



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

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COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (REPLIES TO CL 2014/20-EURO)

Replies submitted by Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovak Republic

ARMENIA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control System

The Draft of the new RA Law “On Food Safety” and the draft of the RA Law “On State Control over Food Safety” were approved by the National Assembly in June 2014.

The RA Law “On Food Safety” regulates relations related to safety in the stages of import, export, production, processing, packaging, labeling, transportation, storage, sale, trade and public catering services of food, materials in contact with food, food and biological active additives, as well as establishes state guarantees for protection of human health from harmful and dangerous effects of food, materials in contact with food, food and biological active additives.

The RA Law “On State Control over Food Safety” regulates basic principles and characteristics of state control in the sphere of food safety, the rights, duties and responsibilities of the persons implementing state control, as well as other relations related to state control.

The RA Government Decree “On approval of procedures for providing professional conclusion on special purpose food and on approval of application for receiving professional conclusion on special purpose food produced in the RA and/or imported into the RA” was approved in 2013.

Besides, a number of decrees of the RA Minister of Health have been approved, such as “Methodological guide on food poisoning epidemiological investigation”, “Sanitary-epidemiological rules and norms on food poisoning epidemiological control”, “Sanitary rules and norms on hygiene requirements for children food in pre-school educational institutions”, “Professional guides on infants nutrition and public awareness materials for pregnant women and nursing mothers”, “Sanitary rules and norms on hygiene requirements for children food in secondary educational institutions”.

Armenian officials and specialists have participated at the various training courses and workshops organized in different countries in the framework of “Strengthening of animal origin food and feed safety control in Armenia” Twinning Project, under TAIEX instrument, EC BTSF training initiative, as well as organized by the CARD (Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development) and US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

i) The Codex National Committee was established in 2012 with representatives from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, consumers’ rights protection NGOs, Academia, representatives from WHO and FAO Armenian offices.

ii) During the meeting of the National Codex Committee in April 2014, the Codex priority areas have been reconsidered, mechanisms of communications and feedbacks have been determined with the aim of activating participation in Codex, as well as opportunities for funding the participation of the Armenian specialist in Codex Commission and Committees sessions have been discussed.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

i) The following standards and related texts are of most importance and interest in the country:

- 1) CODEX STAN 12-1981. Standard for Honey
- 2) CODEX STAN 17-1981. Standard for Canned Applesauce
- 3) CODEX STAN 98-1981. Standard for Cooked Cured Chopped Meat
- 4) CODEX STAN 107-1981. General Standard for the Labelling of Food Additives when sold as such
- 5) CODEX STAN 108-1981. Standard for Natural Mineral Waters
- 6) CODEX STAN 130-1981. Standard for Dried Apricots
- 7) CODEX STAN 150-1985. Standard for Food Grade Salt

- 8) CODEX STAN 192-1995. General Standard for Food Additives
- 9) CODEX STAN 212-1999. Standard for Sugars
- 10) CODEX STAN 227-2001. General Standard for Bottled/Packed Drinking Waters (other than natural mineral waters)
- 11) CODEX STAN 231-2001. General Codex Methods for the Detection of Irradiated Foods
- 12) CODEX STAN 242-2003. Standard for Canned Stone Fruits
- 13) CODEX STAN 247-2005. General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars
- 14) CODEX STAN 279-1971. Standard for Butter
- 15) CODEX STAN 283-1978. General Standard for Cheese
- 16) CODEX STAN 284-1971. Standard for Whey Cheeses
- 17) CODEX STAN 293-2008. Standard for Tomatoes
- 18) CODEX STAN 310-2013. Standard for Pomegranates
- 19) CAC/RCP 48-2001. Code of Hygienic Practice for Bottled/Packed Drinking Waters (other than natural mineral waters)
- 20) CAC/RCP 52-2003. Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
- 21) CAC/RCP 53-2003. Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- 22) CAC/RCP 44-1995. Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- 23) CAC/RCP 33-1985. Code of Hygienic Practice for Collecting, Processing and Marketing of Natural Mineral Waters
- 24) CAC/GL 17-1993. Guideline Procedures for the Visual Inspection of Lots of Canned Foods for Unacceptable Defects
- 25) CAC/GL 27-1997. Guidelines for the assessment of the Competence of Testing Laboratories Involved in the Import and Export Control of Foods
- 26) CAC/GL 32-1999. Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods.

ii) The current priority areas for setting national standards are standards for dairy products (cheeses), meat and meat products, fish, poultry meat, eggs and egg products, water quality, processed fruits and vegetables, production of food additives and their application, as well as reference methods for sampling and testing, laboratory capacities assessment, microbiological risks assessment.

iii) Codex standards or related texts are used during elaboration of corresponding national technical regulations and national standards.

AUSTRIA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems Austria has an extensive framework of legislation and official controls already in place to ensure food safety. All relevant information related to the Austrian food control systems is available in detail on the FVO website http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=AT (Country Profile Austria).

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

The Austrian FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission ("WECO") holds meetings with national experts for the elaboration of national positions for Codex Committees and, furthermore, for the information about the outcome of Codex meetings. In order to promote involvement and active participation of consumers and other stakeholders, representatives of social partners and of the Association for Consumer Information are invited to these meetings.

In recent years, efforts to increase the awareness about the importance to be active and efficient in the Codex standard setting process have resulted in an enhanced participation of Austrian experts in electronic working groups of CCCF, CCFA, CFFP, CCCF, CCMAS and CCMMP.

Despite limited financial resources due to budgetary cuts the responsible Austrian Ministries (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) are continuing to delegate experts to CAC and to selected CC, in particular to support the position of EUMS on site.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Austria makes regular use of Codex standards and related texts either indirectly via EU legislation or in the process of developing national standards in the Austrian Codex Alimentarius.

BULGARIA

QUESTION 1: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

National food law and regulations

The framework legislation for food chain controls comprises:

- Food Law (State Gazette No 102/2003, last amended State Gazette No 8/2011, last amended SG No 68/2013);
- Law on Veterinary Activity (State Gazette No 87/2005, last amended State Gazette No 99/2013);
- Law on Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (State Gazette No 8/2011, last amended SG No 15/2013);
- Feed Law (State Gazette No 55/2006, last amended State Gazette No 7/2013);
- Plant Protection Law (State Gazette No 91/1997, last amended State Gazette No 28/2011).

Detailed requirements are set out in specific Ordinances.

Food safety policy/strategy

In the Republic of Bulgaria the **Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Minister of Health** performs state policy in the field of food safety. Within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), the **Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate (AHFSD)** is responsible for the development and coordination of the implementation of MAF policy in the field of food safety and quality, feed safety, animal health and welfare. **Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA)** under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is the competent authority performing official control of food safety and food quality, feed, plant protection products and fertilizers, animal by-products, animal health and welfare, and plant health. **Ministry of Health (MH)** is also responsible in developing food safety policy in the field of food of non animal origin. **Public Health Directorate (PHD)** has the role of co-ordination and supervision of official controls on bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters, performed by the 28 Regional Health Inspectorates (RHIs).

Food control management

Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate (AHFSD)

The Directorate is responsible for development and co-ordination of the implementation of MAF policy in the field of food safety and quality, feed safety, animal health and welfare. The Directorate is responsible for harmonization of legislation and coordination of the control authorities within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Experts from the Directorate participate in activities on performance of audit of the official control carried out by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency in accordance with art. 4 (6) of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules. The Directorate represents the Ministry at international forums including WHO, FAO and Codex Alimentarius.

Main tasks of the AHFSD include: developing and co-ordination the implementation of MAF policy in the field of food safety and quality, feed safety, animal health and welfare; drafting legislative acts and amendments of the current legislation in the field of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare; preparing Multiannual National Control Plan in accordance with Regulation (EC) 882/2004 and the Annual report on its implementation; coordination the work of the control bodies, laboratories and other national bodies within MAF performing official feed and food control; functioning as the national contact point for the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF); functioning as a National Contact Point for Codex Alimentarius.

Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA)

Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) was founded in 2011. BFSA is a specialized body of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF). It was created with the adoption of Law on BFSA in January 2011 (SG 8/2011). BFSA is in operation since mid-February 2011 when its Code of Organisation was published in State Gazette (SG 15/2011, last amended SG 59/2011). BFSA incorporates the former National Veterinary Service (NVS), the former National Plant Protection Service (NPPS) and the former National Grain and Feed Service (NGFS), as well as the regional food health inspectors, who were responsible for the control of food of non-animal origin in the Regional Health Inspections (former Regional Inspections for Public Health Protection and Control) under the MH and the quality compliance of fresh fruits and vegetables (under MAF) with the European Commission standards for placing on the market.

Risk Assessment Centre

With the adoption of the Law on BFSA and its Code of Organisation, a **Risk Assessment Centre (RAC)** was created, managed by a Management Board and assisted by an Advisory Board. The RAC is an independent legal body within the BFSA. RAC co-ordinates independent scientific risk evaluation according to food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protective products, food and feed additives, GMOs, dietetic products, nutrition and allergens, materials and articles intended for contact with food, enzymes, flavourings and supporting substances, biological hazards, contaminants.

Ministry of Health

After 18.02.2011 (date of entry into force of Code of Organization of BFSA) **Ministry of Health** does not perform official control on food of non animal origin. According to Art. 28, par. 3 of Bulgarian Food Law, Ministry of Health (through its 28 Regional Health Inspectorates) is carrying out official control only on bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters.

Public Health Directorate (PHD)

The PHD develops the food safety policy including the official controls on bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters and the nutrition of the different population groups.

Chief Public Health Inspector organizes, controls, coordinates and conducts the activity of Regional Health Inspectorates.

Some of the main tasks of Public Health Directorate are to develop and adopt drafts of legislative acts in the field of food, including these transposing acts of the European Union; develop health requirements and norms in the food area; arrange the activity of permission and registration and keep registers in the field of bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters] coordinate implementation of programs, projects and activities in the field of food and nutrition of the population.

Inspection services

Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) is the competent authority performing official control in terms of phytosanitary issues; plant protection products and fertilizers; veterinary activities; animal health and welfare; animal by-products not intended for human consumption; feedingstuffs; raw materials and foodstuffs with the exception of bottled natural mineral, spring and table water; materials and articles intended for contact with food; and the quality compliance of fresh fruits and vegetables with the European Commission standards for placing on the market.

The Agency has its central office in Sofia and 28 Regional Food Safety Directorates (RFSD) distributed across the country.

Risk Assessment Centre (RAC) within BFSA carries out independent scientific risk assessment with respect to food safety, public health, animal health and welfare, food and feed additives, GMOs, dietetic products, nutrition and allergens, materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, enzymes, flavourings and auxiliary substances, biological hazards, contaminants, plant health and plant protection.

Competent bodies under the **Ministry of Health** performing official control of bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters are as follows:

- Chief Public Health Inspector (CSHI);
- Public Health Directorate (PHD);
- 28 Regional Health Inspectorates (RHI): "Health control" Directorate (HCD), Department for Control of non food objects and goods and Laboratory activities Directorate.

Health control on the facilities for production and trade with bottled waters and on the bottled waters themselves is carrying out in accordance with Regulation № 882/2004 on the official food control, Directive 2009/54/EC on the exploitation and marketing of natural mineral waters, Food Law, Health Law, Law on Waters, Ordinance on the requirements to the bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters intended for drinking purposes, Ordinance № 9 on the quality of water for drinking and Ordinance № 36 on the rules and procedures for performance of public health control.

Each calendar year Ministry of Health prepares instruction for planning the activities of RHIs in the area of official control of facilities for production of bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters and marketed bottled waters. This is the basis for regional structures to develop their annual action plans. These plans are approved by the directors of RHIs. Based on the annual inspection plan, any public health inspector works under individually prepared annual plan.

At the end of each control year, each RHI makes an annual report on the public health control activity, which is presented in the Public Health Directorate in the Ministry of Health.

Official control in Bulgaria is carried out in accordance with Regulation (EC) № 882/2004 using appropriate control methods and techniques such as monitoring, surveillance, verification, audit, inspection, sampling and analysis.

