems transformation leverages its strategic strengths in nature-based and frugal solutions, policy innovation and geospatial technologies.<sup>16</sup> The region can spearhead global cooperation, transforming regional diversity into an asset by capitalizing on the distinct strengths of European and Central Asian nations.

Without a shift towards more sustainable agricultural production systems, the ability to sustain production and ensure stable food supplies will be compromised, with severe social, economic and environmental consequences. In addition, inequalities in the region regarding technology, knowledge and resources disproportionately affect small-scale producers and agroenterprises.

Women and youth experience distinct challenges. Rural women and girls, on one hand, often face increased vulnerability due to limited access to productive resources and opportunities resulting from gender inequality, compromising their socioeconomic development and livelihoods. Youth, on the other hand, may face challenges linked to the limited attractiveness of rural and agricultural employment,

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<sup>15</sup> Yang, Y., Tilman, D., Jin, Z., Smith, P., Barrett, C.B., Zhu, Y.-G., Burney, J. et al. 2024. Climate change exacerbates the environmental impacts of agriculture. *Science*, 385(6713): eadn3747. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adn3747>

<sup>16</sup> Alexandrova-Stefanova, N., Nosarzewski, K., Mroczek, Z.K., Audouin, S., Djamen, P., Kolos, N. & Wan, J. 2024. Shaping sustainable agrifood futures: pre-emerging and emerging technologies and innovations for impact. FAO, CIRAD. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd2743en>

highlighting the need to rejuvenate rural areas to make them more appealing and viable for younger generations. Behavioural barriers, including those related to power asymmetries and social norms,<sup>17</sup> further complicate the participation of women and youth in agrifood systems.

Addressing these challenges with evidence-based solutions requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that combines climate-resilient, nature-positive and regenerative practices with agroecology, sustainable and integrated land and water management, and circular economy principles, where appropriate, to enhance resource efficiency and ecosystem health.

Scaling up sustainable agriculture requires targeted financial mechanisms, such as blended finance and public–private partnerships, to facilitate the adoption of green and innovative technologies – precision farming, carbon sequestration techniques and digital solutions, among others – underpinned by a clear understanding of barriers to adoption and tested methods for overcoming roadblocks. Strengthening extension services and improving access to technology and innovation can provide farmers with adaptive strategies that support biodiversity preservation, climate action, the sustainable use and management of natural resources, and food security objectives. This approach will contribute to a resilient and sustainable agrifood system for both the present and the future. Consequently, the issue will be further discussed in the subtopic “Unlocking sustainable and inclusive finance and strengthening public–private partnerships for agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia”.

The main topic will cover strategies and policies aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural production and reducing environmental degradation by advancing sustainability principles across agrifood systems. FAO advocates for policy frameworks that incentivize inclusive, sustainable and integrated agricultural approaches, ensuring that stakeholders along the value chain – and, especially, smallholders and other vulnerable groups – have access to the finance, knowledge and technology they need to implement sustainable and resilient practices. These frameworks should be informed by rigorous behaviour change<sup>18</sup> and policy design methods.<sup>19</sup>

In this context, the following subtopics will be discussed:

- Strategic policies and approaches towards more efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient agriculture to improve cropping systems’ productivity, natural resource efficiency and sustainability (Agenda item 4)
- Harnessing digital solutions for agrifood systems transformation (Agenda item 5)

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<sup>17</sup> Lordan, G. & Pischke, J.-S. 2022. Does Rosie Like Riveting? Male and Female Occupational Choices. *Economica*, 89(353): 110–130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecca.12390>

<sup>18</sup> Chadborn, T., Williams, S., Jorgensen, T., Price, C., Buckel, A. & Altieri, E. 2023. An approach for embedding behavioural science in antimicrobial resistance One Health research. *Journal of Infection and Public Health*, 16: 134–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jiph.2023.11.001>

<sup>19</sup> Keizer, A.-G., Almeida, M., Deligkioouri, A., Gadzina-Kołodziejaska, A., Kock, E., Olajos-Szabo, A., Scharfbillig, M., Smits, P. & Vala, F. 2025. Evidence-informed policymaking: a pathway to increasing trust in democratic institutions and boosting competitiveness. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/3905455>

- Unlocking sustainable and inclusive finance and strengthening public–private partnerships for agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia (Agenda item 6)

