

**On the Russia-Belarus Proposal on Creating  
the Eurasia Region and Providing it With the FAO Council Seats**

On 17 February 2025, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, in their letter addressed to the FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu, proposed to create the Eurasia Region in the FAO and allocate two seats in the FAO Council by introducing respective amendments to Article V of the FAO Constitution.

This proposal was submitted in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article XX of the FAO Constitution and is to be considered at the 44th Session of the FAO Conference which will be held in the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, 28 June – 4 July 2025.

**1. The reason why the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus have submitted this proposal.**

Currently, the FAO has a regional division which was established 72 years ago at the 7th Session of the FAO Conference in 1953. Since then, the agricultural development and food security situation in Eurasia and in the whole world has changed dramatically. Beginning from the second half of 1990s, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus have been consistently modernizing the agri-food sector, strengthening their positions as major producers and exporters of food, agricultural commodities, equipment and fertilizers.

Nowadays, Russia is among the world's largest producers of agricultural products and ranks first in wheat export. The Republic of Belarus takes the tenth place in the world in dairy product exports and the seventh place in butter export. Russia is one of the five major exporters of fish.

Russia is also in the first place in the world in nitrogen fertilizers export, in the second place in potash fertilizers export and in the third place in phosphorus fertilizers export. Together, Russia and the Republic of Belarus provide more than 30 percent of the world's fertilizer market.

The Republic of Belarus ranks third in the world in the production and export of flax. It produces more than 15 percent of the world production of combine harvesters and up to 10 percent of small and medium tractors.

Since the early 2000s, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus have been consistently connecting their vast transport highways, which allows to provide fast and smooth transportation of food, agricultural commodities and fertilizers between Europe and Asia. In 2024, transportation of containers from the People's Republic of China to Europe through Russia and Belarus took on average from five to seven days, which is three times faster than through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

The Russian Federation is one of the founding Member States of the FAO and is among the ten major donors in terms of assessed contributions. In cooperation with the FAO, it continuously provides additional financial and technical assistance to the FAO Member Nations in areas that are critical for sustainable agricultural production, food security and nutrition, such as soil management, fighting antimicrobial resistance, prevention and stopping of dangerous diseases of farm animals and crops, fostering healthy diet by developing school catering and generating sustainable livelihood for rural population in the States in crisis and post-crisis periods.

The opening of the FAO Liaison Office with the Russian Federation in Moscow in 2010 marked the crucial role of Russia in supporting the activities of the FAO. Over the 15 years of its existence, the Liaison Office has attracted over USD 80 mn of investment, technologies and innovations in the FAO projects.

Therefore, creating the Eurasia Region in the FAO will ensure that the existing regional division system, which has not been changed since 1953, is brought in line with the present-day realities of agricultural production and food security.

## **2. The reason why the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus have submitted this proposal at this stage.**

Currently, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus are part of the Europe Region. Ninety-eight percent of the countries in this Region are members of the European Union or are expecting to join it.

Over the last few years, the agricultural policy of the EU, on the one hand, and that of Russia and the Republic of Belarus, on the other hand, have increasingly become different. In particular, Moscow and Minsk advocate for a smoother transition to "green" agriculture without speeding it up artificially which could help protect farmers' interests. Besides, Russia and the Republic of Belarus do not support the imposition of additional export duties on agricultural commodities the production of which is related to the forest sector. These disagreements prevent reaching a common agreement. Taking into account that the EU Member States prevail in the Europe Region, the position of Russia and the Republic of Belarus on these and other issues that are important not only for Europe, but also for the whole world, is actually ignored.

In the last three years, the EU countries have pursued the policy of complete isolation towards Russia and the Republic of Belarus. According to the decision adopted at the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (in May 2024), the EU countries banned themselves from electing Russia and the Republic of Belarus to the FAO Council under the quota of the Europe Regional Group. The paragraph 26 (j) of the Report of the Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe provides, in particular, that "the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus should not be elected as Council Members from the Europe Regional Group." Therefore, the EU

countries, acting in violation of Article V of the FAO Constitution, have seized the right of the FAO Conference to determine the composition of the FAO Council. This decision is unprecedented and violates the right guaranteed by the FAO Constitution to Russia and the Republic of Belarus, which are full Members of the FAO and the Europe Region, to be elected to the Council.