One of the measures that BFSA has undertaken to improve the system of official controls is the implementation of system for internal audits in compliance with the requirements of Art. 4, point 6 of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004. The audit system covers all structures of BFSA on the regional and central level (Audited organization).

The internal audit system contains the following documents drawn up by the Quality Management Department, Internal audit Directorate and it is approved by order of the Executive Director of BFSA: internal audit procedure; five-year Internal Audit program.

Five-year Internal Audit program covers all activities of the Audit control throughout the food chain. The program is constructed as a risk assessment of each area of activity of official control and a balance is achieved between the requirement for five years to cover all levels of the hierarchy of the competent authority in all areas of activity and auditing of priority areas are determined with the help of risk assessments. Risk assessment goes through the following stages: identifying the risk; sources of information about risk; determine the likelihood of risk; factors associated with the likelihood of risk; impact of risk.

Sources of risk information: reports from FVO missions, reports from previous audits, reports of verification of control, complaints and signals, governmental organizations and institutions, problems considering crisis situations, including RASFF notifications, Single Integrated Multi-annual National control plan and reports on its implementation.

The following factors are associated with the likelihood of the risk: changes in structure or organization of the management of the audited organization; change in funds or financing modes; changes in legislation, instructions and procedures; national targets, priorities and policy and changes thereto; number and type of activities of business operators under the control of the respective structure; implementation of measures taken in relation with performed FVO audits and internal audits.

Members of the Audit team are selected for each audit and approved by order of the Executive Director of BFSA. Experts are highly qualified in their field, trained and certified to IEC EN ISO 19011/2004.

Each Audit report ends with recommendations for improving the system of official controls regarding training, equipment, control procedures, organization and control plans, risk assessment, the effectiveness of ongoing controls and verification system for efficiency of control, coordination and cooperation between different structures in the Agency.

As regards **bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters** official control is carried out by RHI through inspections at the sites of production of bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters for compliance of business operators' activities with the food hygiene legal requirements. Control is focused at high-risk sites for production and trade with bottled waters; sites where systematic violations are found in the course of official controls; assessment of the level of implementation of systems for food safety management in the production and trade in bottled water, including systems for food traceability; supporting business operators to introduce systems by providing and explaining the legal requirements and any kind of information.

The frequency of inspections at the sites of production of bottled water, planned based on the risk assessment of sites is not less than four times a year.

Official control of bottled waters is focused on meeting the legal requirements concerning their chemical and microbiological safety, composition, proper labeling, promotion and advertising, terms and conditions of storage, production technology, supporting documentation and other requirements specific to the natural mineral spring and table waters.

Laboratory infrastructure and activities

There are 13 laboratories within BFSA, operating in the field of official food control. All they are accredited according to the requirements and in compliance with BS EN ISO 17025:2006. Four of them are National Reference laboratories and 9 are regional. Trained and skilled staff and modern laboratory equipment is available. Laboratory control is based on testing according to the national and European standards or intra-laboratory methods.

Developing and implementing new methods of testing of food additives and dietary supplements, the detection of toxins, residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides, testing of animal feed are priority in future development of the laboratory control in the field of food safety.

As regards bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters designation of laboratories for analysis of food samples taken during the official control is carried out in line with the requirements of Art. 12 of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004 and requirements of Art. 33, par. 2 of Bulgarian Food Law.

Six laboratories within the Ministry of Health for food control were designated. These are laboratories in RHI Sofia, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, Varna, Burgas and Pleven. All six laboratories are accredited to BDS EN ISO/IEC 17025:2006. "General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories". These laboratories have established and maintained a system for management and all remaining documents according to the requirements of the standard.

Analyses in the accredited laboratories are carried out in line with internationally recognized methods, Bulgarian State Standard (BDS), ISO, EN standards.

Laboratories participate in ring tests in accordance with a programme. Each laboratory performs internal laboratory tests under a programme twice a year.

Laboratories perform their activities in accordance with Art. 33 of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004.

Information dissemination

All authorities mentioned above which are responsible for food control systems in Bulgaria have websites where update information, legislation, internal documents, registers, etc. could be found:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Food - <http://www.mzh.government.bg>
- Ministry of Health - <http://www.mh.government.bg>
- Bulgarian Food Safety Agency - <http://www.babh.government.bg/bg>

There is working procedure in place for dissemination of information and coordination between the responsible authorities. Effective interaction between the different control authorities was put in place thus covering all levels of the food chain. Effective exchange of information is performed at central and regional level, border posts and laboratories. Information is disseminated regularly between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Head Quarter of BFSA and between Head Quarter of BFSA and Regional Food Safety Directorates respectively. Exchange of information is done by e-mails, phones, faxes, direct contacts.

An important aspect of the activities of BFSA is good communication and interaction with producers and traders of raw materials and foods, as well as dissemination of relevant information relating to the requirements of the laws of foods.

For this purpose, periodically are organized meetings with various industry organizations. Recently, such meetings were held with the Association of Meat Processors in Bulgaria, the Association of processors of fresh fruits and vegetables, Association of vegetable oils and oil in Bulgaria, the Association of Hotels and Restaurants, Association of Bakers and millers, Association of Dairy Processors in Bulgaria, Union of producers of soft drinks.

Since the beginning of 2011 information Bulletin is published every month on the website of MAF. This Bulletin is prepared by the Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate within MAF. It reflects the new European legislation, as well as update and interesting information in the field of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, GMOs and plant health. The document is intended to facilitate the work of experts performing official controls along the food chain and academics associated with the food industry, as well as the work of all professional organizations.

The flow of information within the Ministry of Health is performed vertically and horizontally. Vertical exchange of information takes place in the structures of MH – from the Chief Public and Health Inspector and PHD to the regional structure and vice versa. Each RHI prepares quarterly and annual reports on the results of control activities.

Regional structures share information horizontally concerning the results of the control activities, by competence and when necessary. PHD analyzes the results of the control and exchange of information, prepares reports and guidance to the regional structures to improve control on bottled natural mineral, spring and table waters.

Important information and in case of emergency all news and alerts for consumers and relevant stakeholders are disseminated via mass media. Regular meetings from the both Ministers are organized to discuss hot topics in specific areas. Different stakeholders are included in the process of drafting of national legislation.

Training/capacity building

Planning of training is based on the needs and areas mentioned in Annex II, Chapter I (Subject matter for the training of staff performing official controls) of Regulation 882/2004.

Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate, MAF

The training needs of experts from the AHFSD are defined by:

- New legislation;
- Annual attestations of experts carried out by the Director of the AHFSD according to the Ordinance on Conditions and the Order on Attestations of officials in State administration. The attestation contains training on the basis of the working plan for the next year of the expert and on the basis of his/her professional experience.

Individual training plans are available for all staff, which includes induction training, training relevant to the job and also some general training such as languages. These plans are approved by the Director to ensure that they match the job description and the training needs identified. A training procedure for experts of AHFSD has been developed and approved. The procedure is published on the webpage of MAF. Training records are kept for all experts of the directorate (record of participation on training courses and qualification of experts).

Pursuant to Article 6 of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004, experts of AHFSD participate in training to achieve a uniform approach and harmonized procedures for implementing the requirements of European legislation. Experts are trained in the regulations of the hygiene package, food and feed, animal health and welfare.

Under the program Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) of the European Commission, experts from AHFSD have obtained certificates for their participation in training courses on different topics. After completion of the training, each expert drafts a report and provides it together with all the presentations and information received during the training for use by all experts from the directorate, colleagues from BFSA and stakeholders.

Recording and archiving of all training participation documents is done by an expert in the AHFS Directorate, who has been assigned responsibilities for the training of competent authorities. Until July 2011 the National Contact Point for the BTSF programme was situated in AHFSD.

Bulgarian Food Safety Agency

There is a special Department "Training and qualification" in "European coordination, international collaboration, training and qualification" Directorate in BFSA. This department co-ordinate training and qualifications of the employees of BFSA, including training by the European Commission, international organisations and third parties. Since July 2011 the National Contact point for BTSF programme is within Department "Training and qualification" of BFSA.

As regards effectiveness of training, at the end of each training course official veterinarians were obliged to pass an exam. A database was created containing information on skills/qualifications of staff, training institutes and qualified trainers. In addition, separate database of all trainings conducted at national level and under the BTSF programme is created.

The Internal Regulations of organization, coordination, analyses and evaluation of trainings of the employees in BFSA are established by Order of the Executive Director of BFSA and published on the BFSA's web site.

In relation to improving the knowledge and qualification of inspectors involved in performance of official controls, periodically are organized training sessions on various topics related to legislation. Some courses are organized jointly with industry organizations. As an example of such a joint training is training for the introduction of the new regulation on food labeling Regulation (EC) № 1169/2011.

Ministry of Health

Trainings are performed in the cases of starting work, new legislation, identifying weaknesses in the performance of duties, at the request of inspectors, following analysis of audit reports.

Access has been provided for any public health inspector to all legislative acts in the food area, on paper and electronically. Ministry of Health is responsible to develop guidance for the implementation of new legislative acts which are provided to the RHIs.

Regular meetings are held with all inspectors to discuss the implementation of the legislative acts, difficulties and issues arising from control performance. Workshops and trainings have been performed regularly. Protocols have been made for all trainings. Participants successfully trained receive a document certifying obtained knowledge and competence.

Priority issues concerning control on national and regional level:

During last year priority was working on the following documents concerning national legislation in the field of food control:

- Draft amendment to the Food Law;
- Ordinance № 9 dated 17 November 2011 on the procedures for reporting, research and registration of an explosion of foodborne illness and procedure for sampling for epidemiological studies;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 1 of 2008 on requirements for trade with eggs for consumption;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 4 of 19.02.2008 on specific requirements for the production, storage and transportation of raw cow's milk and requirements for trade and marketing of milk and dairy products;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 9 for specific requirements for safety and quality of food offered in kindergartens and schools;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 26 of 14.10.2010 for specific requirements for the direct supply of small quantities of raw materials and foodstuffs of animal origin;
- Draft Ordinance on the requirements for fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption; Draft to amend the Law on Wine;
- Draft for amendment of the Law on the Marks and Geographical Indications;
- Draft for amendment of the Law on the common organization of the markets;
- Draft Ordinance № 1 of 07.02.2013 on the application of the rules of organic production of plants, animals, aquaculture, plant and animal products, aquaculture products and foodstuffs, the labeling and control of production and marketing;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 31 of 29.12.2003 of standards for maximum permitted levels for pesticide residues in foods;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 31 of 29 July 2004 on maximum permitted levels for contaminants in foods;
- Draft Ordinance on the conditions and procedure for performance of child and school trips with a total price, initiated by kindergartens, schools and servicing units in the public education system;
- Draft Ordinance on the conditions and procedures for issuing licenses to importers to import hemp seed not intended for sowing and for performing the processing and sale of seeds;
- Draft for amendment of Ordinance № 17 on health requirements for aquaculture animals.
- Ordinance № 4 of 15 July 2014 on specific requirements for the production of raw materials and foodstuffs of animal origin in slaughterhouses, transportation and marketing (State Gazette No 60/2014).
- Project for creation of national reference center for laboratory testing of foods;

With regard to Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides, Bulgaria prepared a National Plan of Action for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.

On the issue of central and regional level concerning the improvement of the control performed by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, a priority in work is given to: Procedure for risk assessment of the premises under the control of the Agency - by setting criteria for determining the frequency of official controls:

- premises for the production and wholesale of food;
- sites for retail sale of food;
- premises for the production and wholesale of materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

Also engage in the development of forms for official inspections at production and storage premises for food.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Activities of Codex Contact Point

The Bulgarian National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) is located in the Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. In the daily work the National Contact Point is supported by two other experts from the same directorate dealing also with Codex alimentarius issues thus strengthening the administrative capacity of the Codex Team.

Competent Contact Points (CCPs) were appointed in other Ministries and administrations involved in the food control – Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Energy, Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. There is a close collaboration and communication between the NCCP and CCPs.

NCCP has the main responsibility to receive, analyze and disseminate all Codex related information to CCPs and other stakeholders and competent authorities. NCCP coordinates all actions and activities in the process of development national positions prior to the EU Council Working Parties and the Codex Committee Sessions.