This approach aims to support efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient agrifood systems that safeguard natural resources, emphasizing the integration of innovative and readily adoptable digital technologies while enhancing economic development and social equity, thereby reinforcing the Pact for the Future and contributing to achieving the SDGs in line with the FAO four betters – better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life – and the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

#### **4. Strategic policies and approaches towards more efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient agriculture to improve cropping systems’ productivity, natural resource efficiency and sustainability**

The increasing frequency of water scarcity, extreme weather events and increasing pest and disease risks due to climate change requires systematic and integrated approaches that enhance climate resilience in agriculture while reducing environmental impacts. By mainstreaming the placing of biodiversity for food and agriculture, climate adaptation and land degradation neutrality at the core of the FAO strategies for climate change,<sup>20</sup> productivity can be boosted and natural resources and ecological balance restored.

For instance, climate-smart agriculture (encompassing the use of quality seeds and planting materials of suitable crop varieties), efficient agronomics and sustainable plant health management – the efficacies of which are enabled by the adoption of agroecology and other innovative approaches – can improve soil health, reduce external input dependence and enhance water-use efficiency. Enhancing preparedness for, responses to and recovery from natural disasters can help farmers increase yields sustainably while adapting to and mitigating climate change. These approaches can further reduce dependence on external inputs, improve resource efficiency and lower emissions. Regenerative agriculture improves soil health while boosting yields, forage quality and resilience; reducing chemical soil pollution; and capturing carbon. Green agriculture promotes resource efficiency and biodiversity to build resilient agroecosystems, minimize degradation and support livelihoods.

This subtopic will focus on analysing holistic and integrated agricultural approaches and innovative policies as a cornerstone for bridging agricultural productivity with sustainability. In this context, it is key to support Member Nations in their efforts to reach national commitments in line with the global ambitions of the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 2024 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the 2024 Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification.

Building resilience in the agricultural sector plays a crucial role by sustainably increasing productivity and incomes while improving adaptability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the promotion of resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in national adaptation plans (NAPs). Furthermore, integrating traditional knowledge with modern innovations fosters productivity, resilience

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<sup>20</sup> FAO. 2022. FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031. Rome, FAO.  
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc2274en>

and carbon sequestration.<sup>21</sup> Among the examples to be discussed of enhancing productivity without harming the environment<sup>22</sup> are conservation agriculture, integrated soil fertility management, integrated pest management, the use of improved crop varieties, post-harvest management, integrated livestock and aquaculture systems, agroecology, and integrated crop–livestock systems.

This session will explore the role of agricultural approaches and innovative technologies such as the use of, the cultivation of stress-resistant and climate-adaptive crop varieties, and the use of frugal innovations,<sup>23</sup> in facilitating adaptation to climate change. In addition, these solutions can help reduce inequality and promote women’s and youth empowerment, particularly in resource-scarce environments.

## 5. Harnessing digital solutions for agrifood systems transformation

Digital solutions can provide a powerful means to enhance agricultural productivity, improve sustainability and strengthen resilience to climate shocks. Overall, by integrating digital innovations into agrifood systems through human-centred design and adoption strategies, they can become more efficient and resilient, contributing to sustainable food security and economic growth.

Precision agriculture<sup>24</sup> technologies – typically powered by the internet of things, satellite imagery, artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics – enable farmers to monitor weather conditions, soil health, water usage, pest infestations and crop growth, allowing for data-driven decisions that improve yields while reducing input costs, thereby improving productivity while minimizing environmental impact.

Digital technology can bridge the knowledge gap for farmers, providing information and advisory services and helping farmers translate that information into action by addressing barriers such as risk aversion, information asymmetry and present bias.<sup>25</sup> E-commerce and digital marketplaces can connect farmers with buyers, ensuring fairer prices and market access. Digital financial services – including mobile banking, insurance services and microloans – can improve access to credit for farmers (though in many contexts, the absence of underlying financial or insurance systems may limit their

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<sup>21</sup> Altieri, M.A., Nicholls, C.I., Henao, A. & Lana, M.A. 2015. Agroecology and the design of climate change-resilient farming systems. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, 35(3), 869–890. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-015-0285-2>

