

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda item 6

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CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025: IMPLEMENTATION IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

(Prepared by the Coordinator for Europe)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 2019, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its Forty-second Session adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.¹

1.2 While the overall progress on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is monitored by the Codex Secretariat, each of the six FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committees (RCCs) agree implementation plans for a two-year period that outline regional priority activities in support of the global plan. The implementation results are reviewed and discussed at the respective RCC sessions, and a subsequent plan is agreed upon by the region.

1.3 This document aims at facilitating discussions on the implementation of priority activities for the European region during the period 2022-2023, identifying activities for the remainder of the plan's duration (i.e. 2024-2025), and highlighting other relevant issues related to the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 includes five goals, with a series of objectives established under each goal as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Goals and objectives in the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Goal	Objectives (CCEURO priorities for 2022-2023 in bold)
1. Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner	1.1 Identify needs and emerging issues. 1.2 Prioritize needs and emerging issues.
2. Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles	2.1 Use scientific advice consistently in line with Codex risk-analysis principles. 2.2 Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards. 2.3 Promote sufficient and sustainable funding for expert bodies that deliver scientific advice.
3. Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards	3.1 Raise the awareness of Codex standards. 3.2 Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/ application of Codex standards. 3.3 Recognise and promote the use and impact of Codex standards.
4. Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process	4.1 Enable sustainable national Codex structures in all Codex Member Countries. 4.2 Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members. 4.3 Reduce barriers to active participation by developing Countries.

¹ REP19/CAC, paragraph 122(i).

5. Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals	5.1 Develop and maintain efficient and effective work management practices and systems. 5.2 Enhance the capacities of committee and working group chairpersons, regional coordinators and host country secretariats to support the work of Codex.
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2.2 For the period 2020-2021, CCEURO focused on the implementation of activities related to Goals 1 and 2.² The implementation of the identified activities was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a change of the meeting format from physical to virtual for two CAC (CAC43 and CAC44), four sessions of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and 14 technical committee sessions, including CCEURO32.

2.3 At CCEURO32, Members acknowledged the progress made under the prevailing conditions and endorsed activities related to Goals 1, 3 and 4 for the biennium 2022-2023.³

2.4 At CCEXEC84, Members recommended to take into account the lessons learnt from the development and implementation of the monitoring framework for the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 when developing of the monitoring framework for the Strategic Plan 2026-2031.⁴

3. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE EUROPEAN REGION 2022 AND 2023

3.1 The Coordinator for Europe oversaw the implementation of the ten priority activities.⁵

3.2 As concerns Strategic Goal 1, Members from the region generally tend to prioritize and focus resources on work in general subject committees over commodity committees. Members actively engaged in discussions on the cross-cutting subject of new food sources and production systems (NFPS) highlighting the important role of Codex in addressing challenges posed by NFPS as they arise.

3.3 As concerns Strategic Goal 3, Members stepped up communication activities aimed at promoting Codex texts, in particular in the area of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), at the occasions of the two World Food Safety Days in the reporting period and the 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2023.

3.4 Concerning Strategic Goal 4, participation data contained in Appendix I generally indicate a strong need to identify and further reduce barriers to active participation in Codex work, in particular for lower and upper middle-income countries in the European region (Goal 3).

Priority Goal 1. Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner

Priority Objective 1.2. Prioritize needs and emerging issues

Activity 1.2.1. Monitor developments in relation to “new food sources” and contribute to related Codex work

3.5 The subject of NFPS was raised in Codex by FAO and WHO at CCEXEC81 and CAC44 in 2021 as an emerging issue that affects agri-food systems in a crosscutting way with relevance to food safety and quality. FAO and WHO sought advice from CCEXEC on (i) mechanisms for information sharing with relevant Codex committees, (ii) modalities to consider how further work could be initiated by Codex, and (iii) processes that would allow Codex to holistically evaluate and prioritize potential need for actions. CAC44 requested the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter (CL) to collect information on ongoing developments related to NFPS and further requested a sub-committee of CCEXEC to assess Member and Observer responses and advise on next steps.