In order to strengthen Codex activities and facilitate the dissemination of information at national level, common codex e-mail address was created within the Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate.

Since the 28th Session of the CCEURO, Bulgaria expanded its participation in Codex events in Brussels and Codex Alimentarius Sessions with great priority for the country. Bulgarian government enhances the participation of the country in various Codex Alimentarius meetings in order to promote more effective involving in the Codex work on food standards. Due to lack of financial resources Bulgaria is limited in the appointment of representatives in the Sessions of Codex Alimentarius Commission and Codex Committees.

As an EU Member State Republic of Bulgaria has close collaboration with the EU bodies. Bulgaria maintains its collaboration with OIE, EFSA and WHO. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture and Food are part of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) - joint program, co-managed by WHO and the FAO.

QUESTION 3: CODEX STANDARDS NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

In the Republic of Bulgaria the following institutions have responsibilities in the process of development of food standards: Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Animal Health and Food Safety Directorate), Ministry of Health (Public Health Directorate), Ministry of Economy and Energy, Bulgarian Food Safety Agency.

As a member of WTO and EU member, Bulgaria has to follow the rules established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, therefore national standards or regulations are in line with the Codex standards.

According to the Bulgarian food legislation, upon approval of guides for application of good practices and for implementation of the system for hazard analysis and critical control points in the production and trade of foodstuffs the competent minister shall consider the opinion of the Risk Assessment Centre developed in compliance with the guides with the requirements of Codex Alimentarius.

Harmonization of Bulgarian national standards with international and European standards is essential to ensure access of Bulgarian goods to the European and international markets.

Since 2010 working groups with the participation of all stakeholders developed new food standards for traditional Bulgarian milk products: "Bulgarian yoghurt (kiselo mljako)", "Bulgarian white brine cheese", "Bulgarian yellow cheese"; approved standards for meat products, approved standards for bread and flour.

In 2010 in a response of public willingness to raise the quality of marketed foods, with the initiative of the Minister of Agriculture and Food standards for certain meat products and meat preparations under the brand "Stara planina" were established.

Two standards for the production of flour and bread under the brand "Bulgaria" were established in April 2011.

The latter Sectoral Standard that has been drawn up is the "Sectoral standard for Lutenica" (Lutenica is a food product traditional for Bulgarian cuisine. It is produced of ground peppers and minced tomatoes, eggplants, carrots, oil, potatoes and starch).

Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Bulgaria Food Safety Agency continue to develop the Policy for establishing approved standards for traditional Bulgarian products. These standards are drawn up by working groups including representatives of Bulgarian Professional organizations in food sector.

Specific Codex standards of most importance

The following standards of Codex alimentarius currently under development are the most important for Bulgaria:

- General Standard for Food Additives;
- General Standard for Food Labeling;
- General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (acceptance limits for specific pollutants);
- Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets - Breaded or in Batter
- Standard for Certain Canned Citrus Fruits;
- Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables;
- Standard for Honey;
- Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish;
- Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children;
- Standard for edible fats and oils;

Priority areas for establishing national standards

- Food hygiene (general principles, hygiene rules in the various spheres and branches, instructions for use of HACCP);
- Flexibility of legislation and implementation of the hygiene package in small businesses;
- Meat, dairy, traditional products;

There are problems in the development of national food standards such as:

- lack of financial resources for the establishment of a National Codex Unit / Committee.
- lack of approved national procedures to promote the standards of Codex Alimentarius between producers.
- insufficient quality of the raw material (raw milk, fresh chilled meat, wheat).
- need to develop indicators for quality and safety (microbiological, chemical).
- complicated procedure for approval of standards at national level.

CROATIA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Health (MH) are the central competent authorities (CCA) with overall responsibility for policy, legislation and implementation of official controls in relation to food safety. MoA is also the CCA responsible for policy and implementation of official controls in relation to food quality, feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health.

In the food safety area, MH co-operates with MoA as regards the preparation of control plans and reports, implementation of official controls, authorisation of official laboratories and registration/approval of establishments. MoA is responsible for ensuring effective cooperation and coordination of activities of official controls, as well as for communication and reporting system on official controls and it is the contact point for the European Commission.

The *Food Act* (OG 81/13) is the basic framework law in Croatia on food and feed safety. It ensures implementation of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and provides a general overview of requirements on food and feed safety. The *Food Act* prescribes the mission, tasks and organisation of the Croatian Food Agency (CFA). The CFA mandate relates to risk assessment

The state administration system in Croatia includes Ministries as central administrative organisations and county offices. Croatia is territorially divided into 21 counties (including the City of Zagreb).

The implementation of laws and regulations is the responsibility of both central and local levels. Centrally it is carried out by the Ministries and their Directorates. Locally it is carried out by State Veterinary Inspectors (SVI), and Phytosanitary and Sanitary Inspectors working in the regional offices and their branches.

Ministry of Agriculture

The MoA has undergone a reorganisation in August 2013: according to the Regulation on Internal Organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture (OG 80/13) published on 28 of July 2013, three directorates are now involved in the organisation of control systems for food and feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health in Croatia:

- Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate (VFSD);
- Food Quality and Phytosanitary Policy Directorate (FQPPD);
- Directorate of Agriculture and Food Industry (DAFI).

With this reorganisation, food safety competencies have been transferred from the old Food Safety and Phytosanitary Policy Directorate to the VFSD. Food quality and food labelling, presentation and advertising issues are the responsibility of the new FQPPD.

Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate

In accordance with the current internal organisation of MoA, the CA in the veterinary field is the Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate (previously, it was the Veterinary Directorate).

The VFSD has four organisational units:

- Sector for Administrative, European and Financial Affairs;
- Animal Health Protection Sector;
- Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety Sector;
- Veterinary Inspection Sector

With the new internal organization of the MoA (OG 80/2013), the tasks of the former Service for Planning and Verification of Official Controls (SPVOC) have been transferred to the Veterinary Inspection Sector (to the Veterinary Inspections Department of the Service for Planning and Veterinary Inspection and to the Veterinary Inspection Service.

The **Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety Sector** (VPHFSS) is competent for general food safety and safety of: food of animal origin and feed, veterinary medicinal products (VMP) and veterinary medical devices; monitoring of residues; animal by-products (ABP). It is responsible for the transposition of EU legislation and for drafting the implementing legislation in the area of food, food of animal origin, feed, VMPs, monitoring programmes, ABPs, emergency measures, hygiene, microbiological criteria, official controls, regulations concerning the activities of the CFA and the regulations on the organisation of RASFF at the national level, as well as other relevant programmes. It organizes training on implementation of the legislation as well as drafting written instructions for authorised veterinarians and veterinary inspectors; and legal, administrative and related activities. VPHS manages activities related to the national residues control plan (NCRP), the residue programme for feed and the monitoring programme for live bivalve molluscs (LBM). VPHFSS comprises two services: the Service for Food Safety and the Service for Veterinary Medicinal Products, Feedstuffs and ABPs.

The Veterinary Inspection Sector (VIS) has three services and is organised as follows:

- Veterinary Inspection Service (VISE);
- Service for planning and veterinary inspection;
- Border Veterinary Inspection and International Trade Service.

With the new internal organization of the MoA (OG 80/2013), the tasks of the former Service for Planning and Verification of Official Controls (SPVOC) have been transferred to the Veterinary Inspections Department and to the VIS. The VIS has thirteen Regional Veterinary Inspection Departments (veterinary offices) located in City of Zagreb, Zagreb East, Zagreb West, Glina, Varaždin, Bjelovar, Koprivnica, Osijek, Slavonski Brod, Šibenik, Rijeka, Dubrovnik and Split and mobile unit for control of animal welfare in transport. The thirteen Regional Veterinary Inspection Departments have 65 branch offices.

Directorate for Food Quality and Phytosanitary Policy

The Directorate for Food Quality and Phytosanitary Policy (DFSP) of the MoA is responsible for food and feed safety and quality and phytosanitary policy. Directorate for Food Safety and Phytosanitary Policy of MoA is organised into three sectors:

- Sector for Food Labelling and Quality;
- Phytosanitary Policy Sector;
- Sector of Phytosanitary Inspection.

Directorate of Agriculture and Food Industry

The Directorate of Agriculture and Food Industry (DAFI) of the MoA is organised into three sectors:

- Sector for Agriculture and Food Industry,
- Sector for Subsidies and Analysis,
- Sector of Inspection in Agriculture.

Ministry of Health

In accordance with the current internal organisation of the MH, the **Directorate for Sanitary Inspection** of the MH is organised into two sectors: The Sector for State and Border Sanitary Inspection and the Sector for County Sanitary Inspection Service and Legal Support.

In food safety area the **Directorate for Sanitary Inspection** is responsible for:

1. Performing official controls:
 - on food of non-animal origin and food contact materials throughout the entire chain of production, distribution and retail, except primary production;
 - composite food;
 - for food of animal origin at the retail level with the exception of establishments approved by the MoA;
 - novel and GM food of non-animal origin throughout the entire chain of production, distribution, retail, except primary production;
 - co-ordination, planning and monitoring of official controls within the MH and performed by sanitary inspectors.
2. Developing legislation and procedures on additives, aromas, solvents, enzymes, food supplements, food for special purposes, nutrition and health claims, quick frozen food, contaminants, novel foods, GM food, food treated with ionizing radiation and food contact materials and the annual plan for official controls carried out by the sanitary inspection.
3. Keeping a register of food business operators, food supplements and food for particular nutritional uses (PARNUT).
4. Co-operating with the MoA regarding RASFF, the development of multi-annual national control plans, the contingency plans and training.

Laboratories:

All authorised official and reference laboratories are accredited according to EN ISO/IEC17025 as foreseen by Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. Official samples are tested exclusively in laboratories which comply with Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

The “Multiannual national plan of official controls of the Republic of Croatia for the period from 1 July 2011 to 1 July 2015” was published on the webpage of MoA in July 2011:

<http://www.mps.hr/UserDocsImages/strategije/2011/VI%C5%A0EGODI%C5%A0NJI%20NACIONALNI%20PLAN%20SLU%C5%BD%20BENIH%20KONTROLA.pdf>

Progress has been made in official controls on fishery products and primary production: a register of fishing vessels has been finalised and official controls on fishing vessels are now being implemented.

The three methods for the detection of marine biotoxins are accredited at the Institute of Oceanography, which is the NRL/National Reference Laboratory/ for LBM /live bivalve molluscs/.

Based on information supplied by the CLMC (Central Laboratory for Milk Control in Križevci), as of June 2013, about 95% of raw milk in Croatia was compliant with prescribed criteria. As by 1 June 2013, 793 milk collection centres had completed the registration process (out of a total of 1,100 farms, in accordance with information provided by the CLMC).

The CA intends and has legal basis to ban dairy establishments from collecting the milk from the collection centres which are not registered by Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate, or which have not applied for registration.

Staff carrying out import/transit official controls is regularly trained in their field of competence in the frame of DG SANCO, BTSF trainings (Better Training for Safer Food), in the frame of trainings organised by TAIEX and trainings organised by Croatian competent authority. In order to better implementation of official controls and strengthening National Food Control Systems in 2014 we have following TAIEX and BTSF educations:

Expert mission

- Drafting procedures and guidelines for official controls regarding flexibility for production of traditional products provided in the Hygiene Package
- Identification and overview of possibilities for flexibility for production of traditional products or using traditional methods in the food production in Croatia in accordance with the provisions of the Hygiene Package
- on Implementation of the Information System for Agricultural Market Management and Monitoring (ISAMM)
- Drafting annual report of conducted official controls regarding multi-annual national control plan
- NOVEL FOODS AND NOVEL FOOD INGREDIENTS - drafting procedure for administrative controls

Study visit

- Development and implementation of laboratory methods, - 1. Implementation and development of method for analysis of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in foodstuffs of animal origin by HPLC or UHPLC-FLD which covers all relevant aspects of legislation into force
- Development and implementation of laboratory methods - 2. Implementation and development of method for analysis of lipophilic biotoxins by LC-MS-MS & technical Training of fundamentals of LC-MS-MS technique

Workshops

- Surveillance/Monitoring and Risk Assessment of Veterinary Drugs Residue and Antimicrobial Resistance - multicountry,
- Monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents in humans and in animals, coordinated data collection and using data for risk assessment – multicountry
- on evaluating the effectiveness of official controls
- FOOD LABELLING, New requirements/provisions related to food information to consumer
- on application of derogation for the establishments producing traditional products

BTSF: Improving risk assessments and controls in primary production of food of non-animal origin

BTSF: Quality Schemes: Protected Designations and Organic Farming

BTSF: Training session on Food Composition and Information,

BTSF: Control of Residue Veterinary –Medical Products

BTSF: Control of Contaminants

BTSF: Control checks at Border Inspection Posts

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Activities of Codex Contact Point

The main activity is the distribution of Codex documents (including TBT notification and EU notification concerning food and feed) to the stakeholders and members of National Codex Structure.

