

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Via delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel.: 57971 Telex: 625852-625853 FAO I Cables: Foodagri Rome Facsimile: (6) 57973152-5782610

ALINORM 91/19

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
Nineteenth Session  
Rome, 1-10 July 1991

REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE  
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE  
Vienna, Austria, 28 May - 1 June 1990

Note: This report incorporates CL 1990/24-EURO.

W/Z 6191

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CX 3/1.2

CL 1990/24-EURO  
July 1990

TO: - Codex Contact Points  
- Participants at the 17th Session of the Codex  
Coordinating Committee for Europe  
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,  
FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe (ALINORM 91/19)

PART A: MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION

- (1) Revision of Maximum Levels for Radionuclides in Natural Mineral Waters at Step 5 of the Procedure (paras. 73-79)

At its 17th Session the Committee agreed to delete the numerical provisions for Ra 226 activity and for total beta-activity in the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN. 108-1981). The proposed amendments will be referred to the Commission for adoption at Step 5.

- (2) Microbiological Methods of Analysis for Natural Mineral Waters at Steps 5/8 of the Procedure (para. 87 and Appendix II, Part A)

The amended list of Microbiological Methods of Analysis as in Appendix II, Part A of ALINORM 91/19 will be referred to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted.

- (3) Chemical Methods of Analysis for Natural Mineral Waters at Steps 5/8 of the Procedure (para. 87 and Appendix II, Part B)

The amended list of chemical methods of analysis as in Appendix II, Part B of ALINORM 91/19 will be referred to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted. The proposed accelerated procedure is subject to the views of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

- (4) Proposed Amendments to Section 3.1 - Treatment and Handling and Section 4 - Contaminants of the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108-1981) at Step 3 of the Procedure (paras. 93, 98-99 and Appendix III)

Amendments proposed by the Committee on Section 3.1 - Treatment and Handling and Section 4 - Contaminants will be referred to the Commission for adoption at Step 3 of the Codex Procedure.

Without prejudice to the decision of the 19th Session of the Commission, Governments and interested international organizations are requested to submit their comments on all aspects of points (1), (2), (3) and (4), including possible economic

implications to Prof. H. Woidich, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee for Europe, Lebensmittelversuchsanstalt, Blasstr. 29, A-1190 Vienna, Austria, with a copy to this office, by no later than 30 March 1991.

**PART B: INFORMATION REQUESTED FROM GOVERNMENTS**

(1) Composition of Mineral Waters intended for Consumption by Infants and Young Children (para. 96)

Information is requested on the composition of mineral waters intended for consumption by infants and young children with specific references to nitrates, sodium, sulphates and all other components considered important for their characterization.

(2) Limits for Organic Contaminants in Natural Mineral Waters (para. 103)

Governments and interested international organizations are requested to provide information and data on the existing national and international regulations on limits for organic contaminants in natural mineral waters.

Information concerning points (1) and (2) should be sent to the Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy, by no later than 31 October 1991.

(3) Survey on the Use of Food Irradiation in Europe

Governments and interested international organizations are requested to send information on the application of food irradiation, especially in Europe, such as irradiated foods (purpose, tons per year), absorbed dose range used, any permitted levels of absorbed dose, applicable regulations and other relevant information.

Information should be sent to Mr. P. Loaharanu, Senior Officer, Food Preservation Section, Joint FAO/IAEA Division, Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 100, A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

(Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe, 17th Session,  
Vienna, 28 May-1 June 1990, ALINORM 91/19)

The Committee reached the following conclusions during its deliberations:

