



## Background

The primary goal of the **Regional Initiative on Improving Agrifood Trade and Market Integration in Europe and Central Asia** is to support member countries in enhancing the agrifood trade policy environment for small- and medium-sized agribusinesses. A better trade policy environment for modern agrifood markets requires the development of capacity for trade agreements, domestic food safety and quality standards. The Initiative consists of three interrelated components:

1. Implementation of trade agreements to increase access to new markets
2. Increased capacity to implement global food quality standards
3. A supportive policy environment for export diversification

The first component foresees training of civil servants and private sector representatives on global trade issues, including market access, domestic support measures, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, technical barriers to trade, trade dispute resolution and trade facilitation.

Within the framework of the first component of the Regional Initiative, the **Agricultural Trade Expert Network (ATEN)** was created to facilitate the formation and sharing of knowledge, as well as to make decisions necessary to develop the capacity of agricultural trade in Europe and Central Asia. The network aims to bring together experts who conduct economic research, carry out training programs and advise governments and private sector on issues related to agricultural trade and trade policy, including multilateral and regional trade agreements.

## Event content

During the **Sixth Annual Meeting of the Agricultural Trade Expert Network in Europe and Central Asia**, which will be held online on **27-28 October 2020**, the participants will discuss changes in agricultural trade in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as trade and economic measures and ways to overcome the negative consequences of the pandemic for the economies and agriculture of Europe and Central Asia. The situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any other food or health crisis in modern times, with simultaneous supply and demand shocks that are global in nature. Therefore, it is expected to have an unprecedented impact on global and regional trade. The weaknesses that have been revealed in the food supply chains require new approaches and efforts that would involve strategic orientation towards intraregional and international trade partners, compliance with trade requirements, such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards and improving efficiency in moving goods across borders.

Ad hoc trade restrictions have been a common feature of the immediate policy response, both import restrictions due to food safety concerns that are not necessarily science-based and export restrictions due to concerns about domestic food availability and market uncertainty. Such measures have proven to exacerbate the situation and cause disruptions in the supply chains. Therefore, to mitigate the impacts of shocks such as COVID-19, instead of restricting trade, it is actually crucial to facilitate and enhance trade, both within and between regions, and improve access to markets. Changes in policies to support agribusiness and agricultural subsidies in relation with COVID-19, multilateral and regional trade agreements, their impact on agrifood trade and measures that are the most effective during the crisis to support agricultural producers and consumers will be discussed at the event.

One of the sessions of the event will be dedicated to innovative technologies in agricultural sector, and presentations will be made on the new stage of technological development "AgroTech 4.0" and on global trends in digital technologies in retail and food supply chains as the transition to a new technological stage is becoming critically important in ensuring competitiveness and further development of the agricultural sector of the countries.

Also, during the event, the ATEN experts will discuss a work plan for the development of the forthcoming FAO publication on agrifood trade policy in the post-Soviet countries, thematic chapters for this publication, the Network achievements and its plans for 2021.

#### **The main objectives of the event:**

- Review of trade and economic measures caused by the outbreak of COVID-19, discuss ways to overcome the negative consequences of the pandemic on the national economies of Europe and Central Asia, and on the multilateral trading system;
- Discuss changes in policies to support agribusiness due to COVID-19 and what measures are the most effective in the crisis to support agricultural producers and consumers;
- Discuss the impact of multilateral and regional trade agreements on agricultural trade;
- Present recent research on innovative technologies in the agricultural sector and their role for trade development;
- Develop a plan for the preparation of the forthcoming FAO publication on agrifood trade policies in post-Soviet countries;
- Discuss the results achieved by the Network during 2019-2020 and the work program for 2021.

#### **Expected outcomes**

The meeting will facilitate the exchange of information between the participants on the following:

- The policy responses adopted by different countries in order to overcome the economic consequences caused by COVID-19 including changes in agribusiness support policies;
- The effectiveness of the adopted measures in supporting agricultural producers and consumers in a period of crisis;
- The impact multilateral and regional trade agreements, such as free trade areas with the European Union of some countries in the region, and the creation of a single market for the Eurasian Economic Union, have on agricultural trade;
- The significance of innovative technologies in agricultural sector for the agricultural development of the countries in the region.

#### **Participants**

International and national experts from the post-Soviet countries working on agricultural trade, representatives of research institutes and analytical centres of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

#### **Language:**

The working language of the meeting is Russian with simultaneous interpretation into English

**Venue:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Please join the ATEN meeting by at the following Zoom link:** <https://fao.zoom.us/j/96121733447>