Croatian Codex Contact Point organizes seminars, lectures and workshops aimed at raising the awareness on the significance of Codex documents for European and national legislations, especially among SMEs, such as:

- Last year a FAO/WHO Workshop on strengthening capacities for effective participation in Codex work was held in Zagreb (4-6 June 2013).
- In July 2014 Codex Contact Point organized the training titled "Obligations of the Republic of Croatia considering membership of Codex Alimentarius Commission"

The national Codex Contact Point has also published publications such as:

- *Food Safety 2*, 2014 issue, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture
- *Five keys to growing safer fruits and vegetables 2013*, translated into Croatian, with the permission of WHO
- *Food safety family of standards 2013*

These publications, aimed primarily at SMEs, promote food safety.

Since the beginning of 2012 representatives of Croatia have participated in the meetings of EU Council working groups for Codex in Brussels. Codex Committees Working Documents have been distributed from the General Secretariat of the Council (unit DGB 2B) to the national Codex Contact Point and then to Experts from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health according to a pre-agreed list.

We have improved the coordination procedures for developing national positions but there is still room for improvement.

Croatian experts participate in several Codex EWGs.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Strengthening the capacities of risk management

Greater involvement of experts from primary production in the elaboration of food safety standards

Establishment of a networking mechanism in the region between national Codex structures and the exchange of information on new national standards and food safety data.

CYPRUS**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems****1.1 Food Administration structure**

At present, the **Food Safety Council (FSC)** of Cyprus is responsible for the food administration. The FSC does not have any budget or specific structure nor dedicated personnel for its activities. It is functioning through the scientific contribution of its members and its role is the **coordination** of the Competent Authorities. More specifically, it was established in May 2003 by a Ministerial Decisions (No. 57.682 of 9/4/2003 and No. 60.959 of 19/10/2004) where its present structure is specified as follows: The Head of the Food Safety Council is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and its members are the Directors and their Deputies of the relevant Competent Authorities (Medical and Public Health Services, Health Services, State General Laboratory, Veterinary Services, Department of Agriculture), the Competition and Consumer Protection Service, the Municipalities Union and the Consumers Association.

1.2 Multisectoral collaboration and inspection services

The Competent Authorities in Cyprus for the **official Control** of foodstuffs and feeding stuffs according to the requirements of the relevant **European Union (E.U.)** legislation (Regulations EU No. 178/2002 & 882/2004) are: **(a) The Ministry of Health (MoH)** through its two departments: (i) The **Health Services (HS)** of the Medical and Public Health Services (MPHS) for the official food control of non animal origin foodstuffs, (including honey and ice cream) including sampling, inspection and enforcement and the official control of the foodstuffs, in general, already on the market. (ii) **The State General Laboratory (SGL)** for official laboratory food control, drafting of National Control Plans in cooperation with the HS and VS and relevant evaluation / assessment of results. **(b) The Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Environment (MANRE)** by its two departments (i) The Veterinary Services (VS) for the official control of the animal origin foodstuffs (area of primary production ex. milk and area of processing/transforming ex: milk products, meat and meat products, except honey and ice-cream) and (ii) the Department of Agriculture (DA) for phytosanitary and feed stuffs official controls, inspections and sampling, including marketing (quality) standards, organic products and the products of designated origin and geographical indications.

The coordination of all the above authorities / services is done by the FSC of the MoH.

1.3 Laboratory infrastructure and activities

The SGL is the **Official Control Laboratory**, granted under the Food (Control and Sale) Law 1996-2013, which is harmonized with the requirements of relevant EU legislation, for the chemical, microbiological and biological analysis of foodstuffs and drinking water. The SGL implements research and surveillance / monitoring and control in these areas, according to appropriate **Multi-Annual Control Plans** (Regulation EU No.882/2004). It also undertakes problem solving oriented research. It encompasses twenty one (21) specialized laboratories. All the laboratories related to food safety and official control of foodstuffs, including food contact materials and drinking water, are **accredited** since 2002, by the Greek Accreditation Body ESYD in many fields/scopes of food analyses, according to the EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard.

The **SGL** cooperates with all the above services for official laboratory control, according to the requirements of Regulation EC No 882/2004. The SGL is also the **National Reference Laboratory** for many fields of Food Safety [Contaminants (mycotoxins, heavy metals, PCBs, dioxins PAHs etc.) Veterinary drugs and Pesticides Residues, Food Contact Materials, GMOs and some microbiological parameters} according to the requirements of Regulation EC No 882/2004.

Additionally, the VS have their own laboratory (**Laboratory for Control of Food of Animal Origin-LCFAO**) under the Food Law (production and control), which was accredited since 2003 by the Greek Accreditation Body (ESYD). Is accredited in many fields of food analysis (in twenty methods) according to EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005. The LCFAO is a **National Reference Laboratory** for Salmonella, milk and milk products, Listeria, Campylobacter, Marine biotoxins, VTEC and Coagulase- positive staphylococci.

Furthermore, the laboratories of the DA, which are accredited since 2011 by the Cyprus Accreditation Body CYS-CYSAB according to EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005, are responsible for the quality control of feedingstuffs and fertilizers (as the National Reference Laboratory for the quality control of feeds and fertilizers), authorized pesticide formulations and the control of pesticide residues in agricultural products as well as any use of non-registered plant protection products on farmer's level. Additionally, analysis of soils and water are also performed both for fertilization and irrigation purposes respectively as well as analysis of any added water in frozen poultry and poultry cuts.

1.4 Information dissemination

The dissemination of Information centrally, is done between the FSC and the Competent Authorities by emails, letters, meetings and telephone communications.

More specifically the Communication between the Health Services of MPHS and the central, regional and local services and the SGL is achieved by written circulars, letters, fax, telephone, personal communications etc. The communication between the SGL and the rest of Competent Authorities (MANRE, VS and DA), regional and local services is done through correspondence, meetings, telephones, faxes and e-mails.

1.5 Food safety priority issue nationally and regionally

Appropriate **Multi-Annual Control Plans**, are prepared according to the requirements of Regulation EC No 882/2004, in cooperation by the SGL and the HS of MPHS of the Ministry of Health, for the official control of foodstuffs in general. For the residues control in raw meat and animal products, the SGL cooperates with the Veterinary Services (VS) of the Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Environment (MANRE). The controls are applied for both locally produced and imported foodstuffs and are **preventive** as far as possible in nature. They are based on the requirements of the relevant EU legislation and on the **categorization and prioritization of risk**, i.e. vulnerability of the foodstuff to spoilage, previous poor results, known safety problems, toxicity or severeness of risks, increased consumption by the consumers, especially high risk or vulnerable population groups (e.g. children) and information from RASFF system. At the end of each year an Annual report is edited and the control plan are reviewed in cooperation of SGL with the HS and VS. All the control plans are submitted to the European Commission are coordinated by the FSC, and are published on its website http://www.moh.gov.cy/MOH/fsc/fsc.nsf/page04_gr/page04_gr?OpenDocument.

An amendment of the National Food (Control and Sale) Law in 2013 gives the power to the Head of Public Health Services to issue announcements, to be published in the media to inform the general public in case of:

- (a) The labelling of a food creates a false or misleading or deceptive or erroneous impression regarding its character, nature, value, quantity, composition or safety
- (b) Finding the decay of a food that has already been placed in the market and
- (c) Finding the adulteration of a food.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Cyprus has developed in recent years a national CODEX network with the participation of interested national competence authorities and other parties. The information is distributed through the National Contact Point and the work of several Codex Committees of special interests to Cyprus is closely followed. Our participation in international meetings is hindered by financial constraints but the participation in e-working groups is encouraged and undertaken.

Cyprus is keen to acquire a stronger capacity to participate in Codex work and also to raise further awareness of Codex at national level. Towards this end the relevant courses offered by the "Better Training for Safer Food" programme of the European Commission, are considered very useful and Cyprus would welcome an opportunity to participate.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

At national level, the Codex standards are taken into account when dealing with several issues of Food Quality and Safety and are especially useful when no relevant EU or National regulations exist. A practical example of the use of Codex standards concerns the examination of vegetable oils [Codex Stan 210-1999 (Amendment 2005, 2011)] for which no Community or National legislation exists.

Codex standards for potatoes, fruits, vegetables and aromatic plants (herbs) are the most important for Cyprus.

CZECH REPUBLIC

On response to CL 2014/20-EURO find hereunder information describing the present situation in the Czech Republic.

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

For general information about Czech food control systems please refer to the Country Profile on the organisation food safety, animal health, animal and plant health control systems under:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/last5_en.cfm?co_id=CZ

Some organizational changes have occurred since the 28th session of CCEURO. The State Phytosanitary Administration was reorganized and was integrated to Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture in 2013.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

The Food Production and Legislation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic is the National Codex Contact Point for the Czech Republic. National Codex co-operates with other ministries and state governmental and NGOs. Codex Committee for the Czech Republic is foreseen to be established, recently is coordination organised on the level of the Food Authority, which started to operate in April 2005. Is based at the Ministry of Agriculture and contains 2 departments and 1 division, which counts together 30 employees.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Czech delegates participate at the Codex Alimentarius Working Party meetings in Brussels, as well as on General Subject Committees, Commodity Committees, Regional Co-ordinating Committees and Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces committees in particular countries. The attendance depends on the defined specific priorities and on the financial resources of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The standard that is of particular interest to Czech Republic is on Processed Cheese, which is currently under discussion. We also participated in eWG on Processed Cheese.

Codex standards are of high relevance for Czech Republic and they are always taken into account when national provisions going beyond the EU legislation are under discussion.

DENMARK**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems**

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration was reorganized in March 2012 with a few amendments in 2013 where the number of local food control offices were cut down to 5 instead of 10 and the laboratories decreased from 3 to 2 and now consists of five departments. Three covers the areas of animals, food, feed and meat inspection. Two covers supporting organizational issues such as finance and accounting, communication and innovation.

- *The Veterinary Department* handles inspections of farmed animals and develops, maintains and coordinates emergency measures against infectious livestock diseases. The department furthermore fights outbreaks and handles legislation and policy formulation in relation to animal health, animal welfare and veterinary medicine.
- *The Food Safety Department* handles food inspections at food establishments. Inspections include checks of own-check programmes, hygiene and labelling. Furthermore the department handles legislation and policy formulation in relation to food and feed safety, chemistry and food quality, diet and nutrition.
- *The Meat Inspection Department* inspects all animals to be slaughtered during the slaughtering, meat cutting and meat processing in slaughterhouses and meat product establishments
- *The Department of Communication and Innovation* handles business development, coordination of food, feed and veterinary inspections and communication and quality concerning the areas of: International Coordination, International Trade, Legal Services, Control Coordination and Customer Service.
- *The Department of Finance* handles finance and accounting, HR, IT, the laboratories and the operations division.

Locally there are

- 5 Food Control Offices and a Food Inspection Task Force
- 3 Veterinary Control Offices and a Veterinary Task Force

The reorganization has shortened the distance between the units performing inspections and the central administration. The new organization also encourages more interdisciplinary collaboration in dealing with its tasks.

The number of DVFA laboratories has decreased to 2. Fewer laboratories strengthen the knowledge at the remaining laboratories and the analytical work will be more efficient.

