

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 5

CX/EURO 04/5

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

Twenty-fourth Session
Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 20-23 September 2004

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

(European Community, Finland, United Kingdom)

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

As regards the Checklist of Measurable Objectives, the situation is as follows:

1. The EC has established a European Codex Contact Point. It is managed by the Directorate Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission. Its main role is to ensure the coordination between the Commission Services and the Member States (via the Council of the EU), with which EU common positions are established. It is also the direct point of contact with the Codex secretariat.
2. The EC is currently establishing a European Codex Committee, which will comprise representative (at European level) stakeholders, including consumer NGOs. These stakeholders will be consulted prior to the drafting of any common positions and will be encouraged to submit their respective positions.
3. There are no direct public consultations prior to development of European common positions for Codex meetings, but consultations with relevant stakeholders and representative organisations. In addition, the final EC common positions are posted on the EU website¹.
4. The EC has identified independent consumer NGOs (e.g. the European Consumers' Organisation - BEUC, Association of European Consumers – AEC). As explained in points 2 and 3, these NGOs will be consulted prior to developing European common positions. The EC encourages the participation of these NGOs in Codex meetings either directly or via their representatives (e.g. Consumer International), however the EC does not intend to invite NGOs representatives in its delegation participating in Codex meetings.
5. At EC level, independent consumer NGOs have already got the opportunity to express their positions prior to the development of the EC common positions and this consultation is currently being more formalised through the establishment of a European Codex Committee.
6. The EC has identified 3 consumer NGOs (among all relevant stakeholders) which are direct representatives of consumers at European level: the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC), the Association of European Consumers (AEC) and the European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (Eurocoop). These NGOs are included in the list of organisations proposed to be part of the European Codex Committee and will therefore be encouraged to express their positions prior to the development of EU common positions.

¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/international/organisations/position_paper_en.htm

FINLAND**Measurable Objectives to assess Consumer Participation in Codex**

Finland has a National Codex Contact Point (Secretary General of the Advisory Committee of Foodstuffs)

The Advisory Committee of Foodstuffs under the Ministry of Trade and Industry is the national Codex Committee.

Public consultations has not been hold when developing national positions for Codex Meetings, but national positions for Codex meetings are prepared in cooperation with the sub-committees of the Advisory Committee on Foodstuffs. In these sub-committees are also representatives of the independent consumer NGOs.

Independent consumer organisations have not been invited to participate in Codex meetings.

In the Advisory Committee of Foodstuffs (National Codex Committee) are representatives of the independent consumer NGOs. Under the Advisory Committee of Foodstuffs are several sub-committees for specific issues (like food additives and contaminants, food labelling, food hygiene, residues of veterinary drugs in food etc.). In these sub-committees are also representatives of the independent consumer NGOs. National positions for Codex meetings are prepared in cooperation with these sub-committees.

In Finland there are two consumer NGOs participating in the Codex Process at the national level: The Finnish Consumers' Association (Suomen Kuluttajaliitto ry) and The Consumers (Kuluttajat-Konsumenterna ry).

UNITED KINGDOM**Activities of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees**

The UK is actively represented by the Food Standards Agency in Codex. A UK delegation is present at most Committee meetings including the meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The UK has the opportunity to make written comments on proposed standards during the elaboration procedure.

The UK position on Codex issues is developed via the usual procedures of considering existing legislation and by consulting widely with the representatives of consumer, industry and enforcement bodies.

Consumers are involved in the preparation of Codex meetings and Codex work in general in two main ways. Firstly, Codex documents asking for Government comment are circulated widely to interested parties including consumer groups for comment in order to formulate a UK response. Secondly, the UK has set up the National Codex Consultative Committee (NCCC) of which three of the nine member organisations are consumer groups (see paragraph 37 below).

The National Codex Consultative Committee (NCCC)

23. The UK set up the NCCC in June 1992, thereby giving a formal framework to the arrangements that already existed in the UK for consultation in Codex matters. The Terms of reference for the NCCC are "*to consider issues and papers that are to be placed before the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its various committees and to advise the UK Government of any issues of concern to UK organisations*". Membership of the NCCC aims to cover consumer, industry and enforcement interests. Members of the NCCC and relevant interested parties are invited to meet with officials, prior to meetings of the CAC and other Codex Committees to discuss Codex papers that have been circulated. Written comments are also considered. This ensures that the views of all interest groups are taken into account when preparing the UK line on Codex matters.