<sup>22</sup> IFAD. 2023. Sustainable agricultural intensification practices: East and Southern Africa. <https://www.ifad.org/documents/d/new-ifad.org/sai-practices-esa-pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Alexandrova-Stefanova, N., Nosarzewski, K., Mroczek, Z.K., Audouin, S., Djamen, P., Kolos, N. & Wan, J. 2023. Harvesting change: Harnessing emerging technologies and innovations for a grifood system transformation – Global foresight synthesis report. Rome. FAO and CIRAD. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8498en>

<sup>24</sup> According to the International Society of Precision Agriculture, the term “precision agriculture” refers to “a management strategy that gathers, processes and analyses temporal, spatial and individual plant and animal data and combines it with other information to support management decisions according to estimated variability for improved resource-use efficiency, productivity, quality, profitability and sustainability of agricultural production”. International Society of Precision Agriculture. 2025. Precision Agriculture Definition. In: International Society of Precision Agriculture. [Cited 2 May 2025]. <https://www.ispag.org/resources/definition>

<sup>25</sup> Aron, J. 2018. Mobile Money and the Economy: A Review of the Evidence. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 33(2): 135–188. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lky001>

effectiveness). Technologies such as blockchain also can enhance supply chain transparency and efficiency.

However, smallholder farmers, rural women and other vulnerable groups often face significant barriers to adopting digital technologies; limited access to digital devices and low internet connectivity in rural areas can exclude them from the benefits of digital innovations. In addition, limited digital literacy and the cost of digital solutions can further exacerbate the digital divide. Addressing these challenges requires targeted policies, inclusive financing mechanisms and digital capacity-building programmes to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital transformation.

FAO recognizes the importance of innovation and digital transformation in advancing its mission to achieve food security for all and to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as outlined in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031<sup>26</sup> and reiterated in the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy<sup>27</sup> and through such initiatives as the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture,<sup>28</sup> the FAO Digital Villages Initiative<sup>29</sup> and the Digital Agriculture Programme Priority Area.

As digital technologies, including AI, become more integrated into agrifood systems, it is critical to apply a precautionary and inclusive approach. Without deliberate safeguards, these innovations risk deepening existing inequalities – particularly along gender and digital divides – by disproportionately benefiting those who are already digitally connected or better resourced. For example, women, smallholders and marginalized rural populations may be excluded from the benefits of AI-driven solutions if access to devices, connectivity or relevant skills is limited. Ensuring that digital transformation is both equitable and responsible means addressing these systemic gaps, embedding fairness into design and deployment, and aligning innovation with the broader social, environmental and economic contexts in which farmers live and work.

The Digital Agriculture and AI Innovation Dialogue for the global agrifood systems transformation, bringing together experts and practitioners to address the challenges faced by low- and middle-income countries in adopting digital and AI technologies, set the stage for global digital cooperation and innovation, leading to a road map for leveraging digital agriculture for agrifood systems transformation that includes governance, implementation and investment priorities.

This subtopic will explore how digital technologies can be harnessed to support all farmers in Europe and Central Asia. This discussion will explore the latest evidence around the key barriers and drivers that influence the adoption of these technologies across the region, as well as proven strategies to sustainably mainstream digital transformation in agrifood systems to close the digital rural and gender divide, ensuring that all actors – especially smallholders and rural women – can benefit from digital technologies.

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<sup>26</sup> The FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 is available online at <https://www.fao.org/3/cb7099en/cb7099en.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> The FAO Science and Innovation Strategy is available online at <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2273en/cc2273en.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> More information on the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture is available online at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/4588db12-e440-4a22-b7ef-e11d611ac7da/content>.

<sup>29</sup> More information on the FAO Digital Villages Initiative in Europe and Central Asia is available online at <https://www.fao.org/digital-villages-initiative/europe/>.