Establishment of an internal audit unit

In connection with the reorganization of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) in March 2012 an internal audit unit was formed. This unit refers to the Board of Directors in the DVFA and performs internal audits according to Art 4.6 in Regulation (EC) 882/2004, covering both food and feed, animal health and animal welfare.

Until then, an external unit in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries performed backward revision of the control systems for food, animal health and animal health. This unit was referring to external stakeholders and was based on the Danish Food Act. The provision in the Food Act has been repealed.

The aim of this new unit is to better identify opportunities to develop, improve and streamline control systems and official controls. The purpose of an internal unit is to further explore synergies with other development and management functions of the DVFA.

Internal Audit verify both compliance with planned arrangements and the effective implementation and assess suitability. Internal Audit examines both the control systems and the implementation of official controls on-site.

The Unit audited in 2013 the control system and the official control of

- Infrastructure, equipment and operation in food establishments, including authorization of animal wholesalers
- Use of analyzes on animal feed
- Animal by-products, including contingency plan and withdrawal

In 2014 the unit has planned to audit the control systems and the official control of

- Traceability - Marking and registration of live animals and food chain information
- Control of storage temperatures and cold chain
- Export and certification

Initiatives to improve multi-sectorial collaboration

In 2013 the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) established a strategic committee for stakeholders. The committee has members from industry, consumer, and animal welfare organizations and workers union. The committee meets 2-4 times a year and discusses matters on a strategic level like strategies, plans for audits of DVFA and the result of these audits. The areas for discussions are controls and rules concerning food and feed safety, animal welfare and animal health.

DVFA collaborates with many groups from industry organizations and NGO's on more specific subjects. Some are groups on a permanent basis and deal with specific areas like control of import, salmonella in poultry and control of food establishments. The groups meet with varying intervals from several times a year to as when needed. Other groups meet ad hoc e.g. to discuss the results of the negotiations in the EU of specific EU regulation.

ESTONIA

On response to CL 2014/20-EURO please find hereunder information describing the present situation in Estonia.

Strengthening National Food Control Systems

There have been no changes in Estonian food control system since the last session of CCEURO. The situation has remained the same: the Ministry of Agriculture has overall responsibility for analysing food safety situation, planning of developments and formation of policies. Responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture include drafting of legislative acts in areas of food and feed safety, phytosanitary, animal health and welfare. Official control in whole food chain is performed by the Veterinary and Food Board. In addition the Consumer Protection Board maintained the possibility to carry out the control of labelling in the retail stage. If there is a reasonable doubt of possible import of non-conforming food of non-animal origin, the Tax and Custom Board has rights to perform control of those foodstuffs at the place of import.

However, we would like to emphasise the following initiatives and developments taken in Estonia in order to strengthen national food control systems and assure good food safety situation.

The Official Control Information Database was established and will be fully operational from 1 January 2015. The Database contains comprehensive information related to the food and feed business operators and official controls. This includes a register and on-line data on food and feed business operators/establishments, results of official controls-inspections (protocols), sampling protocols, approval decisions, laboratory test results, establishments-based official control plans and annual reports. The Database is operated by the Veterinary and Food Board. The data will be partly publicly available. In addition the food and feed operators will be able to see documents related to their establishments via client portal.

As part of the global initiative the issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a priority area also in Estonia. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and the scientists from various universities have collaborated on mapping the public health, veterinary and environmental problems in relation to AMR. As a result of the joint seminar held in April 2014 the website was created by Tartu University to collect and systematize the relevant information. Next multi-sectorial seminar to further develop the common plan of the activities is scheduled by the end of 2014.

Another food safety priority area for Estonia is related to fish from the Baltic Sea. This is also an issue where regional cooperation of the Baltic Sea coast countries is essential. The Baltic Sea belongs to the list of the world most polluted seas, where many hazardous substances such as dioxins, PCBs, brominated flame retardants etc. are present at high level. A number of hazardous substances such as dioxins and PCBs, heavy metals, organotin compounds, polybrominated diphenyls etc. have been determined in Estonian aquatic environment. Although most of the studies have shown relatively low concentrations, which usually are below the established safety levels, safety of fish from the Baltic Sea remains with a high importance for Estonia and requires constant attention from the official control perspective and also regional cooperation.

Finally, a first National Dietary Study in 15 years is on-going. The results are expected to be ready for use by March 2015. The study is conducted by the National Health Development Institute, it covers population in the age of 4 months to 74 years and almost 9000 people are expected to be interviewed during the study. The results of the study will give a high quality food consumption data that can be used to perform food related risk assessment and risk management decisions.

Strengthening Codex at the national level

The Estonian Codex Contact Point is at the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. The National Contact Point receives information from the Codex secretariat and distributes it to the different organizations according to the distribution list. Estonian Contact Point also prepares the Estonian positions for Codex meetings. Estonia has participated in Codex work actively during last years. Estonian delegation regularly attends the following Codex meetings: CAC, CCGP, CCMAS, CCPR, CCFFP, CCCF, CCFA, CCFH, CCNFSDU, CCRVDF. The constant participation of experts in Codex meetings increases the awareness and knowledge on Codex issues and helps to strengthen Codex work at national level.

EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) are pleased to submit the following answers to the questionnaire included in Circular Letter 2014/20-EURO.

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

The information provided by the EU for the 28th session of CCEURO on food control systems remains valid (CX/EURO 12/28/7). All the relevant information related to food control systems is available on the website of the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/index_en.htm. Databases on food additives, pesticide residues and the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) are also available at the same website.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

As a Member Organisation, the EU activities aimed at Strengthening Codex at the national level are focused on capacity building activities at regional and/or national level for non-EU Codex member countries. The Europe region (CCEURO) is the main priority for the EU.

In 2011, the European Commission (EC) launched specific capacity building activities on Codex under the umbrella of the programme "Better Training for Safer Food". The first activity was a joint EC/FAO workshop, attended by 39 participants from 13 countries of CCEURO. The aim of the training was to increase countries' participation in Codex by being better able to both understand and utilise Codex standards but also to contribute at a technical level to their formulation. The underlying objective is to help strengthen national food safety programmes in countries of the European Region. The next event will take place in Astana in October 2014 and 12 countries of the European region have been invited.

The EU will ensure continuity of these actions aimed at improving the dissemination of the activities undertaken in Codex Alimentarius in order to raise awareness and better address food safety issues and the development of standards according to the needs of different countries/ regions.

In addition to the BTSF programme, the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (**TAIEX**) of the European Commission provides support to certain partner countries' on issues that may also include Codex-related capacity building. Further information can be found on the TAIEX website: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taix/what-is-taix/index_en.htm

The EU and its Member States continue to be the main donors to the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) with a contribution of 71% of the total funding. The EU considers that it is very important for as many Codex members as possible to participate actively and efficiently in Codex work at all the stages of the process. To this end, objective 2 (Strengthening Participation in Codex) of the CTF is of particular relevance to the EU. The EU would like to encourage all eligible CCEURO countries to request support from the CTF. Although the CTF will come to an end next year, the WHO in close cooperation with the donor countries are already working on a successor activity to the CTF. The EU welcomes views on this from the beneficiary countries.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country?
- ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards?
- iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Due to the fact that the EU is the world's biggest exporter and importer of food, the work of all Codex Committees is of high interest to the EU.

Codex standards are of high relevance for the EU and they are always taken into account when EU legislation is developed. Direct reference to Codex standards is used in EU legislation when appropriate. For example, Regulation 470/2009 laying down procedures for the establishment of residue limits of pharmacologically active substances in foodstuffs of animal origin introduces an obligation for the EU to take over maximum residue limits (MRL) set by Codex for those MRLs which the EU has supported in the relevant Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting. Another example concerns pesticide residues, where the EU has a policy in place whereby EU MRLs are aligned with adopted Codex MRLs in those cases where the EU has not signalled its reservation.

At a European level, the EU and its Member States are keen to see European countries have a stronger capacity to participate in Codex work. This must stem from the national levels first of all, but can be further complemented at a regional level. Given that CCEURO is the largest region in Codex and often have very particular views, it is important that this capacity is also extended to the way in which we can defend European values and interests on the international stage. The EU is committed to facilitating this process of integration in the region and will continue to invest resources in the CCEURO region to this end.

¹ Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Israel, Moldova and Ukraine

FINLAND**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems**

Finland has four-levels of administration for food safety system comprising ministries, central administrative level, regional level and local level. For information on structure and organization of the Finnish official services responsible for food control, please see the updated country profile on the FVO website: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=FI

For the policy communication the Government Report on Food Safety has been issued to the Parliament in 2007, 2010 and 2013. Focus in the report is on the current status of the food safety as well as on the challenges and responses. The main focus of the report in 2013 was on the globalization, on the diversification of the food chain and on the nutrition. Implementation of the report will be done through the Advisory Committee on Food Legislation and Control (see Question 2).

Oiva is a food safety information publication system coordinated by the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira. The publication of the Oiva reports derived from municipal food inspectors' control visits begun in May 2013. The first phase of Oiva included all retail shops and restaurants. Oiva will be expanded to include all food industry companies by 2015. Publication of control data will increase transparency in supervision and provide information for consumers to help them make informed choices. Another aim is to increase the effectiveness and awareness of food control. At the same time, food companies will be given the opportunity to tell consumers that their operations are in order. Oiva will harmonise application of legislation, since municipal inspectors all around Finland will make their inspections based on the same Oiva assessment instructions drawn up by the Evira. Food companies can utilise the inspection instructions in the planning of their own operations. The contents of inspections carried out by the municipal inspectors will not change. Along with the Oiva system, controls will focus on a risk-based approach, as a result of which the time spent in inspections will be reduced. The inspection results are presented in the Oiva report using smileys to describe the company's food control results. The Oiva report includes grades for all inspected subject entities.

The new nutrition recommendations by the National Nutrition Council were published in January 2014. The recommendations target all Finns, and as a rule they follow the Nordic recommendations published in autumn 2013. The focus is on a comprehensive idea of a health-promoting diet, composed of the quality, quantity and role as source of nutrition of various kinds of foods and their link to human health. The recommendations are intended to steer the actions of healthcare, catering and food industry professionals, various authorities and public health organizations in promoting public health. The recommendations also give advice on how to select food items, designed to fit the Finnish eating habits and food culture. The new food triangle and food plate model support the choices.

The National Nutrition Council: <http://www.ravitsemusneuvottelukunta.fi/portal/en/>

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

In conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry operates the Advisory Committee on Food Legislation and Control (more than 50 years old institution). Task of the Committee is to handle matters relating to food safety and quality as a cooperative body. The committee is responsible for the national coordination of the international cooperation in the food sector and Finland's contribution to the work of the Codex Alimentarius. The Advisory Committee on Food Legislation and Control is the Finnish National Codex Committee. Members of the Committee represent food control and food law, food industry, food trade and catering sector, consumer issues and primary production.

Under the the Advisory Committee on Food Legislation and Control are several sub-committees for specified issues (like food additives, contaminants, food labelling, food hygiene, residues of veterinary drugs in food etc.). In these sub-committees are representatives of all relevant authorities and NGOs. National positions for Codex meetings are prepared in cooperation with these sub-committees.

In relation to the 50th anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the national Codex Alimentarius Committee organized an international seminar titled “Food Safety and Quality in International Trade”, which was held in December 2013 in Helsinki. The themes of the Seminar were achievements and future challenges of Codex Alimentarius, challenges of international trade and science and the role of legislation and control authorities. The audience, altogether around 80 participants, represented the Finnish government, food industry and trade, other stakeholders and academia.

In June 2014 Finland arranged a colloquium “HACCP – the road ahead” for interested parties (e.g regulators, food businesses, consumers, academia). This scientific colloquium was arranged as a follow-up to an intervention made by Finland at the previous session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH). Finland asked the CCFH to consider an update of the Codex Alimentarius’s General Principles of Food Hygiene and especially its Annex on HACCP. To clarify which parts were most in need of an update, and what might be missing from the Codex texts altogether, Finland the scientific colloquium. As an outcome of the three days colloquium a draft discussion paper has been put together. The discussion paper will be circulated by the Codex Secretariat prior the next meeting of the CCFH, which will consider a possible new work..