3.6 In total, 29 of the 51 Codex Member countries from the European region (57%) responded to CL 2022/06/OCS-CCEXEC together with several European or Europe-based NGOs.⁶ Members provided information on the existing domestic regulations on “new food” or “novel food”.

3.7 After consideration of the report of the CCEXEC sub-committee on NFPS in 2022, CAC45 decided to seek further input from Members and Observers to identify possible issues related to NFPS that the current structure and procedures in Codex could not address including options for addressing them.

² REP20/EURO, Appendix II.

³ REP22/EURO, paragraph 59.

⁴ REP23/EXEC1, paragraph 115.

⁵ REP22/EURO, Appendix III.

⁶ The European Union (EU) is counted as 27 Member countries throughout this document.

3.8 The same European Member countries that responded to the first CL on NFPS also submitted comments in response to CL 2023/31/OCS-CAC. Several of the comments suggested the need to help ensure Codex Members are promptly informed about new developments in the area of NFPS.

3.9 At CAC46 (2023), Members from the European region actively participated in the debate on NFPS and highlighted the important role of Codex in addressing challenges posed by NFPS as they arise. Members also stressed the need to ensure clarity on the way to proceed with the submission of new work proposals concerning NFPS. During the period 2022-2023, no Member from the European region submitted any concrete proposal for new work in Codex.⁷

Priority Goal 3. Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards

Priority objective 3.2. Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/application of Codex standards

Activity 3.2.1. Conduct a regional event dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and encourage national events

Activity 3.2.2. Encourage multi-stakeholder events (food business operators, politicians, civil society, scientists, academic and research) to promote the use of Codex standards

3.10 To kick off the year of celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Coordinator for Europe and the Codex Secretariat organized an expert panel discussion on 20 January 2023 entitled “*Is the Codex system fit for the future?*” as part of the annual Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin, Germany. The GFFA is considered the largest informal conference of agricultural ministers. In the final 2023 communiqué signed by 64 agricultural ministers (including 32 from the CCEURO region), the critical role of Codex in the context of cross-sectoral collaboration in the transformation of agri-food systems in line with the One Health approach was highlighted.

3.11 The Coordinator for Europe also contributed to other national multi-stakeholder events as well as the regional event “*Advancing food standards and Codex participation in Europe and Central Asia*” which took place from 14-15 September 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan. This event was organized by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and the Azerbaijan Food Safety Agency with collaboration of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) Secretariat, and the Codex Secretariat and attended by representatives of 21 Members from the European region (41%).

3.12 The Coordinator for Europe and the Codex Secretariat regularly encouraged awareness raising events at national level. Between 2022 and 2023, around 40 Codex Members from the European region (77%) announced sub-regional, national and online multi-stakeholder events on the CCEURO webpage in response to those calls.

3.13 Members also participated in international capacity development activities (notably under CTF, the WTO Standards and Trade Development Facility, and the European Union’s Better Training for Safer Food programme) that sought to facilitate better understanding and use of Codex standards.

Activity 3.2.3 Promote implementation of the *Code of Practice (CoP) to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance* and the *Guidelines (GL) on Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)*

3.14 The level of implementation of the CoP and GL on AMR, adopted by CAC44 (2021), will be measured in the 2024 survey on use and impact of Codex standards.

3.15 As of 2023, all but four Members in the region have established some type of multi-sectoral coordination mechanism on AMR with government leadership. Of those Members, 31 (61% of countries in the European region) report to use integrated approaches to implement national AMR action plans or committed to implement such plans in the course of 2024.⁸

3.16 Throughout the period 2022-2023, Members from the region supported actions at international level.⁹ Several Members are involved in the Quadripartite Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform on AMR, raised awareness in different policy fora (e.g. G7, G20) and organized dedicated events on the revised CoP and new GL adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in November 2021.

