

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 5

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

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CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS

GOVERNMENT COMMENTS

(Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden)

ESTONIA

The Estonian Codex Contact Point is at the Veterinary and Food Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. There is no National Codex Committee established so far. The National Contact Point receives information from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and distributes it to the different organisations according to the distribution list. There are universities, food industry associations and state authorities in the list. Independent consumer organisations are not included in the list at the moment. If needed, the National Codex Contact Point prepares Estonian positions on the Codex documents. We do not hold special public consultations when developing national positions, but all relevant institutions have right to submit their comments on the drafts of Codex documents after they have received a copy of the documents. In Estonia there is one main consumer NGO, The Estonian Consumer Union (*Eesti Tarbijakaitseliit*), but they have not participated in the national Codex work so far.

IRELAND

In Ireland the main consumer representative organisations are routinely consulted on food related safety and consumer protection issues including proposals for legislation of both national and EU origin. A number of formal arrangements are in place for such consultation including the Consumer Liaison Group of the Department of Agriculture and Food, FSAI's Safety Consultative Council and a web-based consultation system also operated by the FSAI. The bodies listed in Annex 1 also provide consumers with information on food safety through a variety of other channels such as helplines, info-centres, libraries, websites, etc. There is extremely active participation by consumers via the media, particularly national radio. Given the national coverage of the relevant media programmes and the high level of consumer participation, this is a very effective method of ensuring that the needs and demands of consumers are met.

Regarding consumer involvement in Codex work, Ireland has implemented all the "measurable objectives" set out in the CL 2004/12-EURO e.g. designation of a dedicated Codex Contact Point; operation of a National Codex Committee; compilation and periodic distribution to interested parties inviting comment of a document summarising Codex Letters in circulation; organisation of occasional Codex information events, etc.

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

LATVIA

The protection of consumers in Latvia is regulated by several normative acts and there has been established national Consumer Rights Protection Centre. Especially in the food sector consumers are very active and know their rights as well as they are supported by media, websites, info lines of Food and Veterinary Service, Latvian Food Centre, etc.

When elaborating any national positions or legislation drafts Latvia sends these documents for comments to different governmental and non-governmental organisations (Food Producer's Federation, Latvian Agricultural Joint Consultative Council, Latvian Traders Association, etc.), sub-committees and to other representatives from more specific food sectors.

Any information received from Codex is electronically forwarded to relevant Codex sub-groups where in cooperation with its members from different institutions the proposals will be prepared. The members in the Codex groups are from scientific institutions, consumer organization, other relevant ministries and members from different organizations in relation to different food items.

At the moment public consultations have not been held and the co-operation is not really sufficient but Latvia is working to improve this situation. However, consumers through Consumer Rights Protection Centre have full rights to participate in the meetings if they wish so.

LITHUANIA

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 Law on Consumer Protection and other laws as well as the procedure rules adopted by the Board. **Board's activities:**

- Coordinates state institutions' activities on protection of consumers;
- Protects consumers' public interest;
- Undertakes control on advertising;
- Within the limits of its competence applies action measures intended by law to trespassers infringing the Law on Consumer Protection, Law on Products Safety and Law on Advertising;
- Organizes and carries out education of consumers, sellers, producers and services providers;
- Provides information for consumers about unsafe products, which have appeared or may appear on the market;
- Organizes the exchange of information with the European Union and Member States;
- Represents the Republic of Lithuania in the European Union and international organizations in consumer rights protection field.

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

SWEDEN

The Director General of the National Board for Consumer Policies, two county councillors, and one city councillor sit on the Board of the National Food Administration (NFA). All proposals for new food legislation, which are of importance for consumers, are sent out for comments to consumer organisations before being finalised.

A Consumer Board has been established at the NFA for information and discussion of food matters of special interest to consumers including Codex matters. The Consumer Board meet several times a year. Codex Circular Letters of special interest are sent out for comments to consumer organisations. These comments are taken into consideration when preparing written Swedish comments.

The NFA provides information on food matters (including legislation) of interest to consumers via the website (www.slv.se) and various publications, press releases, etc. In addition, information about Codex activities is published in the NFA's journal *Vår Föda*, which is sent to *inter alia* the mass media in Sweden.