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Use of Codex standards and related texts in Finland is mainly indirect via their influence on the preparation of the EU food legislation. Within the area there is no EU legislation, the Codex standards and related texts have been used as a basis for national measures.

The the international scientific colloquium “HACCP – the road ahead” mentioned under Question 2 is and example of the activities within Codex based on the national priorities and interests.

GERMANY

Where there are no specific remarks to the questions set out in CL 2014/20-EURO the situation in Germany is unchanged since the last session of CCEURO and there is no need to update.

QUESTION 1: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

Germany has an extensive framework of legislation on national food control system and on official controls in place to ensure food safety. All relevant information related to the German food control systems is available in detail on the FVO website

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=DE (Country Profile Germany).

Question 2: Strengthening Codex structures at the national level

Competences and procedures on the national level have not changed since the 28th Session of CCEURO. The German Codex Contact Point (CCP) is located in the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The CCP circulates information from the Codex Secretariat within the Federal Government, forwards information to competent authorities in the federal states (*Länder*) and to stakeholders interested in the matters concerned. Germany encourages the participation of stakeholders from all interested circles in Codex meetings. Representatives of the *Länder*, from science, the industry and consumer organizations are regularly invited to participate in Codex meetings as members of the German delegation. BMEL informs interested parties about important Codex activities on its website and holds preparatory briefing meetings at regular intervals up to the sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as well as specialized Codex Committees.

QUESTION 3: CODEX STANDARDS: NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

Germany makes regular use of Codex standards and related texts either indirectly via EU legislation or in the process of developing national standards. Germany participates at the Codex Alimentarius Working Party meetings in Brussels, as well as on General Subject Committees, Commodity Committees, Regional Coordinating Committees and Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces Committees in particular countries.

GREECE

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

Overall, the information provided by Greece for the 28th session of CCEURO on food control systems remains valid (CX/EURO 12/28/7). Overall, the information provided by Greece for the 28th session of CCEURO on food control systems remains valid (CX/EURO 12/28/7). An overview of the national food control system in Greece is given in the Country profile published at http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=GR. Some organisational changes have been introduced since the publication of the report (2011) which does not affect the national food control system. Among these changes are worth noting the following:

- (1) The change of the supervising Ministry for Hellenic Food Authority (EFET), one of the competent authorities in food inspections. EFET is now operating under the supervision of Ministry of Rural Development and Food instead of Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity.
- (2) The establishment of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation – ELGO DIMITRA, an independent body operating for public benefit which is under the supervision of the Minister of Rural Development and Food. ELGO DIMITRA was established by merging the following four organisations:
 - The Greek Meat and Milk Organisation (ELOGAK) which has a network of eight laboratories to analyse raw milk samples for hygiene and quality,
 - the National Institute for Agriculture and Research – NAGREF which laboratories are participating in the import controls,
 - the Organisation for Certification and Inspection of Agricultural Products - AGROCERT, and
 - the Organisation of Agricultural Vocational Education, Training and Employment (O.G.E.E.K.A – DIMITRA).

In addition, a new law (N. 4235/2014) on the measures to be taken in the case of non-compliance, including sanctions and fines to be imposed has been published recently. Amongst others, the new law aims at further rationalizing and harmonizing the sanction system applicable to non-conformities reported during inspections from all competent authorities to food business operators.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;*
- ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.*

Hellenic Food Authority (EFET) acting as the Greek Codex Contact Point (GCCP) is updating regularly its network to which all relevant information and working documents of Codex Alimentarius Committees is disseminated. Before adopting the formal Greek positions regarding the agenda items of the Codex Committee meetings, a public consultation is taking place seeking the views of the interested parties. The public consultation is available in the link http://www.efet.gr/portal/page/portal/efetnew/legislations/consultations/codex_alimentarius and an automatic e-mail alert is sent to the EFET's newsletter subscribers' informing them about the subject matter of the consultation and its deadline.

In order to overcome the lack of resources which is the major limitation for the participation to Codex work, an active participation of competent bodies to electronic Working Groups of interest is strongly encouraged.

Further to that, "shadow" networks behind participants to Working Groups, where representatives from academia, scientific institutions, industry and unions/associations of the sector concerned can contribute, are being pilot-tested. Currently, such an informal network has been established – in a pilot phase – to support the work of GNCCP and of the participants to the e-WGs on culinary herbs. As per usual practice, our final comments to the e-WG will be subject to a public consultation, where involvement of consumer organizations and other interested parties is expected.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;*
 - ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and*
 - iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.*
- (i) The standards that are of particular interest to Greece are those on culinary herbs (i.e. oregano and thyme), which are currently under discussion.
 - (ii) At national level, the standards on dairy products are of high priority. The current legislative framework on dairy products (i.e. milk and milk products, fermented milks, butter and cheese) was considered outdated and a discussion has started between competent authorities regarding the provisions on the quality characteristics of the abovementioned products.
 - (iii) Codex standards are of high relevance for Greece and they are always taken into account when national provisions going beyond the EU legislation are under discussion.

ITALY

QUESTION 1 - STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

The Italian food control system has three level of administration, namely central, regional and local. Some organizational changes have intervened since the 28th session of CCEURO.

The activities at central level are currently coordinated by the Ministry of Health (MoH) [formerly Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies] and the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF). A new law on the reorganization of MoH has been passed (Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 11 February 2014, n. 59), whereby the former Department of Veterinary Public Health, Food Safety and Collegial Bodies for Health Protection of MoH has been abolished. Functions and coordination of activities at MoH are carried out by the Secretariat General, the Directorate General of Food Hygiene, Food Safety and Nutrition, the Directorate General of Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine, and the Directorate General of Collegial Bodies for Health Protection.

The regional and local levels of the administration have remained unchanged.

A new law – the Ministerial Decree of 18 January 2013 - has recently established the National Reference Centre for Emerging Risks in Food Safety in Milan. The functions of the NRC include (i) networking of public laboratories that perform analyses on foods and feeds (Istituti Zooprofilattici Sperimentali), (ii) implementation of systems for the identification and prompt evaluation of emerging risks in food safety, and identification of areas and conditions where risks may arise, (iii) monitoring for risks related to changes in production technologies, preservation, distribution, trade, final preparation of foods, consumption patterns and types of food commodities, and (iv) any other initiative aimed at the identification of emerging risks in food safety, including the implementation of information exchange platforms and collaboration with similar initiatives of other Countries and international Organizations.

QUESTION 2 - STRENGTHENING CODEX AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

There has not been any change of competences nor procedures at the national level since the 28th session of CCEURO. However, the team of Italian Codex Contact Points has improved through time the evaluation and distribution of documents in order to strengthen Codex at the national level and promote more effective participation and national coordination preliminary to the meetings of the Codex Committees. Those efforts have led to a more active participation of experts in particular from public institutions. Further efforts are underway to improve the involvement of other stakeholders from industry and consumers organizations.

QUESTION 3 - CODEX STANDARDS NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

The Codex standards and related texts that are of most importance and interest to Italy include those related to the work of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), the Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA, Codex STAN 192-1995), and those on olive oils.

KAZAKHSTAN

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

The Committee for State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance (CSSES), previously was acting in charge of the national food control system under the Ministry of Health. At this moment, CSSES has been separated as an independent Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Consumer Rights Protection (ACRP).

In frame of the World Bank Project, Component F “Food safety and WTO accession”, all regional centers for sanitary and epidemiological expertise of the Agency have been equipped with the modern laboratory equipment. Specialists of all centers for sanitary and epidemiological expertise passed the training courses at the international training centers abroad. The themes for training courses are:

- «Modern parasitological testing methods for foods»
- «Modern methods for harmful substances testing in foods»
- «Training on food testing made from genetically modified (transgenic) plants»
- «Modern methods for food additives testing in food for babies»

Specialists of the departments for the consumers rights protection had the training courses jointly with the specialists of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of New Technologies and Trade “On interagency coordination between the information services of the concerned ministries, WTO secretariat, WTO countries-members”. Study tour has been held for Automatic Management System departments specialists to learn experience for information service on TBT and SPS functioning in France.

In frame the World Bank Project and Component F «Food safety and WTO accession» ACRP concluded the contract with the consulting company «T&M Associates», USA to implement a pilot project to introduce HACCP principles at oblast level and then at country level.

Consulting company SIM, Italy will provide some contribution on:

1. *Expansion of research methods range for labs specializing in Food Safety given regional peculiarities in SES centers.*

- (i) Regional request for analysis of regional peculiarities of harmful factors that make unfavorable impact upon environment (soil, water for plant and animal origin food)
- (ii) Making the list of regional peculiarities of harmful factors that make unfavorable impact upon environment (soil, water for plant and animal origin food)
- (iii) Preparing of analysis for needed research methods given identified regional peculiarities.
- (iv) Identification of adequate standards for research methods including:
 - for evaluation of fruit and vegetables imported from various countries including PRC, Pakistan, Iran, Germany;
 - for identification of food additions content (preservatives) in juices and juice products;
 - for identification of dried milk use in milk and dairy products (naturalness);
 - treatment of vegetables by antifungal preparations;
 - wine falsification identification methods.

2. Development of auxiliary materials for quality managers

Development of general guidelines for quality managers having the course of methods verification for quality control.

Consulting Company ACE, International will provide consulting services for harmonization of Standards for Food Safety indexes including MRLs of Nitrates, Radionuclides, Antibiotics and Veterinary Drugs in Food stipulated by Technical Regulations of Customs Union to meet international requirements.

The Central Asian Training center on food safety is established under the Agency for the Consumers Rights protection. Global Partnership on food safety, USA, and International Financial Corporation are the partners in potential strengthening of this Center.

All regional departments for the consumers rights protection regularly conduct communication campaign on food safety among all target population groups.

Booklets, leaflets, calendars, posters on food safety have been developed by the Consulting company “Euroconsultants”, Belgium and now are under the printing process. Then these communication materials will be provided to all regional departments for using in communication campaigns.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

National Codex Alimentarius Commission has been established by the Order of Agency for Consumers Rights protection dated 27, June 2014 No165. All concerned ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, Kazakh Academy of Nutrition, consumers protection societies, Union of food producers and etc are involved into this Commission.

WEB site for National Codex Alimentarius Commission is under developing process.

Regional training workshop EU-BTSF Training program “Organization and implementation of training activities in third countries to strengthen their capacity to participate actively in the work of International Standard-Setting Bodies” is planning to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan this October.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Technical regulations of Custom Union are in action. The following Codex Standards have been used in country for ex.,(The Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108-1981);(GENERAL STANDARD FOR BOTTLED/PACKAGED DRINKING WATERS (OTHER THAN NATURAL MINERAL WATERS) CODEX STAN 227-2001); (RECOMMENDED INTERNATIONAL CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE COLLECTING, PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF NATURAL MINERAL WATERS CAC/RCP 33-1985); (CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR BOTTLED/PACKAGED DRINKING WATERS (OTHER THAN NATURAL MINERAL WATERS) (CAC/RCP 48-2001) and many many others

LATVIA

Questionnaire

In completing these questions, countries are encouraged to provide information on changes and new initiatives since the last session of CCEURO.

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

Since January 2, 2013 there is a new structural unit established at the Food and Veterinary Service (FVS): Information Analysis and Fast Response Division, one of its tasks is minimizing and revealing unlawful commercial practices in all supervised areas, including activities linked to food safety aspects.

In order to comply with requirements of legislation and to ensure a proper State control and supervision, the FVS has laid down the following priority measures for 2014 – 2016:

1. To improve control on traceability of animal origin food all over the food chain;
2. To improve control on materials and items coming into contact with food;
3. To improve supervision and control on quality of fresh milk to ensure that fresh milk delivered to processing and marketing comply with quality requirements laid down by EU regulations and national legislation;
4. To diminish cases of fraudulent activities with food and to encourage a fair competition among business operators, to enable consumers to recognize and properly use the food and to make choices best suited to their individual nutritional needs, to ensure control on obligatory food information (incl. general and specific labeling).

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;
- ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

The Veterinary and Food department of the Ministry of Agriculture is the National Codex contact point in Latvia, which co-operates other state institutions and NGOs.