⁷ In 2019, one member proposed new work on oil derived from a new food source, namely the marine zooplankton *Calanus finmarchicus*. The consequential change to an existing Codex standard (CXS 329-2017) was proposed by CCFO28 in 2024 for adoption at Step 5/8.

⁸ Global Database for Tracking Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Country Self- Assessment Survey (TrACSS), 2023.

⁹ Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach, 2023, available here: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9581-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

3.17 FAO promoted the CoP and GL on AMR during a technical consultation on Antimicrobial use and AMR in the livestock sector in the Balkans, held in Budapest on 6-7 December 2023 and attended by veterinarians and food safety professionals.¹⁰

3.18 The new Roadmap on AMR for the WHO European Region 2023-2030 includes an action to “adopt relevant Codex Alimentarius texts into national policy and legislation”.¹¹

Priority Objective 3.3. Recognize and promote the impact of Codex standards

Activity 3.3.1. Conduct a regional event to support participation in the new global survey on use and impact of Codex standards

3.19 On 20 September 2022, the Codex Secretariat held a virtual launch event to promote the survey making this activity obsolete.

Activity 3.3.2. Promote the inclusion of food safety as well as the most recent Codex standards in the national actions on the transformation of food systems, including through international bodies

3.20 The Coordinator for Europe promoted the role of Codex standards and the importance of food safety in the transition towards more sustainable food systems during the 2023 GFFA, which saw attendance by agricultural ministers from 32 (63%) of Member countries in the region.

3.21 In response to the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), over 100 countries committed to developing national pathways that would define the food system they need. An FAO Stocktake report showed that out of the 30 Members (58%) from the European region that submitted national pathways to the UNFSS Coordination Hub, 19 (37%) defined activities under the theme “food quality and safety”.¹² As FAO shares the results of the regional Stocktake report, the importance of food safety as part of food systems transformation is highlighted. Many of these activities regard commitments to creating better food safety data, increasing human resource capacity for food control or enhancing policy regulations. Several of the initiatives of Members in the region make direct or indirect reference to Codex Alimentarius.

3.22 Strengthening the assessment, management and communication of food safety risks is included as an action track in the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026) developed by the Quadripartite organizations FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA. The plan offers a set of actions and activities for the Quadripartite to advance One Health at all levels.

Priority Goal 4. Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process

Priority Objective 4.2. Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members

Priority Objective 4.3 Reduce barriers to active participation by developing countries.

Activity 4.2.1. Continue to support capacity building via trainings, webinars

3.23 In 2022, most Codex committees continued to run virtually. To facilitate participation in virtual committee sessions, the Codex Secretariat continued to offer a range of preparatory meetings and webinars.

3.24 In 2022 and 2023, the CTF Secretariat, in collaboration with Regional Coordinators, FAO and WHO, held training events on the CTF2 application process and application of the FAO/WHO Codex Diagnostic tool for self-assessing the status of national Codex programmes. FAO provided direct technical advice to Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Moldova on preparation of applications to round eight of CTF in December 2023.

3.25 In the reporting period, FAO and WHO regional offices as well as Members of the region generally connected capacity-building initiatives to the World Food Safety Day on 7 June and the 60th anniversary of Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2023. FAO and WHO held a joint webinar on 28 June 2023 to promote understanding and awareness of One Health and food safety for Members in the European region.¹³

¹⁰ <https://www.fao.org/europe/news/detail/antimicrobial-use-and-resistance-in-the-livestock-sector-take-centre-stage-in-budapest/e>

¹¹ Roadmap on antimicrobial resistance for the WHO European Region 2023–2030, <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/372503>

¹² See www.unfoodsystemshub.org and Outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in Europe and Central Asia <https://www.fao.org/3/cc5319en/cc5319en.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.fao.org/europe/news/detail/fao-who-focus-on-food-safety-and-one-health/en>

Activity 4.2.2. Develop opportunities for mentorship, and for sharing experience and knowledge among countries of the region

3.26 The Coordinator for Europe organized 17 informal online coordination meetings in preparation of CCEXEC and technical Codex committee sessions. In addition to the possibility for coordination of positions, these meetings offered Members the opportunity to share experience and knowledge on concrete matters up for discussion within CAC subsidiary bodies. Where possible, translation and interpretation were offered. In addition, Kazakhstan as former Coordinator for Europe facilitated outreach to Russian-speaking countries.