## **6. Unlocking sustainable and inclusive finance and strengthening public–private partnerships for agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia**

This session will highlight scalable financial solutions – including de-risking tools, insurance mechanisms, impact investment and innovative policy frameworks – that redirect financial flows towards efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

Access to affordable and appropriate finance and investment remains one of the biggest barriers to sustainable agricultural transformation. Knowledge gaps, risk aversion and mistrust also impede the uptake of financial instruments, even when access is assured. Given the limitations of public finance in addressing climate change, mobilizing private capital through innovative financial mechanisms is crucial for scaling up the necessary investments in mitigation and adaptation. Smallholders and agricultural small and medium enterprises – pivotal to food production in Europe and Central Asia – face constraints in the implementation of innovative practices that are climate smart, biodiversity supportive, economically sustainable, financially viable, technically efficient and productive. These include limited access to capital and information, high upfront costs and perceived risks, insecure land tenure, labour shortages, weak market linkages, unsupportive policies, and the increasing impacts of climate change on degraded natural resources. Women, youth and other vulnerable groups experience additional challenges in accessing finance, which deepens inequalities and limits the resilience of rural communities at large. As the urgency intensifies to meet global commitments such as the SDGs, it becomes indispensable to design inclusive financial solutions so they are easier for stakeholders to adopt and trust and to scale them up across the region.

The background document explores how strategic public investment and inclusive financing models can drive the adoption of sustainable practices in Europe and Central Asia, in particular through improved policy frameworks; de-risking instruments such as guaranteed schemes, insurance products and blended finance; and the redirection of nature-negative financial flows and policy incentives. *Inter alia*, public–private partnerships offer a powerful mechanism to address these financing gaps by leveraging the strengths of multiple stakeholders. By aligning public-sector priorities with private-sector expertise and resources, public–private partnerships can enable investments in climate-smart agriculture, promote biodiversity and ensure equitable benefits.

This session will aim to highlight actionable pathways for enhancing rural livelihoods, building resilience and supporting the ecological foundations of agrifood systems.

### **Other matters**

## **7. Advancing gender equality in the region: update on the progress made**

This is a standing agenda item for all sessions of the ECA. The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Gender Team will provide an update on the work of the Regional Office in meeting its commitments in mainstreaming gender equality concerns in its development interventions, as well as in specific activities aimed at advancing rural gender equality and women’s empowerment in the region through knowledge building, dialogue and policy advice.

Considering the recommendations outlined in the report of the Forty-third Session of the ECA, a background document will summarize key issues at the intersection of gender and agrifood systems. The document also will share the findings of a review of country gender assessments conducted in the region over the past two years, reflecting regional trends and the situation of rural women in light of multiple challenges, including conflicts and climate events. Members will be invited to review FAO's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the region, present their views, and share country practices and cases regarding gender mainstreaming in agrifood systems, food security and nutrition in their respective countries.

#### **8. Progress made by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on the main recommendations of the Forty-third Session of the European Commission on Agriculture**

Following the recommendations on the sustainable use of land and water resources in Europe and Central Asia, adopted by the Forty-third Session of the ECA in November 2023, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia will present an update on recent activities carried out by the Organization in Europe and Central Asia related to the implementation of the recommendations. The ECA will be invited to note the report and provide comments as deemed appropriate.

#### **9. FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia**

The Europe and Central Asia region has faced multiple crises due to the war in Ukraine, climate change and natural disasters, leading to a triple crisis in food, energy and finance in 2022. These challenges have resulted in soaring food and energy prices, rising inflation, tighter financial conditions, higher import costs, disrupted food supply chains and damaged infrastructure, threatening regional food security.

While prices declined in 2023 and food supply chains showed some recovery, costs remain significantly higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Inflation has generally slowed since its 2022 peak, and in 2024, food inflation was relatively moderate in many countries but persisted in others due to rising tariffs and currency depreciation. However, global oil and gas prices have fallen, weakening trade and external balances.

The most vulnerable countries – including Türkiye and countries in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans – have been hit hardest, especially among the poorest populations. FAO has provided short-term and medium-term support to the affected countries in the region.

The information item aims at providing updates to the ECA on FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia.

#### **10. Election of the ECA Chairperson, the first and second Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the Executive Committee**

#### **11. Any other business**

#### **12. Date and place of the Forty-fifth Session of the ECA**

### **13. Review and adoption of the report of the Session**

#### **Closing of the Session**

##### **Information items**

#### **Addressing all forms of malnutrition through agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia – Information on FAO’s work on nutrition in the region**

Ensuring food security and addressing all forms of malnutrition is one of the four key priorities in Europe and Central Asia. Due to its cross-cutting nature, this priority is embedded across FAO’s work in the region, contributing to the four betters (better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life). Addressing agrifood system challenges through systemic actions and coherent policies is crucial to ensuring equitable access to healthy, affordable and sustainable diets. This paper outlines FAO’s role and programme of work in addressing nutrition challenges in the region while identifying key challenges, opportunities and entry points for action.

