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| Europe and Central Asia reinforces commitment to transform food systems for better nutritionA képen étel, asztal, tányér, beltéri látható  Automatikusan generált leírás*Photo: ©FAO/Mirbek Kadraliev****21 January 2022, Budapest, Hungary*** - For three days, FAO Members from Europe and Central Asia discussed current agricultural issues that are key to transforming the region’s food systems for better nutrition. Ending today, the [Forty-Second Session of the European Commission on Agriculture](https://www.fao.org/events/detail/eca-42/en) also voted on policy recommendations to improve agrifood production, support rural economies, and advance gender issues.FAO convenes the Commission every two years to assist with cooperation on agricultural matters and make recommendations for the 50-plus Members of the Europe and Central Asia region. The current session focused on providing healthy and nutritious diets for all, especially the most vulnerable, and on addressing all forms of malnutrition.Members expressed their will to go beyond the food system as a linear and narrow concept towards a holistic and comprehensive approach that leads to better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life by including context-specific synergies and trade-offs. Countries will also monitor and take into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition and on the livelihoods of those engaged in food production.With this in mind, to transform the way food is produced, processed, distributed, prepared, and consumed, and to improve nutrition in the region, the Commission recommends strengthened collaboration and cross-sectoral dialogue, the reconciliation of healthy nutrition and sustainability, improved equality and inclusiveness through livelihood and nutrition support to the most vulnerable, and more investments in agrifood systems through better production and value addition.“Food systems should be diversified for more stability, resilience, and sustainability, and, ultimately, to improve access to diverse and nutritious food,” said Piotr Wlodarczyk, Secretary of the European Commission on Agriculture. “For better production, we should ensure more diversity in the scales of production, crops, marketing channels, financial sources, financial instruments, technologies, value addition, and social processes. The meeting has reconfirmed this approach. The record number of country participants and observers from civil society, non-governmental organizations, and academia also shows its importance.”The session report encourages Members to create an adequate environment for innovation and to support the development of financial systems in which financial instruments and service providers can proliferate. Backing this, FAO pledged, among other actions, to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience, provide relevant data and analysis, and promote green, nature-based solutions.The Europe and Central Asia region is highly diverse in terms of development status, natural resources, and structural characteristics; thus, countries face different challenges related to malnutrition and different barriers to the sustainable and inclusive transformation of local food systems and rural areas.Territorial approaches that recognize environmental, social, and economic differences as determinants of development are important instruments for achieving more inclusive economic, social, and environmental development at the local level while ensuring these are embedded into national, regional, and global processes, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.“Including the principles of territorial approaches in national agendas can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitment to leave no one behind,” Wlodarczyk added.**Progress on gender equality**Since 2010, the progress made in mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in FAO's work in the region has been a permanent standing item on the Commission’s agenda. During the current session, FAO presented this work, framed by the Regional Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for 2019–2022, and highlighted persistent gender gaps that require further attention and action and limit progress towards achieving the SDGs.Based on these issues, FAO recommends gender-transformative agricultural policies that address the root causes of inequality and reflect the contributions of rural women to agrifood sector value chains, improve data collection and gender statistics, and further analyse gender gaps in access to agricultural services, inputs, and resources. Additionally, Members and FAO should continue to empower rural women by supporting their participation in decision-making and by creating targeted economic, social, and environmental policies and projects that provide women with diverse and viable income opportunities. |
| **LINKS**[Countries of Europe and Central Asia look at various aspects of food systems’ transformation](https://www.fao.org/europe/news/detail-news/en/c/1469494/)[Webcast Day 1](https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5761/icode/)[Webcast Day 2](https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5762/icode/)[Webcast Day 3](https://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5763icode/)[Forty-Second Session of the European Commission of Agriculture](https://www.fao.org/events/detail/eca-42/en)[European Commission on Agriculture](https://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/)[FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC 32)](https://www.fao.org/europe/commissions/eca/)  |