3.27 In the frame of CTF2 projects, twinning partnerships, including study tours, between Türkiye and Azerbaijan; Sweden, Norway and North Macedonia as well as Germany¹⁴ and Turkmenistan were implemented successfully. Members of the National Codex Committee (NCC) in Azerbaijan received trainings on understanding the work of Codex, participating in Codex sessions, and using Codex at national level with practical examples. In both Azerbaijan and North Macedonia, mentoring sessions took place for the Codex Contact Point and NCC members on the preparation for and attendance of Codex sessions. NCC Uzbekistan learned from the experience of the Codex team of Kazakhstan through a workshop.

Activity 4.2.3. Promote establishment of National Steering Committees in Member countries as required

3.28 With support of CTF2, functional national steering committees have been established in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The Committees coordinate Codex work across relevant ministries and agencies. NCCs have also been established and are active in Azerbaijan, North Macedonia, and Moldova.

Activity 4.2.4 Promote participation in Electronic Working Groups (EWGs)

3.29 Through regular emails, the Codex Secretariat and the Coordinator for Europe informed about the establishment of new EWGs and related deadlines. Practical information on how to access the Codex online discussion forum for EWGs was integrated into capacity building activities (e.g. the twinning partnerships and CTF study tours).

3.30 Experts from the European Union and/or its 27 member states as well as six additional Member countries from the European Region (65%) registered to EWGs established in the reporting period. With the exception of two upper middle-income countries, none of the developing countries in the region participated in EWGs.¹⁵ EWGs with expert registrations of more than ten percent of European Members all related to work in general subject committees, in particular the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF), and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH).

4. REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS WORKPLAN

4.1 CCEURO32 highlighted the importance of communication and recalled that the regional communications work plan for the period 2020-2025 was still valid¹⁶. Since the activation of the CCEURO page on the Codex website, more than 130 news stories have been published.¹⁷ The Coordinator for Europe supported communications activities through participation in events, media interviews, delivery of news articles, and contributions to the Codex podcast. In 2024, a CTF2 video on support provided to Azerbaijan was published.¹⁸

5. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOCUSING ON PRIORITY ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN 2024 AND 2025

5.1 The Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is the basis for the development of a regional work plan for the biennium 2024-2025. Regional implementation plans should detail the regional contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Goals and reflect the priorities of the region while providing a sufficient degree of flexibility to Members.

5.2 Appendix II proposes possible activities to be implemented in the European region in period 2024-2025 for consideration by the Codex Members in the European region at CCEURO33.

¹⁴ Germany also hosted a study tour for the NCC of Uzbekistan in 2024.

¹⁵ Developing countries are countries eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA) according to the 2024 OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients.

¹⁶ REP22/EURO para. 58 and REP20/EURO Appendix III- Regional Communications Work Plan 2020-2025.

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/committees/codex-regions/cceuro/about/en>