The National Codex contact point is:

- Coordinating assistance of experts of Latvian competent authorities in evaluation of Codex Food Standards;
- Distributing a working documents and other relevant information on Codex activities;
- Ensuring the relevant circulation of information.

Depending on the nominated priorities experts of Latvia participate at Codex EU coordination meetings and *Codex Alimentarius* sessions in the countries of the Europe.

The experts responsible for each Codex Committee are ensuring feedback from Codex Committees to stakeholders, such as professional and consumer protection organizations, scientific and education institutions of Latvia.

The relevant turnover of Codex information facilitate of strengthening of co-operation between the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission, the National Codex contact point and stakeholders at the national level.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;
- ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and
- iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Taking into consideration the limited requirements of the legislation, for example, regarding temperature regimes in catering sector, very useful is application of the Codex of hygiene practices regarding previously heat treated and heat treated food in catering sector. The second significant area is a correct indication of nutritional value.

Currently ongoing is translation of several standards into Latvian – Guidelines on marking nutritional value, general principles of food hygiene.

LITHUANIA

QUESTION 1: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

National Food Law and Regulations

Food safety is being regulated by following major acts of the Republic of Lithuania:

- Food Act (approved in 2000).
- Drinking Water Act (approved in 2001).
- Act on Veterinary (approved in 1992).
- Act on Plant Protection (approved in 2012).

Lithuanian legislation designed to improve national food control system that came into force in 2013:

- Order of SFVS director No B1-91 of 19 February 2013 amending order concerning accounting of low quality raw milk
- Order of SFVS director No B1-141 of 8 March 2013 concerning food safety and hygiene
- Order of SFVS director No B1-237 of 21 March 2013 on approval of the procedure for certification of food supplements exported to third countries
- Order of SFVS director No B1-255 of 28 March 2013 on approval of list for non-animal origin foods, for which control level is increased
- Order of SFVS director No B1-351 of 10 May 2013 amending order on approval of veterinary requirements for live fish sold in retail locations
- Order of SFVS director No B1-488 of 19 July 2013 on approval of assessment procedure of catering businesses for compliance with hygiene requirements
- Order of SFVS director No B1-500 of 24 July 2013 amending order on approval of drinking water suppliers in the drinking water surveillance program of the annual statistical reporting arrangements and drinking water suppliers reported in terms of changes in water supply provision of the procedure
- Order of SFVS director No B1-791 of 11 December 2013 on approval of certification commission for alcohol product quality testing laboratories
- Order of SFVS director No B1-719 of 7 November 2013 amending order on the control of fishery products
- Order of SFVS director No B1-797 of 12 December 2013 on the procedure of notification for operators in the Republic of Lithuania producing and supplying to the market food contact materials and articles
- Order of SFVS director No B1-816 of 23 December 2013 on recognition procedure for approval of natural mineral water in the Republic of Lithuania

Responsibilities of the different ministries and institutions are described in the Food Act of the Republic of Lithuania and various decrees of the Government. Responsibility for food safety including import/export in Lithuania according to Food Act is divided in the following ways:

1. Within the sphere of its competence the **Ministry of Health**:

- shall lay down the following mandatory requirements for food, taking into account the assessment of risk to human health based on scientific research: maximum permitted levels of pesticides and contaminants in food, requirements for the safety of food additives, the safety of foodstuffs for particular nutritional purposes, irradiated, genetically modified food, novel foods, safety requirements for articles, intended to come into contact with food, requirements for food hygiene and control, the procedure for the introduction of hazard analysis and critical control points system at food handling entities, requirements for health of persons handling food, their health examination procedures and obligatory hygiene training;
- shall co-ordinate implementation of the policies of food safety, wholesome nutrition of the population and reduction of food-borne morbidity;
- SHALL DEVELOP AND APPROVE PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT OF NUTRITION OF THE POPULATION, MONITOR THE NUTRITION OF THE POPULATION, FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD-BORNE DISEASES, PROMOTE HABITS OF WHOLESOME NUTRITION AND DISCHARGE OTHER FUNCTIONS LAID DOWN BY THE MENTIONED LAW AND THE OTHER LEGAL ACTS;
- SHALL ESTABLISH THE MANDATORY FOOD LABELLING REQUIREMENTS.

2. Within the area of its competence the **Ministry of Agriculture**:

- shall implement the policy on improved quality of food products and raw materials, production of organic agricultural products, and enhancement of the competitiveness of Lithuanian products on the international market;
- shall develop and approve programmes for the improvement of food quality, production and marketing of wholesome, organic food, shall establish the mandatory requirements for the assessment of quality and composition of food, the assessment of raw materials quality, growing of plants for food and their placement on the market as well as for using and control of plant protection means;
- shall establish the special requirements for labelling of foodstuffs intended for marketing.

3. Within the limits of its competence the **Ministry of Economy**:

- shall implement the food trade policy;
- shall establish the requirements for foodstuffs trade.

4. Within the limits of its competence the **State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS)**:

- shall implement the policy for official control and monitoring foodstuffs safety and reduction of the morbidity of animals intended for food;
- shall establish the mandatory requirements for safety of raw materials of animal origin food; for hygiene and control of animal origin food handling and its placing on the market; hazard analysis and critical control points system at handling entities of the food of animal origin;
- shall monitor contamination of animals and raw materials of animal origin food with harmful substances.

In general, responsibility for food safety policy rests with central government departments, which are Competent Authorities under the EU food legislation, while these, together with a number of other national/regional/local agencies, undertake food safety enforcement activities on behalf of the State Food and Veterinary Service.

The Ministry of Health lays down mandatory requirements for food safety taking into account the assessment of risk for human health based on scientific research, EU legislation and Codex Alimentarius standards. It is responsible for health and safe foodstuff consumption of inhabitants as well as for their healthy living. The basic type of legal acts is Hygiene norms approved by the Minister of Health.

The Health Education and Diseases Prevention Center under the Ministry of Health carries out regular monitoring of food consumption in the country, takes part in the development of methodologies and consumers education.

The Ministry of Agriculture issues orders on quality of foodstuffs, products of organic agriculture and their labelling.

The State Food and Veterinary Service is the major government institution responsible for food control, therefore its role is described in more detail below. SFVS issues orders in the field of official food control, food hygiene supervision, animal health, welfare and veterinary drugs. The SFVS takes part in building the Government policy on the safety, quality and labelling of food and feed, provision of information on the goods including prices and other mandatory requirements, on handling food, by-products of animal origin, feeds, feed additives, veterinary medicinal products and veterinary appliances, on animal health and welfare, on communicable diseases common for humans and animals, on safeguarding consumer rights in provision of food and food-related services and implements the state policy in the above fields.

SFVS objectives:

To ensure monitoring and control of contagious animal diseases, zoonoses and of animal welfare, to eliminate outbreaks of diseases; to apply all the necessary biological measures for prevention from the introduction of contagious diseases and zoonoses into the territory of Lithuania and the EU.

To ensure food safety and control at all the stages of food handling according to the principle "from stable/field to table", to safeguard the interests of consumers, to ensure that the food supplied on the market as well as that intended for export complies with safety, labelling and other mandatory requirements established by the legal acts.

SFVS generally organizes official controls on the basis of the multi-annual national control plan and strategic activity plan. There is a thematic approach to annual official control in the plans. Each year, the SFVS estimates the area of the food group where official control will be performed in a more detailed and thorough manner. Controls not included in the program may be undertaken for the purpose of investigation of complaints, or official reports on infringements.

The long-term strategic goals and the priority tasks are established, the parameters for evaluation of the implementation of the plan are indicated for each sector of the official controls. After the plan is approved by the SFVS, each subordinate institution has to draw up its own annual activity plan with an indication of the specific actions for the implementation of strategic goals and tasks.

Official controls are carried out by inspectors working in the territorial services of the SFVS. The frequency of inspections is based on a classification of establishments into categories of risk: high, medium, low and negligent.

Food control management

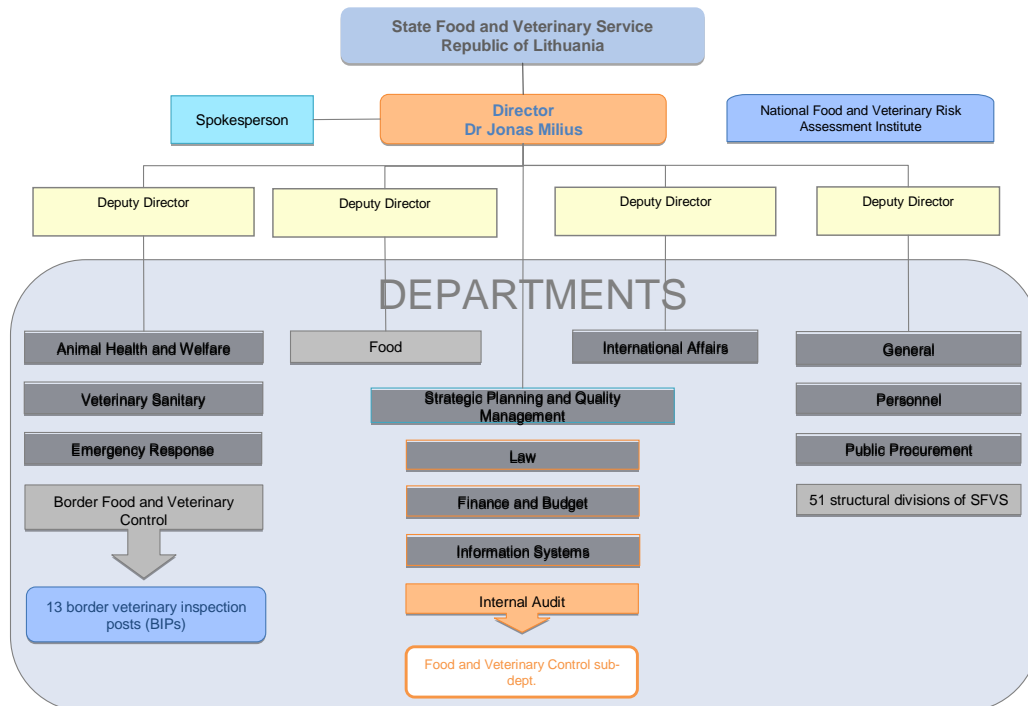
SFVS develops and implements the Government’s policy in food safety and quality as well as in animal health and welfare. The SFVS is accountable to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. SFVS is headed by the director –Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), who is accountable to the Government and Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania. The director has 4 deputy directors. The internal work of SFVS is organized by the heads of departments, who are accountable to the director. The SFVS has 14 Departments and 1 Sub-department, 51 territorial State Food and Veterinary Services, 13 Border Inspection Posts and the National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute (NFVRAI).

The NFVRAI ensures, within its remit, an effective implementation of the state policy in the protection of consumers’ interests in the areas of food safety and veterinary. The NFVRAI was established in order to separate risk assessment from risk management and thus to strengthen protection of the consumer interests and implementation of the European Union requirements in the fields of food safety and veterinary. By carrying out risk assessment based on the research and scientific knowledge, the NFVRAI identifies risks and contributes to reducing risks for food and feed safety, animal health and animal welfare, and environment. The NFVRAI has the national reference laboratory designated to perform laboratory analyses of food of animal origin.

Strategic goals of the NFVRAI in the field of food safety include:

- Provide scientific and technical advice associated with food safety issues from field to table: scientific opinion and technical advice in preparing drafts of legal acts; carry out risk assessment and keep close contacts with risk assessment institutions; participate in scientific committees and expert working groups;
- Perform evaluation of materials and products: participate in risk monitoring and control programs and in management of crisis situations; carry out risk assessment of biological, chemical and other risks;
- Collection, dissemination and analysis of scientific information: develop cooperation with competent authorities, scientific and education institutions at the national and international level; participate in international programs and scientific projects;
- Focus on effective risk communication through close cooperation with risk assessment institutions, risk managers, international partners, stakeholders and consumers, etc.

