

Regional Dialogue for Europe and Central Asia

Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia

Organized by the Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems

25 May 2021 10:00am - 12:30pm CEST



Background

Across the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, governments and stakeholders are actively discussing food systems in preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), through Member States dialogues (i.e. national dialogues) and independent dialogues. Based on game changing and systemic solutions at country and regional levels, the development of pathways to transform food systems, as an essential driver of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), builds upon previous, and ongoing, policy efforts in food and nutrition security, agriculture and food production, environmental protection, investment and social support sectors.

Policy makers in the ECA region face challenges which may be common to many countries, such as the need to improve the nutritional status for all, and stem the tide of overweight and obesity; providing an equitable, sustainable food system, while minimizing negative effects on the environment and reducing the contribution to climate change and GHG emissions. Determining how to ensure a balanced, just, and fair food systems transition – economically, socially and environmentally - to provide safe, nutritious food for all, protect the environment, support livelihoods, and address inequalities, requires policy-makers to foster multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation. This is a central element of coherent policy development, and people-centred solutions, where all those engaged in food systems can fulfill their aspirations and reach their full potential, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Regional dialogue is convened to discuss key policy and governance issues related to sustainable food systems, as well as to share information and experiences on opportunities, challenges, and appropriate policy actions for sustainable transformation of the food systems in Europe and Central Asia, in the context of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In particular, the regional dialogue will highlight the following key messages:

- Strong governance and holistic national and regional approaches are needed for a sustainable food systems transformation

- Food systems need to be equitable and promote the livelihoods and nutritional status of the most vulnerable in food systems both in urban and rural areas (including small-holders, children, youth, women) with a view to addressing their specific needs, access safe, nutritious food, and enabling them to be drivers of change through their food choices
- Boosting nature-positive production and building climate-resilient food systems require regional approaches aimed, among others, at measuring the contribution of food production to GHG emissions, improving circularity and resource efficiency in food production and manufacturing, as key to reduce the impact of food production on the environment.
- Innovation through participatory engagement processes and structures is required to create food systems solutions that deliver co-benefits and mitigate trade-offs.

As a result of the two main panel discussions, knowledge and experiences will be shared on:

- appropriate measures to address the specific nutritional challenges of the most vulnerable members of our society, focusing on children, youth and women;
- means to shape food demand through actions of government and civil society, including consumers, to drive sustainability through their food choices and actions;
- building equitable, inclusive food systems which allow small-holders and small and medium-sized enterprises to reach their maximum potential, and contribute to sustainable value chains;
- drivers for adjusting food systems to more sustainable models which meet food and nutrition security needs, with reduced depletion of natural resources and negative environmental impacts;
- aligning policies with nature positive production, including financial support to incentivize a just transition to sustainable agriculture and greening of value chains.

In addition, a “food systems community” for the ECA region has been set up on the [UNFSS Community website](#) which will feed into the **event**, on **25 May 2021**, and allow for continued dialogue, information exchange and sharing of best practice following the event.

The results of the regional dialogue will be submitted to the global UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat and will feed into the Summit’s report.

Target Audience

Government representatives from Europe and Central Asia (i.e. Ministers of Agriculture, Environment, Economy, Health, Social Affairs, and relevant technical staff from the Ministries; UN staff; academia, CSOs and private sector working on food systems-related issues; farmers; producer’s organizations; general public interested in food systems)

Draft Agenda (2.5 hours)

25 May, 2021

Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia

Russian/English simultaneous interpretation.

The event will be organized through the zoom platform, and on YouTube.

Q&A option in the chat, and comments from the audience.

10:00

Video - Intro

10:05

An Overview on the Agenda and Panelists

OPENING SESSION - Setting the scene

10:05

Welcome by the Moderator: **Conny Czymoch**, facilitator and journalist

10:15

Welcome by **Vladimir Rakhmanin**

FAO Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia

Opening remarks and statements

Dongyu Qu

FAO Director General

10:15

Martin Frick

10:40

Deputy of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Food System Summit 2021

Dmitry Mariyasin

UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary

10:40

Video

10:42

Testimonials from ongoing dialogues on food systems

10:42

DIALOGUE: Policy and governance issues at stake to accelerate food systems transformation sustainably in the ECA region:

10:52

Overcoming food systems challenges sustainably in the ECA region through stronger governance and holistic, coherent policies

Jessica Fanzo

Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Global Food & Agricultural Policy and Ethics, Johns Hopkins University

Conny and Jessica in dialogue about the essential issues

10:53 **Video**
Sisters are doing it for themselves!
10:55 **Medina and Fatima Maysar** Pro-active school girls, representing children's rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan

10:55 **Panel discussion 1**
11:35 **Shaping our food systems to be more equitable, by empowering all consumers and protecting the most vulnerable by ensuring access to safe, nutritious food, and inclusive economic livelihoods.**

Co- Facilitated by UNICEF, Amir Yarpavar, Health and Nutrition Specialist

The discussion contributes to: [Action Track 1](#), [Action Track 2](#), and [Action Track 4](#)

Panellists:

Annamurat Nazarov, Chief Specialist, State Sanitary Epidemiological Inspection, Ministry of Health of Turkmenistan

Arman Khojyan, Deputy Minister of Economy, Republic of Armenia

Doris Letina, Vice-President of the European Council of Young Farmers

A.A. Harutyunyan, Director of the EEC Agricultural Policy Department, Eurasian Economic Commission

Žaklina Stojanović, Professor, University of Belgrade – Faculty of Economics, Serbia

Contributors / statements / testimonials

Jaroslav Ponder, Head of ITU, Office for Europe

Sophie Healy-Thow

Youth Ambassador from Ireland, leading the Youth Community on UNFSS

11:35 **Video**
Georgia: home of old grains – re-awakened!
11:40 **Biological Farming Association Elkana**, Georgian nongovernmental organization

11:40
12:20

Panel Discussion 2

Improving the sustainability of food systems, by minimizing negative impacts on the natural resource base by promoting nature-positive and climate-resilient food production, and re-shaping financing for greener outcomes.

Co- Facilitated by UNDP, Maxim Vergeichik, Technical Advisor, Biodiversity and Ecosystems

The discussion contributes to: [Action Track 3 and Action Track 5](#)

Panellists:

H.E. Jamshid Khodjaev, Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Elena Mateescu, Director-General of the Romanian Meteorological Administration, Vice-chair of WMO Standing Committee on Services for Agriculture.

Doaa Abdel-Motaal, Senior Counsellor, World Trade Organization

Volkert Engelsman, EOSTA, Trading Company in organic fruits and vegetables

Contributors / statements / testimonials

Namiq Shalbuzov, Deputy Director of Agrarian Research Center, Azerbaijan

Blazhe Josifovski, President, Let's Do Macedonia

12:20
12:30

Take home messages // Conclusions

Closing

12.30

Video

YOUNGSTERS ACT4FOOD ACT4Change, UNFSS Youth Community