#### **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems in Europe and Central Asia – Information on FAO’s work in the region**

This paper explores the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) approach from a regional perspective, highlighting its potential to address challenges, unlock opportunities and deliver national and global benefits. It outlines FAO’s support to countries in Europe and Central Asia for GIAHS recognition, achieved within the framework of the regional road map, and highlights significant results and the path forward.

**APPENDIX B****LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

ECA/44/25/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ECA/44/25/2	Provisional Timetable
ECA/44/25/3	Balancing productivity and sustainability in driving agrifood systems transformation
ECA/44/25/4	Strategic policies and approaches towards more efficient, inclusive, sustainable and resilient agriculture to improve cropping systems' productivity, natural resource efficiency and sustainability
ECA/44/25/5/Rev1	Harnessing digital solutions for agrifood systems transformation
ECA/44/25/6	Unlocking sustainable and inclusive finance and strengthening public–private partnerships for agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia
ECA/44/25/7	Advancing gender equality in the region: update on the progress made
ECA/44/25/8	Progress made by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on the main recommendations of the Forty-third Session of the European Commission on Agriculture
ECA/44/25/9/Rev1	FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia
ECA/44/25/10	Election of the ECA Chairperson, the first and second Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the Executive Committee
INF SERIES	
ECA/44/25/INF/1	Provisional List of Documents
ECA/44/25/INF/2	Information Note
ECA/44/25/INF/3	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union and its Member States

- ECA/44/25/INF/4 Addressing all forms of malnutrition through agrifood systems transformations in Europe and Central Asia – Information on FAO’s work on nutrition in the region
- ECA/44/25/INF/5 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems in Europe and Central Asia – Information on the FAO’s work in the region

## APPENDIX C

## SECRET BALLOT VOTE RESULT SHEET

<b>44th SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025</b> <b>44<sup>e</sup> SESSION DE LA COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE D'AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025</b> <b>44.ª REUNIÓN DE LA COMISIÓN EUROPEA DE AGRICULTURA, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025</b> <b>44-я СЕССИЯ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ КОМИССИИ ПО СЕЛЬСКОМУ ХОЗЯЙСТВУ, БУДАПЕШТ, 2 – 3 ОКТЯБРЯ 2025</b>	
REPORT OF BALLOT RÉSULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACIÓN РЕЗУЛЬТАТ ГОЛОСОВАНИЯ	ELECTION OF THE SECOND VICE CHAIRPERSON OF ECA – 2025- 2027

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas Использовано бюллетеней	43	3. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas Испорчено бюллетеней	0
2. Abstentions Abstenciones Воздержавшиеся	1	4. Members casting valid votes Membres ayant exprimé un suffrage valide Miembros que emitan votos válidos Отдавшие действительные голоса члены	42

5. Majority Majorité Mayoría Большинство	22
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Elected – Élu(s) – Elegido(s) – Выбран(ы)		Not elected – Pas élu(s) – No elegido(s) – Не выбран(ы)		Eliminated – Eliminé(s) – Eliminado(s) – Удален(ы)	
Mr Andrea Angeli	37	Ms Dilyara Ravlova- Borovik	5		

## Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores/Счетчик голосов

Mr Nuriddin Kushnazarov (Uzbekistan)

Signature.....

Date: 03 October 2025

Ms Terezia Kramolisova (Slovakia)

Signature.....

Date: 03 October 2025

Election Officer / Fonctionnaire électorale / El oficial de elecciones / Сотрудник,  
 ответственный за проведение голосования

Mr Goran Starvik, Elections Officer, FAO

Signature.....