¹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_1w5VhTooQ

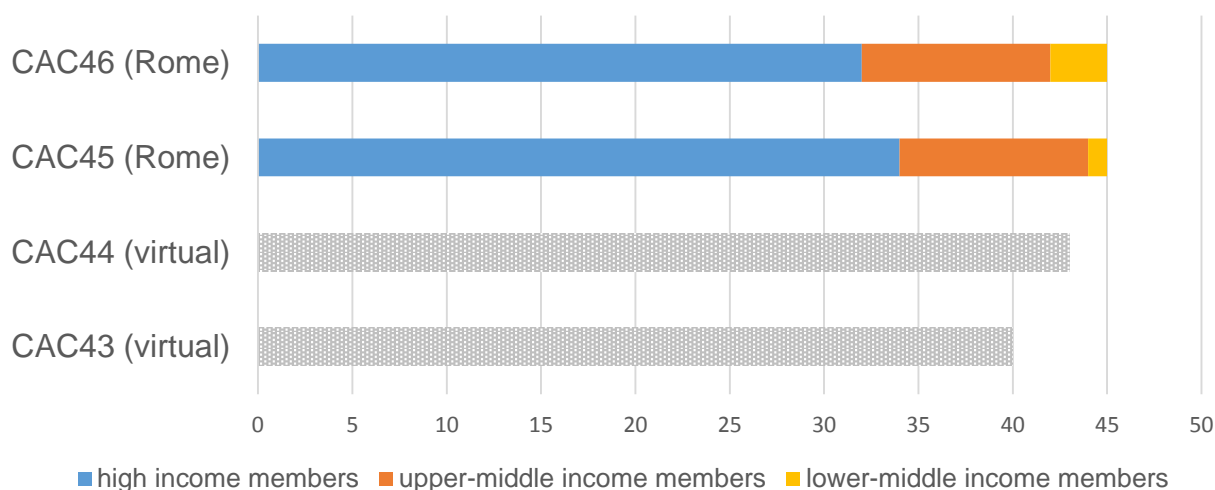
6. RECOMMENDATIONS**6.1 CCEURO33 is invited to:**

- i. identify the priority goals/objectives on which the region will focus its contributions to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for the biennium 2024-2025;
- ii. identify the activities to be implemented to support achievement of the prioritized goals and objectives by CCEURO and Codex Members in the region;
- iii. articulate how the activities identified under ii. will contribute to the achievement of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025; and
- iv. provide comments, if any, on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025 for consideration by CCEXEC.

Appendix I

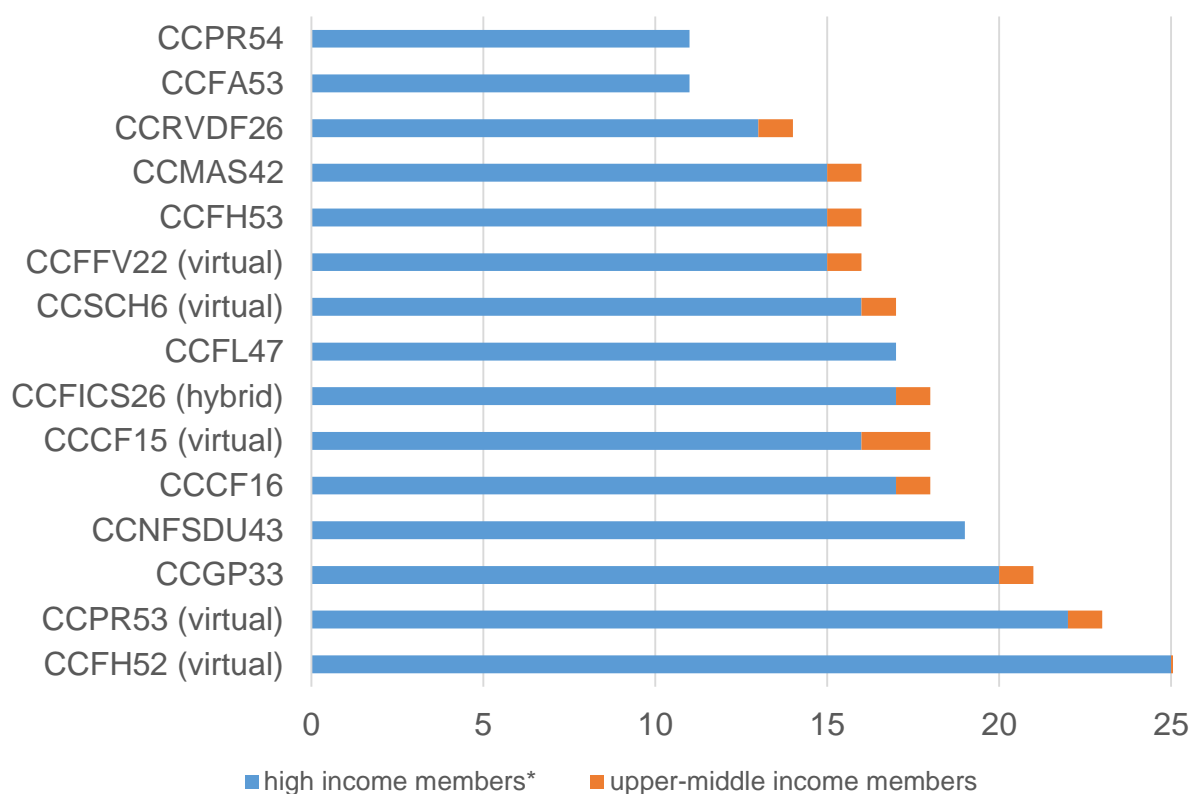
QUANTITATIVE DATA ON PARTICIPATION BY CODEX MEMBERS FROM THE EUROPEAN REGION, 2022-2023

