

## **PREPARATION OF THE 42ND SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (2021), INCLUDING STRATEGIC THINKING ON IMPROVING MODALITIES, IMPACT AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT**

*(prepared by the ECA Secretariat)*

### **Introduction**

The next session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) has been planned to be held in late September or early October 2021, in Budapest, Hungary. At this stage, it is difficult to predict whether the Session will be held face-to-face or online. As for today, both options may be taken into account.

### **Role of the Executive Committee in the preparations to a Session of ECA**

The Executive Committee has important roles to play in the preparation, as it is involved in the selection of the main technical theme for the Session, development of the agenda, and the review of the agenda. The selection of the main theme for the session is on the agenda of this meeting. Once the main technical theme is selected, relevant REU technical officer will be identified as the lead for the theme, and the Secretariat will draft the agenda. The agenda will be presented to all Members of the region within the Informal Consultation, which normally takes place in April or May. Should comments to the agenda be made at the Informal Consultation, the Secretariat will present the revised agenda to the ExCom, along with the outcome of the Informal Consultation.

Apart from items relating to the main technical theme of the ECA Session, on the agenda of the Session there will be other items, such as adoption of the agenda, election of rapporteurs, election of the ECA Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons, and the members of the Executive Committee, and finally the adoption of the report. Other standing items on the agenda are the update on the implementation of recommendations from the previous ECA Session, and the update on the implementation of the Gender Strategy in the region, which was requested by an earlier ECA Session.

In 2021, at ExCom meetings, the Secretariat will be ready to present regular updates on the progress of preparations for the Session, similarly as it was done in the case of ERC.

### Arrangements for elections at ECA Sessions

The Secretariat would like to bring to the attention of the ExCom recall that in 2019, there was an agreement that the ECA Chairperson would coordinate the process of nominations of candidates for the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the other ExCom Members, and would notify the Secretariat about the nominees. The Secretariat should then develop the list of candidates and make it available to the Members of the region, as an ECA Session document. Prior to the publishing of the list, the Secretariat should verify the number of terms and years previously served by the nominees in the ExCom, in line with the provision of Rule III.1 of the Rules of Procedure of ECA:

*“(...) The term of office of the elected members shall be for a period of two years and they shall be eligible for re-election for up to two additional two-year terms. (...) In order to ensure both rotation of members and continuity of service, when electing members of the Executive Committee, due consideration shall be given to the desirability of replacing no more than four members at the same time, and avoiding that the overall term of office of an individual, irrespective of the nature of his/her mandate, should exceed eight years.”*

The Secretariat should confirm on the list the eligibility of all candidates to be elected. Should any of the nominees not be eligible to be elected, the Secretariat should notify the Permanent Representation of the nominating country and the ECA Chairperson.

In order to make the list of candidates available to the ECA Members in time, as for all ECA Session documents (no less than 30 days prior to the start of the Session), the deadline for the submission of nominations should be ca. 40 days prior to the Session, i.e. 15 August 2021. In order to allow sufficient time for ECA Members to prepare nominations, and taking into account the summer holiday season in the region, ECA Secretariat might need to solicit nominations in due advance, preferably by 1 June.

The ECA Secretariat is ready to support the ECA Chairperson in any communications with the Members on ECA-related issues, as needed.

The Excom is invited to:

- review current arrangements for ECA Sessions and consider whether improvements in the working modalities could be suggested in order to enhance the impact of the Sessions and to facilitate the involvement of Members.