

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

CX/EURO 19/31/2

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

Thirty-first Session

Almaty, Kazakhstan, 30 September – 4 October 2019

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

#### FOOD FRAUD – ADDRESSING RISKS, PREVENTION AND COUNTERACTION

1. Fraudulent food dates back to Middle Ages where watering down milk or mixing spices with soil, nutshell or seeds were practiced. In a globalizing world, as food is sourced from more diverse and longer supply chains, methods for fraud have also become so complex that in some cases it could be difficult to identify with conventional food safety approaches. In 2017, Europol-Interpol operations seized 13 million units/items worth an estimated EUR 230 million of potentially harmful food and beverages ranging from every day products such as alcohol, mineral water, seasoning cubes, seafood and olive oil, to luxury goods such as caviar.<sup>1</sup>

2. Food fraud is any deliberate action of businesses or individuals to deceive others in regards to the integrity of food to gain undue advantage. Types of food fraud include but are not limited to: adulteration, substitution, dilution, tampering, simulation, counterfeiting, and misrepresentation, mislabeling. Additional to the globally heard cases of dioxin in meat, melamine in milk powder and horsemeat in beef products, recent examples include mislabeling recycled cooking oil, fipronil contaminated eggs, coloring olive oil, fish and meat products, diluting honey and maple syrups, ground hazelnuts mixed with peanuts.

3. Food fraud may pose high risk for consumer health, result in food waste, have financial consequences for food businesses, and damage consumer trust in food enterprises as well as the country. In order protect public health and preserve the reputation of countries and integrity of the unique food products in the European Region, it is necessary to ensure the safety, quality and authenticity of food products produced in the region, and to prevent the entry of food products that do not meet safety and quality standards into the market. The completeness and accuracy of information on food products is an important public good to reduce risks to consumer health both within the region and beyond. It is also essential to prevent food fraud to improve consumer trust in the food industry and competent authorities.

4. Reducing risks associated with food fraud requires a coordinated approach across sectors and stakeholders at the national and international levels. Combating food adulteration requires strong food safety systems consisting of comprehensive and science- and evidence-based policy and legal framework, risk-based food inspection, effective laboratory techniques and capacity, education and communication for good ethics and accountability among stakeholders in the food supply chain, capacity to investigate and respond to food fraud incidents and emergencies.

5. A keynote speaker is invited to give an overview of the problem of food fraud in terms of risks to consumer health and methods of preventing, counteracting and responding to it. The speaker will also provide an update on the status of regional and global discussions on the issue.

6. Using the keynote address as a basis for further discussion, CCEURO members are encouraged to share their experiences to address food fraud, and knowledge to better understand the issue and identify prevention, counteraction and response measures. Given the complex nature of the problem, which may transcend national boundaries, areas which merit a combination of efforts and collaboration, may be identified. It may include views on how CCEURO member countries can work together to enhance Codex's work, and identify areas for regional cooperation, or identify improved national measures to prevent food fraud, thus preserving and strengthening the reputation of foods in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/eur-230-million-worth-of-fake-food-and-beverages-seized-in-global-opson-operation-targeting-food-fraud>