FIGURE 1: ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS FROM EUROPE, CAC



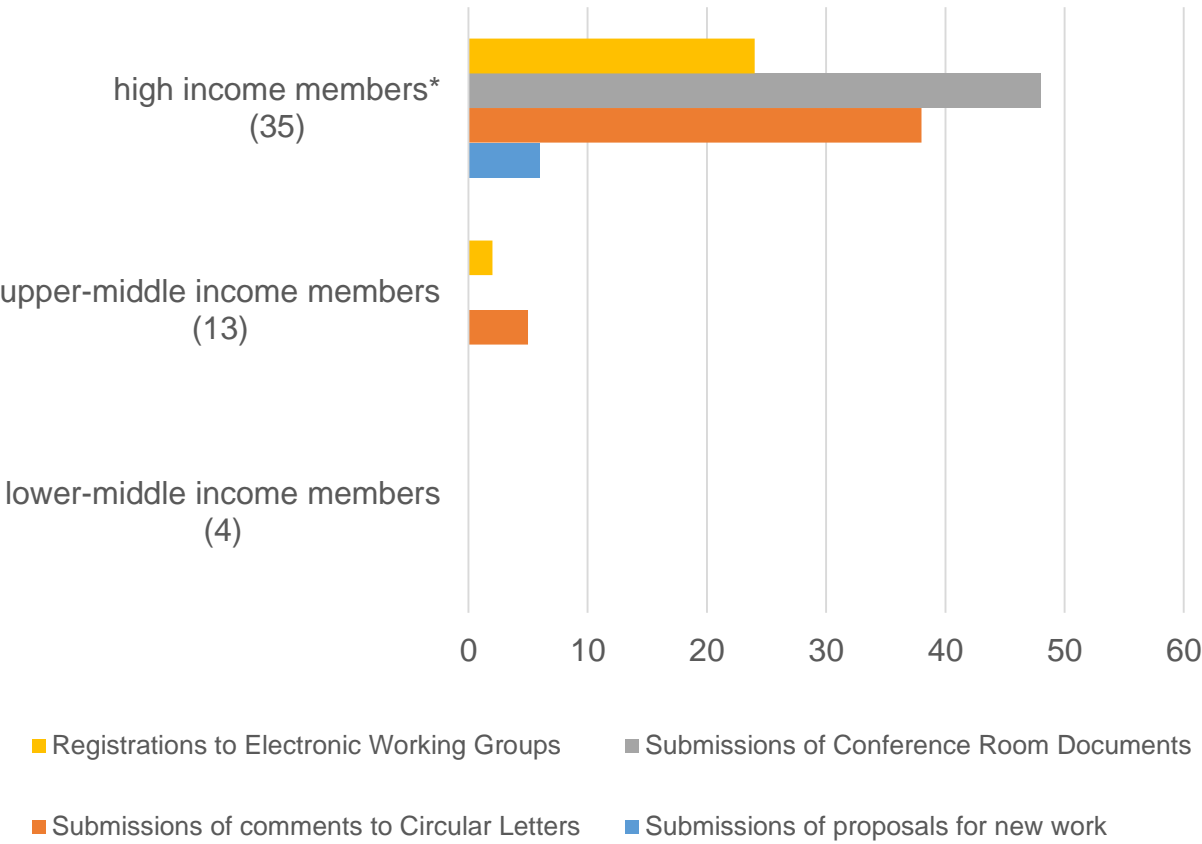
* Given their virtual meeting format, CAC44 (2021) and CAC43 (2020) are shown for comparative purposes.