Under these circumstances, Russia and the Republic of Belarus have no other way out but to make efforts to ensure that their rights are respected through creating the Eurasia Region.

**3. The reason why Russia and the Republic of Belarus do not consider the option to be incorporated in another region.**

Russia and the Republic of Belarus proceed from the fact that last time the FAO Council was enlarged 48 years ago. Since then, the number of countries in all the Regions, except for North America, has increased. The number of seats in the FAO Council that belongs to each Region does not meet the needs of these Regions. The transfer of Russia and the Republic of Belarus to one of the Regions already existing will lead to more intense competition in this Region for the seats in the FAO Council. We believe that such option is unfair and inconsistent with the general goal to ensure equal representation of all Member Nations of the Organization in the FAO Council.

**4. The reason why Russia and the Republic of Belarus do not request the transfer of two seats from the Europe Region to the Eurasia Region.**

Despite the fact that the Russian Federation was one of the founding Member States of the FAO, it became its full member only in 2006 after the ratification of the FAO Constitution. The Republic of Belarus became the member of the FAO two years earlier, in 2004. Russia and the Republic of Belarus, just like some other EU countries, were determined as the Europe Region, but were not provided with additional seats in the FAO Council. In this regard, Russia and the Republic of Belarus do not have any reasons to request that two seats of the Europe Region be transferred to the new Eurasia Region.

**5. Do Russia and the Republic of Belarus support the proposal of Indonesia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan to enlarge the number of seats in the Council from 49 to 55 and introduce a respective amendment to Article V of the FAO Constitution?**

In their letter addressed to the FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu, dated 28 February 2025, Russia and the Republic of Belarus expressed their support to the proposal made by Indonesia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. We believe that this proposal corresponds to the objective to ensure a more representative and balanced composition of the FAO Council which will correlate with the changes that took place since the last enlargement of the FAO Council 48 years ago.

**6. Does the proposal of Russia and the Republic of Belarus on providing the Eurasia Region with two seats in the FAO Council comply with the specified criteria?**

Russia and the Republic of Belarus fully satisfy the criteria for the Council membership specified in the paragraph 3 of Rule XXII of the General Rules of the Organization and in the paragraph 126 of the Report of the 34th Session of the FAO Council (17-27 October 1960).

Besides the volume of agricultural production and export, as well as financial and technical participation in the activities of the FAO (see paragraph 1), it is necessary to take into account the following.

The Russian Federation is situated both in Eastern Europe and Asia. It ranks first in the world in terms of territory, ninth in terms of population, third in terms of arable lands and second in terms of freshwater resources. One fifth of all the world's forests is located in the Russian territory. The total area of forest resources of the Republic of Belarus is over eight million hectares.

**7. Do Russia and the Republic of Belarus consider the possibility that other countries could be incorporated in the Eurasia Region and would they be entitled to be elected to the Council under the quota of the Eurasia Region?**

Russia and the Republic of Belarus render their full support to integration processes in the Eurasian space which contribute to sustainable agricultural development and food sovereignty of the countries of the Eurasia Region and its neighbours.

In case other countries wish to be incorporated in the Eurasia Regional Group, they could also seek to be elected to the Council on behalf of this Regional Group.

We **call** upon the FAO Member Nations, considering all the above-mentioned factors, to support the decision on creating the Eurasia Region and providing it with two seats in the FAO Council at the 44th Session of the FAO Conference (28 June – 4 July 2025).

We **assure** that the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus will continue to fully implement the FAO mandate, contribute to the achievement of the goals and fulfilment of the objectives that the Member Nations set for the Organization, use the existing national capacity to fight poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition, inequality and climate change, as well as make efforts to ensure biodiversity conservation, provide necessary assistance to other countries in solving these and other problems in agriculture and food security.