- Expressed support for the work of the Working Group on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Barriers and for the further strengthening of the cooperation between Codex and the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (para. 30).
- Decided that the question of sampling in the Codex European Regional Standard for Mayonnaise should be considered in the light of the decision taken by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling at its 17th session (para. 16).
- Agreed on the following recommendations concerning the European Regional Standard for Natural Mineral Waters:
  - to delete the provisions for Radiation (para. 79)
  - to refer the methods of analysis to the Commission at Step 5 with a recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7 and adopt them at Step 8. This proposed procedure for the chemical methods is subject to a review by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (paras 82, 86, 87)
  - to retain the limits for Arsenic and Barium as defined in the Standard (para. 89)
  - to maintain the present limits for Fluoride and initiate an amendment of Section 3.1 of the Standard to allow defluoridization treatment (para. 93)
  - to maintain the present limits for Nitrate (para. 96)
  - to amend the present limit for nitrite from 0.005 mg/L to 0.02 mg/L (paras 98-99)
  - to initiate setting limits for organic contaminants (para. 103).
- Expressed satisfaction with the proposed basic Codex document on the Implications of Biotechnology for Food Standards and recommended to the Commission to pursue its role in the field of biotechnology (para. 113).
- Agreed that the Codex Contact Points should be more actively involved in coordination and implementation of food legislation, and requested the Secretariat to improve communication in the network and to prepare Draft Guidelines for the Work of Codex Contact Points in the Region (para. 118).
- Considered establishing permanent limits for radionuclide contamination of foodstuffs and agreed to await the results of the discussion of the status of Codex Guidelines at the 37th Session of the Executive Committee of the Commission (para. 128).
- Reached agreement on a number of issues concerning biologically/organically produced foods and requested the Secretariat to present the discussions on this item to the 37th Session of the Executive Committee with a view of the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the 19th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (para. 144).
- Agreed to propose Mrs. Barbro Blomberg of Sweden for Nomination by the Commission as the Regional Coordinator for the next term (paras 157-158).
- Agreed on a number of topics to be included in the future work of the Committee (para. 161).

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### Opening of the Session (Agenda Item 1)

1. The Seventeenth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe was held in Vienna from 28 May to 1 June 1990, by courtesy of the Government of Austria. The Meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. H. Woidich, Coordinator for Europe.

2. The Session was opened by Dr. E. Bobek, Director General, on behalf of the Federal Minister of Health and Public Services. He recalled that Austria had already been given twelve times the opportunity to host this important Committee and had one of its citizens nominated again as Coordinator for Europe and expressed appreciation for these signs of confidence.

3. Dr. Bobek pointed out that the efforts for harmonizing food standards had become more important with increasing international trade. Trade across borders or even continents may also lead to health related problems. Without doubt, giving highest priority to matters relating to consumer health is of central interest for every Minister of Health. This principle of consumer protection should be given fullest consideration in the future orientation of the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Coordinating Committee. Besides that, specific higher quality standards of the individual countries should not be neglected. Acceptance of Codex standards would certainly not be promoted if it were associated with a down levelling of quality. Referring to agenda items of particular public interest, Dr. Bobek mentioned organic agriculture as an expression of environment awareness with much sympathy in Austria, underlined his interest in the future role of biotechnology and noted the great reservations in this country against irradiation of foods. Dr. Bobek wished the Committee success for its session and its future work.

4. Dr. H. Redl, Director, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and mentioned Austria's long cooperations in the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. The significance of this Commission is based, amongst others, on FAO's aim to improve production and distribution of all foodstuffs and agricultural products and thus contribute to the liberation of mankind from hunger. In Austria production of several foodstuffs exceeds demand and there are changing trends in consumption. In particular this concerns health aspects like weight control and food for physical fitness in sports etc. Proposals for production and trade should rely mainly on products in their natural state and without chemical treatment. Agriculture in future will offer high quality products, but a higher price will have to be paid for them. Packaging should take environmental considerations into account, mass production in husbandry should increasingly be abandoned. Finally Dr. Redl referred to the proposal of the Director-General of FAO for an International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 and wished the delegates successful work at the session.

5. Prof. Dr. R. Wenger, President of the Austrian Codex National Committee, welcomed the delegates and pointed out that by hosting this session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe Austria was demonstrating its sustained support to international endeavours. He stressed the role the Committee has to play in organizing the potential of the European member countries for the important tasks before the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the Region.

6. The Session was attended by delegations from 18 countries and observers from one country and 7 international organizations. A List of Participants, including officers from FAO, WHO, IAEA, and the Technical Secretariat is attached as Appendix I to the report.

Adoption of the Agenda (Agenda Item 2)

7. The Committee had before it the provisional agenda for the session CX/EURO 90/1 and CX/EURO 90/1 - Add. 1. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda without change.

Matters of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

8. The Committee had before it working papers CX/EURO 90/2, CX/EURO 90/2 - Add. 1 which contained respectively a summary of matters of interest to the Committee arising from the 18th Session of the Commission, a Report on the status of the Uruguay Round Trade Negotiations on Agriculture and a summary of matters of interest arising from other Committees.

Matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other Codex Committees (Agenda Item 3(a))

9. Among the issues presented in the Working Paper or discussed under other agenda items, the Committee noted several matters arising from the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Terms of Reference for Regional Coordinating Committees

10. The Commission at its 18th Session adopted common terms of reference applicable to all Regional Coordinating Committees.