Date: 03 October 2025

## APPENDIX D

## ROLL CALL VOTE RESULT SHEET

44th SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44e SESSION DE LA COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE D'AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44.ª REUNIÓN DE LA COMISIÓN EUROPEA DE AGRICULTURA, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44-я СЕССИЯ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ КОМИССИИ ПО СЕЛЬСКОМУ ХОЗЯЙСТВУ, БУДАПЕШТ, 2 – 3 ОКТЯБРЯ 2025

Vote on: Agreement to adopt the Report *en-bloc*

**RESULT SHEET / RESULTATS / RESULTADOS / РЕЗУЛЬТАТ**

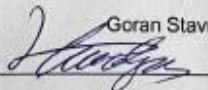
Roll Call Vote / Vote par appel nominal / Votación Nominal / Поименное  
голосование

Number of votes cast / Nombre de suffrages exprimés / Número de votos emitidos / Количество поданных голосов	35
Majority required / Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida / Требуемое большинство	18
Votes for / Votes pour/ Votos en faveur / Голоса за	33
Votes against / Votes contre / Votos en contra / Голоса против	2
Abstentions / Abstenciones / Воздержавшиеся	2

<b>Votes for:</b> <b>Votes pour:</b> <b>Votos en favor:</b> <b>Голоса за:</b>	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom
<b>Votes against:</b> <b>Votes contre:</b> <b>Votos en contra:</b> <b>Голоса против:</b>	Russian Federation, Tajikistan
<b>Abstentions:</b> <b>Abstenciones:</b> <b>Воздержавшиеся:</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan
<b>No reply:</b> <b>Aucune réponse:</b> <b>Ninguna respuesta:</b> <b>Без ответа:</b>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Serbia, Türkiye

ADOPTED / ADOPTÉE / ACEPTADA / ПРИНЯТО

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones/  
Сотрудник, ответственный за проведение голосования

Signature:  Goran Stavrikj Date: 3 October 2025

## APPENDIX E

## ROLL CALL VOTE RESULT SHEET

44th SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44<sup>e</sup> SESSION DE LA COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE D'AGRICULTURE, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44.ª REUNIÓN DE LA COMISIÓN EUROPEA DE AGRICULTURA, BUDAPEST, 2 – 3 OCTOBER 2025  
 44-я СЕССИЯ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ КОМИССИИ ПО СЕЛЬСКОМУ ХОЗЯЙСТВУ, БУДАПЕШТ, 2 – 3 ОКТЯБРЯ 2025

Vote on: Adopting the Report *en-bloc*

**RESULT SHEET / RESULTATS / RESULTADOS / РЕЗУЛЬТАТ**


**Roll Call Vote / Vote par appel nominal / Votación Nominal / Поименное  
голосование**

Number of votes cast / Nombre de suffrages exprimés / Número de votos emitidos / Количество поданных голосов	32
Majority required / Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida / Требуемое большинство	17
Votes for / Votes pour/ Votos en favour / Голоса за	31
Votes against / Votes contre / Votos en contra / Голоса против	1
Abstentions / Abstenciones / Воздержавшиеся	2

<b>Votes for:</b> <b>Votes pour:</b> <b>Votos en favor:</b> <b>Голоса за:</b>	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom
<b>Votes against:</b> <b>Votes contre:</b> <b>Votos en contra:</b> <b>Голоса против:</b>	Russian Federation
<b>Abstentions:</b> <b>Abstenciones:</b> <b>Воздержавшиеся:</b>	Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan
<b>No reply:</b> <b>Aucune réponse:</b> <b>Ninguna respuesta:</b> <b>Без ответа:</b>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Serbia, Spain, Tajikistan, Türkiye

**ADOPTED / ADOPTÉE / ACEPTADA / ПРИНЯТО**

**Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones/  
Сотрудник, ответственный за проведение голосования**

Signature:  Date: 3 October 2025

**APPENDIX F****STATEMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION  
OF THE REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE 44TH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**

Thank you, Madam Chair. The Russian Federation would like to make a statement on the outcome of the adoption of the report, outlining its position. In line with the rules of procedure and the established practice we ask to attach this statement to the outcome report.

Madam Chair, Colleagues,

The Russian Federation voted against the adoption of the report. Our position is explained by the refusal by the European Union and the 26 Members of the European Union and also a range of other Member States of the Commission in an open dialogue to discuss the content of the report concerning, in particular, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The Russian Federation proceeds from the idea that all the people in the world have an equal right to life, to health and to sufficient and healthy food. It is absolutely unacceptable to refuse to discuss the issue when it comes to humanitarian access and guaranteeing food for the inhabitants of Gaza.

We hope that in future when discussing crises the Members of the Commission will on an equal basis devote their attention to the needs of all.

Thank you for your attention.