



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

171st Session of the Council of the FAO

(5–9 December 2022)

Item 8: Report of the 134th Session of the Programme Committee

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Norway, The Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
3. We would like to start by thanking Her Excellency Ambassador Rubinstein for her excellent leadership of the Programme Committee.
4. The EU and its Member States appreciate the efforts for implementing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031, taking into account the specific conditions, needs and priorities of members, across the various technical areas.
5. However, we would like to see further refinements of the priorities for the technical committees and for the Regional Conference for Europe, in the revision of the Medium-Term Plan 2022–2025, especially concerning the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The graphic presentation of the priorities is also lacking clarity and detail. Therefore, we would like to invite FAO to adjust the document.

6. We appreciate the strategic priorities for food safety as they are underlined in FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–2031, in particular the critical importance of One Health and the work of the Codex Alimentarius. We also welcome the particular attention paid to mainstreaming food safety management and controls throughout agriculture and food systems.
7. The One Country, One Product Initiative (OCOP) still raises many questions. We call on FAO to provide regular updates on the list of countries which are part of the Initiative as

well as the products which were selected. FAO key strategies, especially on climate change and biodiversity, and the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management should be duly taken into account, recalling also the information given by FAO management at the informal briefing on 30 September that OCOP is intended to lead to more diversification in agricultural practices and has a focus on biodiversity and sustainability criteria.

8. The EU and its Member States welcome all efforts made by FAO to implement a more precise regulatory framework for data governance, protection of data and intellectual property rights aligned with the rules and principles in other United Nations bodies. We invite FAO to continue to work in this domain. The proper implementation of the policy and the alignment of FAO's statistical data and other data activities with the policy on intellectual property rights, once promulgated, are now the key elements.
9. We welcome the Office of Evaluation's renewed focus on enhancing the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of evaluation. We look forward to regular updates of the Work Plan of Evaluations 2022-2025 being presented to the governing bodies. We underline that all sustainable agricultural approaches, such as agro-ecological practices, organic agriculture and agroforestry, are a key issue to be considered in the strategy of evaluation.
10. Lastly, the EU and its Member States express their appreciation for the Evaluation of FAO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation and the Management's Response. As indicated in recommendation 4, FAO's strategic orientation on this type of projects is essential to ensure its relevance.
11. With these comments, we endorse the report of the 134th Session of the Programme Committee.

Thank you, Mr Chair.