National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute executed Project on Salt Intake Reduction. During this project amount of salt in most frequently used food products was estimated, nutritional habits of population were analysed and suggestions were issued regarding ways to reduce salt intake. This project was prepared taking into account White Paper of European Commission on Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity Related Health Issues and World Health Organization Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Both strategies underline importance of salt intake reduction for the health of population.



Multi- sectoral collaboration

Collaboration parties	Date of conclusion
Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania and SFVS	15 February 2013
Information Society Development Committee under the Ministry of Transport and SFVS	15 April 2013
Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus Republic and SFVS	28 May 2013
Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service and SFVS	26 June 2013
Food Supplements Manufacturers' Association and SFVS	22 July 2013
Swedish National Food Agency and SFVS	23 September 2013
State Plant Service under the Ministry of Agriculture and SFVS	2 December 2013
Chancellery of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and SFVS	10 December 2013

Inspection services

Official controls are carried out by inspectors working in the territorial services of the SFVS. The SFVS has 51 territorial State Food and Veterinary Services. At the territorial level there are 603 inspectors, 431 are dealing with food of animal origin and with animal health and animal welfare, 172 with food of non-animal origin, pesticides and imports of food of plant origin.

The system of controls comprises three types of checks and inspections:

1. Permanent or regular supervision of animal origin food handling establishments by official veterinarians;
2. Regular inspections by inspectors from the territorial SFVS;
3. Audits on HACCP-based systems by inspectors from the central SFVS.

For all three types of checks and inspections there are clear inspection procedures and uniform check-lists established in the SOPs and working instructions of the quality management system of the SFVS.

The databases of establishments and inspections are in place and accessible to the different levels of the SFVS via its intranet. The databases allow access to information on the results of controls for individual establishments.

SFVS has implemented the Quality Management System in accordance with the requirements of International Standard ISO 17020:2004 "General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection". Almost all procedures are carried out according to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and working instructions which are part of the quality management system of the SFVS.

According to LST EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard, there is established and accredited Quality Management System in the National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute. The accreditation was performed by the German accreditation service DAkkS. Additionally, the NFVRAI is accredited by Federal Service for Accreditation of Russian Federation. In 2007 the NFVRAI was licensed to use the International Laboratory Accreditation Association Label - ILAC.

Laboratory infrastructure and activities

The National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute is an accredited laboratory for the official food control and national monitoring programmes. The NFVRAI provides service to the food control authority – State Food and Veterinary Service. There is a quality assurance and management system implemented in the NFVRAI which is accredited according ISO/IEC 17025 (by DAkkS, Germany). The NFVRAI is also accredited by the competent authorities for food safety of the Russian Federation. Laboratory investigations of food performed by the NFVRAI include chemical, microbiological, sensory, radiological as well as molecular biology and GMO analysis. New methods of analysis are implemented continuously.

Information dissemination

The SFVS has the system in place to inform consumers of its activities in order to ensure transparency and promote public confidence in the food and veterinary control. The SFVS news, alerts and important information for consumers, business operators is disseminated via mass media such as TV, radio, press, etc. The SFVS co-operates with stakeholders on the basis of signed agreements. Regular meetings are organised to discuss the current situation in specific business areas. In the legislation drafting process by SFVS, a consultation procedure with stakeholders is included.

There is a well functioning website of SFVS (<http://vmvt.lt/>), where information, news and other relevant documents are published for consumers and business operators. Besides, there is an internal portal where all working documents, internal rules, etc. are placed for staff members.

In year 2013 were prepared 5 information publications (brochures, leaflets) for consumers and business operators: "African swine fever. Important information"; "African swine fever"; "Myths and Facts or 12 issues of African swine fever"; "Memo to producers of farm animals. 10 steps to a healthy herd"; "Hypersensitivity to food: food allergy and intolerance".

Designed one ranking mark for catering companies "Compliance with the hygiene requirements of the assessment." SFVS website contains information about ranking system of catering establishments.

National food safety issues and priorities

Improving food safety, quality and labeling indicators; Lithuanian Seimas adopted the resolution that 2013 is the "Year of Health" and SFVS had implemented the ruling and the necessary tools to take it into action.

To improve the business, especially the small and medium business environment and increase public trust Service activities.

Activity priorities are food safety, quality and labeling indicators. Which are taken by:

- Ensuring correct labeling of food products, taking into account more accurate labeling control for wholesale trade operators;
- Arrange meetings with food business operators on the food-borne disease outbreaks prevention and discuss the requirements of difficulties for legislation implementation;
- Ensure effective quality control of raw milk, and actively cooperate to provide detailed advice to dairy farmers, other economic entities involved in the supply of raw milk in the process of organizing meetings with milk producers;
- Arrange public, objective and on control data based catering rating system;
- Continue to control food product labeling, nutrition, health claims in laboratory studies to evaluate the quality of food products.

Training/capacity building

To ensure qualification improvement of staff members of the SFVS and subordinate institutions training of the staffs is arranged in accordance with the Law on Public Service of the Republic of Lithuania (O.G.,1999, No. 66-2130; 2002, No. 45-1708) and Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

Organisation of the training of public servants of State Food and Veterinary Service and the staffs working under employment contract is described in the SOP of the quality system DR-2 "Training of public servants and the staffs working under employment contract" approved by State Food and Veterinary Service director Order No. B1-488 of 20 June 2012.

All the training undertaken is registered within the Training Register in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 with the specification of the date of the training, venue, title, organiser, number of trainees and other information. The Register is run by the specialist of the International Affairs Department of SFVS. On the basis of the information received from territorial SFVS on the training attended by their staffs, the annual report on the training held is prepared in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004.

After the training, the employee of the SFVS or territorial SFVS submits the documents related to the training undertaken (copy of SFVS director order on the training, materials of presentations, registration sheets, the filled in questionnaire on the quality and effectiveness of the training) to the specialist of the International Affairs Department of SFVS. Also all trainees fill in the "Evaluation form on the quality and effectiveness of training" approved by SFVS director Order No B1-488 of 20/06/2012. An analysis of the completed forms is made afterwards.

The food legislation system in Lithuania is directed to strictly follow the EU food legislation and tight governmental responses to food safety threats at various stages of production as dictated by evolving public health criteria and/or trade requirements. In Lithuania all EU legal norms and control arrangements take effect either directly, in the case of Regulations and Decisions, or indirectly in the case of Directives, following their transposition into national legislation within a specified period.

Cooperation with Other Countries

At Central Government level, officials have regular contacts with their colleagues in other Member States of the EU, especially during the Codex Alimentarius Working Party in Brussels.

Lithuanian food control laboratory staff maintains regular contacts with their counterparts in other countries via networks, through participation in proficiency test schemes and through informal exchanges.

Scientists working on food safety in Lithuanian research organisations are also involved in collaborative research projects with their counterparts across Europe and beyond.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Activities of Codex Contact Point

The Lithuanian Codex Contact Point is located in the Health Education and Diseases Prevention Center under the Ministry of Health. Main activities are to distribute the Codex related documentation and to raise awareness of Codex matters inside a country. Because of the WTO SPS and TBT Agreements, the Lithuanian likewise the EU food legislation is strongly influenced by the work done by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. However due to the fact that the European Commission is very actively participating in Codex activities, the Lithuanian work on Codex related matters is mainly done not through the direct participation at the Codex meetings, which are quite costly for small country, but through the participation at the Working Party on Codex Alimentarius (23F) under the European Union Council. During last years, Lithuanian Codex Contact Point activities are moving to the Ministry of Health which has coordination role and is responsible for the work carried out by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

In view of this, more in-depth discussion and may be decisions are needed at national level about the role of the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee or other government structure(s) in implementing coordinating functions historically assigned to these Codex structures.

Consumer participation in standards setting

Lithuanian public organisations for the protection of consumers' rights in ensuring the interests of consumers' in the area of food safety, quality and information work mainly as follows:

- 1) conduct consumer opinion polls about food safety and quality and publish an overview of the results of the survey in the media;
- 2) either at the request of a consumer or on its own initiative apply to the court for violation of the consumer's rights or his lawful interests;
- 3) collect information from the producers and traders about food safety and quality;
- 4) establish information and consultation centres, and test laboratories for the examination of food safety and quality;
- 5) notify the National Consumers Rights Protection Board and the food control authority about violations of legal acts regulating food safety and quality and make proposals about a more effective protection of consumers' rights;
- 6) take part as observers at the meetings of the National Consumers Rights Protection Board.

The **National Consumer Rights Protection Board** coordinates state institutions' activities on protection of consumers. The Board being comprised of the Chairman, 4 Members and the administration has been functioning since August 2001. The work procedure of the Board is established by the Act on Consumer Protection and other laws as well as the procedure rules adopted by the Board.

There are more than 20 public and non-governmental institutions in Lithuania related to food and nutrition which take part in drafting of national food acts and provide own position concerning EU law.

It is reasonable therefore to conclude that Lithuanian consumers have every opportunity to be involved, through their relevant NGO, in the preparatory process used to formulate the Lithuanian position on a variety of Codex issues.

QUESTION 3: CODEX STANDARDS NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

Specific Codex standards of most importance

- Advisory Lists of Nutrient Compounds for Use in Foods for Special Dietary Uses intended for Infants and Young Children
- Statement on Infant Feeding
- Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
- Code of practice for the reduction of acrylamide in foods

Current priority for setting national standards:

As the WTO and the EU member, Lithuania has to follow the legislation established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, therefore national standards or regulations are based on the text of Codex standards. Codex standards regarding requirements for food composition (especially in the fields unregulated by European Union legislation) are currently of the most importance and interest to our country. In order to ensure the rights of the consumers to choose products according to their needs, national standards or regulations for classification of fish and fishery products as well for specific products such as sour cream, fermented milk drinks, ice-cream, fresh cheese products containing high levels of acrylamide and others are developed.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems**

Please describe any significant development/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

There are no significant changes in the Slovak Republic since 2012 in National Food Control Systems. The information provided by Slovakia for the 28th Session of CCEURO on food control systems remains unchanged or only with small changes regarding the rationalization of the organization in food control laboratories falling under Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic under a single management.

Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission carried out 11 missions on different objectives in Slovakia to check on compliance with the requirements of EU legislation – reports were published on the FVO web http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/controlsystems_en.cfm?co_id=SK

Updated Annual reports on official controls (2012, 2013), Multi-annual National Control Plan for the Slovak Republic for 2012- 2014, National Report on the control of pesticide residues in Slovakia in 2012 and National report on zoonoses, zoonotic agents and alimentary infections in the Slovak Republic in 2012 were published on web www.land.gov.sk.

National authority staff involved in official controls in areas of food and feed law attended over 35 training activities within the European Commission training initiative to ensure efficient control. As regard to training activities addressed nationally, food control authorities (in the field of their responsibilities by the law) organise trainings for staff in their responsibilities regularly. For example, State Food and Veterinary Administration of the SR trains relevant staff via Institute of Postgraduate Education of Veterinary Surgeons on the base of the national plan of education activities (42 in 2014), which is available on <http://www.ivvl.sk/index.php?page=21>. Other competent authority - The Public Health Authority – provides educational activities via Slovak Medical University.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex structures at the national level

Two meetings of NCCP on conclusions of Codex Committees and Commission meetings and following national activities took place with representatives of Slovakia. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius, the Slovak national contact point organized a 1 - day meeting for all national experts who have ever represented their country in the work of the Codex. NCCP performed general NCCP activities followed up the rules as set in the Codex Procedural Manual and it distributed documents and information from other international organizations relevant to the work of Codex or food safety e.g. WTO (SPS/TBT), EFSA, INFOSAN, OECD, European institutions...) in 2013-2014.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

The Slovak Republic as a member of European Union has to obligatory implemented *acquis communautaire* Codex standards are always taken into consideration in the process of establishing the EU legislation -

Direct reference to Codex standards is used in EU legislation when appropriate.

For the Slovak Republic, standards and related texts of all general subject committees are of most importance and interests, mainly provisions regarding permitted maximum levels of contaminants, maximum limits for pesticide residues, acceptable maximum levels for food additives and recommend maximum levels of residues of veterinary drugs in foods.

In the area which is not subject of EU legislation, any of Codex standards (or provisions) and related texts haven't been used in preparing of the new national legislation.