**Meeting ID:** 961 2173 3447

**Passcode:** 069363

| <b>27 October 2020 (1<sup>st</sup> day)</b> |  |
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| <b>8:45 – 9:00<sup>1</sup> CET</b>          | Time to connect to the ATEN meeting in Zoom <sup>2</sup>   |
| <b>9:00 – 9:30 CET</b>                      | <p><b>Opening and welcome address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Iryna Kobuta</b>, Markets and Trade Division (EST), FAO, Italy</li> <li>• <b>Dmitry Zvyagintsev</b>, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Hungary</li> </ul>   |
| <b>9:30 – 11:00 CET</b>                     | <p><b>Session 1: Impact of COVID-19 on markets and trade and countries' policy responses</b><br/>Moderator: <b>Iryna Kobuta</b>, FAO, Markets and Trade Division (EST)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Natalia Kireyenka</b>, Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining of Agro-Industrial Complex Personnel of the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University</li> <li>• <b>Nurlan Kulbatyrov</b>, JSC "Center for Trade Policy Development", Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan</li> <li>• <b>Tamara Ostashko</b>, Institute for Economics and Forecasting, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion: Securing domestic food availability and developing agrifood exports amid the COVID-19 pandemic: what needs to be done to maintain market stability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Natalia Karlova</b>, Institute for Agrarian Studies, Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation</li> <li>• <b>Roman Mogilevskii</b>, University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>• Other participants</li> </ul> |
| <b>11:00 – 11:10</b>                        | <b>Break</b>   |
| <b>11:10 – 12:30 CET</b>                    | <p><b>Session 2: Changes to agribusiness support policies in response to COVID-19</b><br/>Moderator: <b>Renata Yanbykh</b>, Institute for Agrarian Studies, Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shalva Pipia</b>, Rural and Agricultural Policy and Development Institute (RAPDI), Georgia</li> <li>• <b>Daria Ilina</b>, Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research under the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, Uzbekistan</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion: What are the most effective measures in the crisis to support agricultural producers and consumers?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anatolie Ignat</b>, National Institute for Economic Research of the Republic of Moldova</li> <li>• <b>Elchin Atababayev</b>, State Service on Management of Agricultural Projects and Credits, Azerbaijan</li> <li>• Other participants</li> </ul>  |

<sup>1</sup> Central European Time Zone (CET): local time in Rome, Italy

<sup>2</sup> During this time slot panellists can check functionality of their microphones, speakers and web-cameras, as well as presentation sharing. However, it is highly recommended to test the Zoom connection quality at any time prior joining the actual virtual event, by visiting the following page <https://fao.zoom.us/test>

| <b>28 October 2020 (2<sup>nd</sup> day )</b> |   |
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| <b>8:45 – 9:00<sup>3</sup> CET</b>           | Time to connect to the ATEN meeting in Zoom <sup>4</sup>  |
| <b>9:00 – 10:30 CET</b>                      | <p><b>Session 3: Multilateral and regional trade agreements, their impact on agrifood trade and challenges to the multilateral trading system</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Iryna Kobuta</b>, FAO, EST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Doaa Abdel-Motaal</b>, Senior Counsellor, World Trade Organization, Switzerland – <i>WTO actions in response to the COVID-19 crisis</i></li> <li>• <b>Aina Kussainova</b>, Agricultural Policy Department of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC)<br/><i>Five years of the EAEU: what has been done to create the single market and the implications for agricultural trade</i></li> <li>• <b>Veronika Movchan</b>, Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting (IER), Ukraine<br/><i>The export of agricultural products from Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to the European Union: what has changed since the signing of the EU association agreements</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion: Challenges facing the multilateral trading system due to the pandemic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Viacheslav Evseev</b>, Center for Customs Tariff and Non-tariff Regulation Research, Russian Federation</li> <li>• <b>Valeriy Piatnytskyi</b>, Expert on international trade</li> <li>• Other participants</li> </ul> |
| <b>10:30 – 10:45</b>                         | <b>Break</b>  |
| <b>10:45 – 11:45 CET</b>                     | <p><b>Session 4: Innovative technologies in agricultural sector</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Dmitry Zvyagintsev</b>, Policy Officer, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Hungary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mischa Tripoli</b>, Economist, FAO, Markets and Trade Division, EST<br/><i>Global trends for digital technologies in trade and food supply chains</i></li> <li>• <b>Nadezhda Orlova</b>, Institute for Agrarian Studies, Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation<br/><i>Agriculture 4.0: Russia in a global context and the most promising innovative solutions</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion: The role of innovation in agricultural trade development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mischa Tripoli</b>, Economist, FAO, Markets and Trade Division</li> <li>• <b>Dmitry Prikhodko</b>, Senior Economist, FAO Investment Centre</li> <li>• Other participants</li> </ul>  |
| <b>11:45 – 12:00 CET</b>                     | <b>Break</b>  |
| <b>12:00 – 13:00 CET</b>                     | <p><b>Session 5: Achievements, performance assessment and directions of the ATEN for 2021</b><br/>(in Russian language, no interpretation in English)</p> <p>Moderator: <b>Alla Saranina</b>, FAO, EST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Iryna Kobuta</b>, FAO, Markets and Trade Division<br/>Results and future directions of the ATEN work for 2021</li> <li>• <b>General discussion</b><br/>Discussion of the ATEN work plan<br/>Discussion of the next publication and its thematic focus</li> </ul> <p><b>Summing-up of the meeting</b></p>   |

<sup>3</sup> Central European Time Zone (CET): local time in Rome, Italy

<sup>4</sup>During this time slot panellists/participants can check functionality of their microphones, speakers and web-cameras, as well as presentation sharing. However, it is highly recommended to test the Zoom connection quality at any time prior joining the actual virtual event, by visiting the following page <https://fao.zoom.us/test>.