

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 9**

**CX/EURO 00/14**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

Twenty-second Session  
Madrid, Spain, 3 – 6 October 2000

### **CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS GOVERNMENT COMMENTS**

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Consumers' interests are perceived as very important by the Czech government and the government has already made several steps towards helping consumers to secure their rights. The basic step was creation of "Conception of Consumer Policy for Period 2001 – 2005" which outlined clear principles, intentions and measures for strengthening consumers' position on the market. Basic objectives of the Czech consumer policy are protection of life and health of citizens, protection of the internal market against unfair practices that are difficult to solve in the court, compatibility of internal markets of the CR and EU, development of activities of non-governmental consumer organizations and improvement of knowledge of consumers concerning their rights on the market. Following its consumer policy, the Czech government supports establishment and activities of consumer NGOs in many ways. Recognizing that financial support is a decisive factor for further development of consumer NGOs, while it is necessary to ensure independence of consumer NGOs, it was decided to provide relevant NGOs with total sum of about 263,000 USD in 2000 and about double the amount in the future. The money concerned is intended specially for following activities: independent consumer tests, out-of-court settlements of consumer disputes, participation of independent consumer NGOs in activities of the EU, providing advice to consumers etc. Besides financial support there will also be other types of support and cooperation of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and control agencies. Regarding participation of consumer NGOs in Codex work, consumer NGOs were offered to participate in the work of the Czech National Codex Committee which will provide them with the opportunity to actively participate in preparation of Czech positions. In near future, consumer NGOs will have the opportunity to participate more in the preparation of the Czech food legislation and express their opinions, limiting factor for their acceptance being the commitment of the CR to harmonize its food legislation with that of the EU.

#### **Appendix**

##### Information on Measurable Objectives to Assess Consumer Participation in Codex

1. the Czech Republic has established the National Codex Contact Point
2. the Czech Republic has established the National Codex Committee
3. the Czech Republic has not yet held public consultations when developing national positions for Codex meetings
4. the Czech Republic has identified independent consumer NGOs and invited them to submit written comments
5. the consumer NGOs have not participated in development of national positions yet but they are expected to do so in near future
6. cooperation with consumer NGOs in the field of Codex is still at the beginning and therefore it is not possible to say the number of participating consumer NGOs

## **POLAND**

### 2.1 Consumer organisations:

- Consumer’s Federation
- Office for Competition and Consumer Protection

### 2.2 Consumer education, information service

#### Consumer’s Federation

Consumer’s Federation is an independent organisation, working in structures of Consumer’s International (CI). The tasks of Consumer’s Federation are:

- protecting consumer’s interests,
- creating consumers policy in the Polish law /recently they have prepared the reports on the Polish Food Law under the EU directives, Genetically Modified Food, Labelling of market products.
- publishing activities,
- teaching programs at schools,
- co-operation with media.

#### Office for Competition and Consumer Protection (Polish abb. UOKiK)

Basic aims of the OCCP in the field of consumer protection include the following:

- preparing drafts of legal acts on consumer interests protection,
- ordering competent bodies of State supervision to conduct research on the observance of consumer rights,
- working out governmental drafts on consumer policy,
- co-operation with organisations with the statutory task of consumer protection.

Within the scope of information and education the UOKiK in co-operation with consumer organisations has already taken numerous steps such as:

- providing free of charge legal advice for consumers, including assistance in court proceedings, through inspectorates of Trade Inspection and Consumer Federation Clubs,
- introducing consumer issues into primary and secondary schools teaching programmes,
- issuing series of leaflets, brochures and folders dealing with such matters as comparative testing of chosen food products, “Genetic and food”, Consumer assessment of ground coffee”, “Consumer issues in teaching a rational nutrition” etc.
- training and publication of materials for consumer.

## **SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

The Slovak Codex Committee was established with the decision of the Slovak Government Nr. 325 in May 1996. The chairman of the Slovak Consumers’ Association is a member of the SFCC. The Secretariat of the Slovak Food Codex Committee (SFCC) was appointed as the National Codex Contact Point in 1996.

This time, 20 professional Working Groups are active. The WGs represent advisory elements to the SFCC. Those persons interested in Codex works (including consumers) were involved in the WGs and membership is still open.

All Codex information is spread from the CCP among persons interested in Codex either directly by e-mail or through the chairpersons of the WGs. As written in the Procedural Manual of the SFCC, anyone can submit comments to the individual Codex materials to the chairman of the relevant WG, who is responsible to regard them while preparing draft of the national position and submit to the CCP for final processing. In case of some problematic items, the WG chairperson organizes either directly or with help of the CCP a meeting to come into consensus while preparing the national position.

Invitations to the Codex meetings are spread to all persons as mentioned above. According the Procedural Manual of the SFCC, any expert or consumer can become a member of a national delegation to a Codex meeting after being agreed by the SFCC. National representatives to the meetings are informed on their duties and rights in details in the Procedural Manual of the SFCC. Poor participation at the Codex meetings, as evident, has been only a consequence of financial problems.

The CCP provides all information to consumers including their access to the Codex library and performing necessary copies and translations of the related materials. Codex information is reviewed regularly in "Codex Annex" to the magazine "Food Trends" being issued regularly 6 times a year since 1994 and distributed free of charge to about 1200 addressees (as demanded by recipients).