



U E A A NEWSLETTER

2022, N° 7

Tbilisi, 14 September 2022

Latest News

The President reports on his two years Presidency (2020 -2022)

President Guram Aleksidze, Professor, Academician (Georgia)

After having been President elect and acting President during the first half of the year 2020, due to the sad death of my Predecessor Professor Michel Stanca (Italy), I took over the Presidency in October 2020.

I wish to briefly report on the various activities that were performed during these two years.

The three main goals were: (1) to increase the number of active European Academies of Agriculture members, (2) to interact with the European Union Commission in topical matters, and (3) increase the communication of UEAA still insufficiently known by our European Agricultural Academies. As reported below, the first goal was only partially reached and clearly further effort should be made by my successor Vice President Professor Elena Horska and all steering committee members. The second objective was more successful and two main subjects were tackled, referring to the New Genomic Technologies (NGT) and the EU Forest strategy were actively debated with some fruitful interaction with the Brussels offices. The third objective was also met with satisfaction in improving the UEAA web site (www.ueaa.info) and launching in 2022 the UEAA monthly Newsletter.

The governance of UEAA is provided by a Steering Committee whose members have been elected at the previous General Assembly held (by Zoom) in October 2020. During the report period, 7 sessions of the Steering Committee were held electronically (by Zoom), to which almost all members of the Steering Committee participated. In addition, during the sessions three "observers" were elected from Portugal, Spain and Great Britain. So, the Steering Committee was finally formed as follows: 10 members and 3 "observers".

A total of 56 issues were discussed during the reporting period. Below I will summarize all the main issues in which we all participated together.

1. Recommendations for the promotion of agriculture, for the period of corona virus and beyond – “An Open Letter to the UN, G-20, and National Governments on Covid-19 and Agriculture for Food and Nutrition Security” was published and first posted on the UEAA web site. The recommendations were prepared by the Steering Committee and sent as a guiding document to the Ministries of Agriculture in all European countries through our member academies.

UEAA suggested 4 major areas to be developed and further included in the global strategy to react to this COVID 19 crisis:

- a) Seeking self-sufficiency for strategic products such as wheat, rice, corn, millet, legumes, fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, or else traditional and more resilient crops as cassava, cowpea, sorghum, sweet potatoes while respecting the imperatives of sustainable development.
- b) Implementing targeted development programs – Intense investment in Agriculture and food systems is more than necessary, particularly in the countries to develop ‘territorialized food systems’.
- c) Restoring attractiveness to agricultural jobs.
- d) Strengthening scientific and technical research.

Finally, it is our firm belief that by acting collectively for the common good, we can help human society overcome the multi-faceted challenges to the agricultural and food security system.

2. Making changes in the European legislation on the use of genetically modified organisms of plants and animals in the light of new discoveries in genetics of the New Genomic Technologies (NGT) – CRISP – CAS technique ("genetic scissors").

So UEAA has set up an Electronic Working group on Gene Editing to deal with the matter and interact with the European Union Commission. Some recommendations to the EU Commission were published and sent to the commission. A letter was sent to Commissioner Stella Kyriakides on January 5, 2022.

A meeting was held with the EU relevant office and a communique about this meeting has been posted on the UEAA web site on 1st of March 2022.

3. UEAA meeting with the « Forest Team » of the EU Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG Agri).

The aim of the meeting was to underline and elaborate on the UEAA Position Paper regarding the New Forest Strategy of the EU Commission. Further interaction between UEAA and the relevant EU Commission office is expected in the few months ahead.

4. UEAA Best Abstracts scientific competition.

The President has launched in January 2022 such a program aiming at getting more European Academies of Agriculture involved to participate to this scientific competition. A jury will meet early 2023 to award three UEAA scientific prizes. To date more than 20 Abstracts have been received by the UEAA office and are currently posted on the Scientific News page of the UEAA web site (<https://ueaa.info/scientific-news/>) .

5. Monthly Newsletters

Since January 2022, UEAA has started dispatching a monthly Newsletter to all UEAA members and simultaneously posted on the UEAA web site.

6. Updating on the UEAA web site.

An effort has been made these two last years to update on a regular basis the UEAA web site as can be seen on the home page. Two additional pages have been set referring one to the Scientific News and the second to the UEAA Newsletters.

7. International Conferences.

Despite the difficulties we have experienced during these last two years, related to COVID first and then second to the war in Ukraine, we managed to hold during my presidency, vice-presidency and membership of the Steering Committee (2017-2019-2022), 3 international conferences in Tbilisi:

“Viticulture and Wine making in European countries – Historical aspects and prospects”;

“Wheat in European countries and Georgia as one of the origin of Cultural wheat”;

“Agricultural Mechanization and Technology in Europe and Perspectives”.

Proceedings of all Conferences been published and distributed among the participants.

In conclusion, we will hold our General Assembly in Bratislava on October 6 and 7 and I hope then to see you all members of UEAA either physically present or by Visio. I would now like to wish all the best to the Vice President Professor Elena Horska for her Presidency for the years 2022-2024 and long life to UEAA.

G.A.