11. The Delegation of Hungary pointed out that the elaboration of regional Codex Standards by the Coordinating Committee for Europe is sometimes delayed or altogether discontinued through the comments of delegates of member countries of other regions that had not been represented at the earlier discussions of the standard. The Delegation suggested that a proposal be made to the Codex Committee on General Principles or the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to consider devising a procedure whereby the elaboration of the regional standard is carried out within the Coordinating Committee to a final stage and then is presented to the Commission, or alternately the Commission decides at an early stage to have the regional standard elaborated as a worldwide one.

12. The Delegation of Sweden cautioned the Committee against proposing amendments to the standards elaboration procedure and suggested that the Committee should consider very carefully any proposal to embark on a new regional standard.

13. The Observer from the EEC expressed the European Commission's scepticism toward regional standards, which may be potential non-tariff barriers. The procedure for the elaboration of worldwide Codex Standards has proven its usefulness in practice and it should be maintained.

14. The Delegations of the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and France strongly supported the representatives of EEC. The Committee agreed to inform the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission about the discussion on this item.

Draft European Regional Standard for Mayonnaise

15. The Committee was informed that the Commission had adopted at Step 8 the Regional European Standard for Mayonnaise. The Delegation of the United Kingdom pointed out that at the previous session the Committee had agreed that the question to develop sampling procedure for Mayonnaise should be considered at the next session and requested information on the lack of this issue on the Agenda.

16. The Codex Secretariat informed the delegates that the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling at its 16th Session had analyzed the texts of Codex Committee on the elaboration of sampling plans and other recommendations and agreed that a single document on sampling should be developed rather than including sampling provisions in individual Codex Standards. At its 18th Session the Commission agreed to the advisory nature of the Codex document and approved the development of Codex Guidelines on Sampling (ALINORM 89/40, paras. 340-341). The Committee decided that the question of sampling in the Mayonnaise Standard should be reconsidered in the light of the decision taken by the CCMAS.

Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific (CCNASWP)

17. The Committee was informed that the Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific, noting the increasing extent to which contaminants are becoming barriers to international trade, had recommended that the Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission consider the possible separation of food additives and contaminants into separate Codex Committees.

18. The Delegation of the United Kingdom noted that this issue had been discussed at the 17th Session of the Commission which had decided to maintain both food additives and contaminants with the same Codex Committee (ALINORM 87/39, para. 111). It enquired what different circumstances had given rise to this proposal and suggested that the Executive Committee should examine the reasoning of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific as compared to the record of discussion at the Commission. This was supported by the Delegation of Sweden.

19. The Delegation of the Netherlands supported the position of the United Kingdom against the proposal of the CCNASWP, particularly in consideration of the fact that the issue was not discussed by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants.

Matters arising from activities of other international organizations (Agenda Item 3(b))

20. The Committee received an oral report from the representative of Marinalg International.

Statement by the Representative of Marinalg International

21. The representative of Marinalg International stated that Marinalg International is the World Professional Association of Producers of Seaweed-extracts derived hydrocolloids. It states its objectives and activities as protecting the production of pure and safe seaweed-derived hydrocolloids intended for use in foods, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics; representing the seaweed-processing industry before the relevant regulatory bodies; providing data on technical justifications and on safety of seaweed-derived hydrocolloids to international and national regulatory agencies. This Association has 14 members in 11 different countries from Asia, USA, Europe and Africa (Morocco). It represents about 90% of the seaweeds hydrocolloids industry, used as texturizing ingredients in processed food. Its cooperation with and attendance at Codex Alimentarius sessions have been regular for nearly 15 years, and had involved many fields of common interest. The cooperation has been very close with JECFA to supply specifications for identity and purity, toxicological data and methods of analysis on the substances produced.

Report on the Status of the Uruguay Round Trade Negotiations on Agriculture;  
Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers (WGSPS) (Agenda Item 3(c))

22. The Committee had before it paper CX/EURO 90/2 - Add. 1. In introducing the paper the Secretariat drew attention to the discussion of the GATT Uruguay Round on Non-Tariff

Barriers at the last 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 1989 and the 25th Session of the FAO Conference in November 1989. The Commission supported cooperative efforts with GATT while noting that the mechanisms of this relationship were subject of further developments. The FAO Conference emphasized the pivotal role of FAO in the Harmonization of National Regulations on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures based on the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the International Office of Epizootics (OIE).