FIGURE 2: ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS FROM EUROPE, CODEX COMMITTEES



* High income Members include the European Union as Codex Member Organization

FIGURE 3: OTHER ENGAGEMENT, MEMBERS FROM EUROPE, BY INCOME GROUPS



* High income Members include the European Union as Codex Member Organization

APPENDIX II

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE EUROPEAN REGION IN 2024-2025

Priority goal	Priority objective	Activities for the period 2024-2025	Rationale for proposed activities	Responsible party and collaborators	Expected output by 2025	Reporting mechanism/
1. Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner	1.2 Prioritize needs and emerging issues	1.2.1. Actively contribute to the discussions on challenges related to the preparation and prioritization of new work and preparation of related practical guidance by the Codex Secretariat 1.2.3. Communicate needs and emerging issues based on discussions at CCEURO33 (e.g. in dedicated group in the Codex online discussion forum)	The activity is expected to improve the ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of Members	Regional coordinator, FAO and WHO, Members, Codex Secretariat	Members have contributed to discussions on challenges and needs related to proposals for new work in Codex Members have made contributions in online discussion forum	Report at CCEURO34
2. Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles	2.2 Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards. 2.3 Promote sufficient and sustainable funding for expert bodies that deliver scientific advice.	2.2.1. Support activities aimed at enhancing and facilitating the work of the FAO/WHO scientific advice programme	The activity is expected to contribute to sustain and strengthen the scientific basis of Codex standards	Members, Regional coordinator	Members have provided scientific data, experts, funding or other support in response to the needs of Codex scientific advisory bodies	Report at CCEURO34

3. Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards	3.2 Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/ application of Codex standards	<p>3.2.2 Respond to the 2024 and 2025 surveys by the Codex Secretariat on the use and impact of Codex texts</p> <p>3.2.1 Share experience with use of Codex standards in line with Regional Communications Work Plan (news stories, presentations at events, social media contributions etc.)</p>	The activities are expected to raise the level of awareness of the Codex Alimentarius and increase knowledge about priority standards for the region	Regional Coordinator, Members, Observers, Codex Secretariat, FAO, and WHO	Increased recognition of Codex Alimentarius and priority standards for the region	<p>Report at CCEURO34 and National Action Plans on AMR</p> <p>Codex webpage (main page and regional page)</p>
4. Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process	<p>4.2 Increase sustainable and active participation of all Codex Members</p> <p>and</p> <p>4.3 Reduce barriers to active participation by developing countries.</p>	<p>4.2.1. Continue to support needs-based capacity building activities (trainings, webinars, study visits and virtual coordination sessions)</p> <p>4.2.2. Continue to conduct advocacy to policy makers to prioritize Codex work, allocate resources and provide institutional framework for Codex structures within member countries</p> <p>4.2.4 Continue to promote participation in Electronic Working Groups (EWGs)</p>	The activities are expected to increase Members knowledge and confidence in articulating positions and stimulate greater participation in Codex work	Members, FAO and WHO Regional Coordinator, Codex Secretariat	Increased or sustained participation in CAC, CAC subsidiary bodies, WGs and responses to Circular Letters from across the region	<p>Report at CCEURO34 on the number of member countries by economic status participating in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies as identified in the lists of participants, WG reports and Online Commenting System statistics</p>