23. The Secretariat then outlined the main topics discussed at the third and fourth meetings of the Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers to Trade - increased coordination and cooperation between GATT and international scientific organizations such as Codex, the equivalency principle, harmonization, improved dispute settlement procedures, effective system of consultation and notification.

24. The Observer from GATT gave a brief description of the basic functions and objectives of GATT and a brief historical outline up to the present 8th Uruguay Round of Negotiations (1986-1990). The Observer then presented a summary of the work of the last two meetings of the Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers. The sixth meeting had discussed a multilateral framework to guide bilateral sanitary and phytosanitary arrangements based on risk assessment as a key component; special and differential treatment of developing countries.

25. At the seventh meeting (10-11 May 1990) a complete review was undertaken of all the common concepts used by the group including objectives, disciplines to be applied and their scope; harmonization; risk assessment; equivalency; non-discrimination; pesticide free zones; inspection and control concerns; transparency; special and differential treatment, consultation and dispute settlement.

26. The Observer from EEC expressed full support for the presentation of the representative of GATT and stressed the importance of close collaboration between the WGSPS and the principal sources of scientific and technical advice; namely, Codex Alimentarius Commission, OIE, IPPC on matter of health protection, pesticide residues, food additives. The Committee took note of the submission of the European Community on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (Regulations and Measures (MTN/GNG/NG 5/146) made in December 1989 to the multilateral trade negotiations.

27. In reply to a query by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, the Secretariat gave details on the role and the tasks of a special unit in the Food Quality and Standards Service to coordinate FAO/Codex/GATT cooperation. The Committee took note that although this proposal was welcomed by the 25th FAO Conference, it has not been realized so far due to FAO's financial situation.

28. The Delegation of Sweden stressed that GATT is not a standards setting body but its role in dispute settlement could be very important. The Delegation cautioned that difficulties might arise when adopting GATT procedures which include Codex Standards which had not been accepted by the country.

29. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany was of the opinion that GATT procedures should not have a negative effect on the rules for the acceptance of Codex Standards. A Codex Standard becomes binding for a given country only after its formal adoption by this country. This has to be taken into consideration when adopting GATT dispute settlement procedures. Moreover, the Delegation of the United Kingdom pointed out that in accepting Codex Standards or accepting them with variations, member governments should take account of consumer interest.

30. The Committee noted the statements of Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany and expressed support for the work of the Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Barriers and for the further strengthening of Codex/GATT cooperation.

Progress Report on Acceptances of Codex Standards (Agenda Item 4)

31. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 90/3 - Part I containing general considerations on the implementation of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food. The Committee was informed that the Commission had stressed the need for all countries to set up the required infrastructure for the control of the Code and had asked the Secretariat to continue to monitor implementation of the Code and to report on further progress to its next session.

32. The Committee was also informed that the Commission at its 18th Session had stressed that the countries should continue to give favourable consideration to notifying the Secretariat that products in conformity with Codex Standards would be permitted free entry into and distribution within their territorial jurisdictions.

33. The Committee noted the information of the representative of the EEC that a proposal for a Council Regulation on the acceptance by the European Community of Codex standards for foodstuffs and on maximum limits for pesticide residues or maximum limits for residues of veterinary drugs in food drawn up under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme had been elaborated in draft form in order to facilitate the procedure of acceptance of Codex Standards through notification directly from the Commission to the Codex Secretariat.

34. The representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) informed the Committee that approximately 27 countries had regulations specific to food irradiation and that 37 countries permitted the trade of one or more irradiated foods in their countries. An examination of the Codex acceptances of Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods did not reflect the existing use of food irradiation in several countries. The representative of IAEA suggested that the Codex and IAEA Secretariats should report to the Committee at its next session the results of the analysis of these discrepancies.

35. The Delegation of Switzerland informed the Committee that Switzerland had accepted about one hundred Codex Standards with small limited deviations and invited the other delegations to do the same thing in order to improve the acceptance of Codex Standards and to support the main objectives of Codex Alimentarius in international trade.

Report on Standardization Work of the Economic Groups and International Organizations (Agenda Item 5)

36. The Committee received an oral report from the representative of the AFNOR.

Statement by the Representative of AFNOR

37. The representative of AFNOR introduced a document which had been distributed at the meeting and gave the Committee some information on the activities of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) on Fruit Juices. Following the 1985 decision of the EEC to abandon the elaboration of individual product directives ("vertical" directives), the CEN suggested that there was a need to establish methods of analysis for fruit juices. On the basis of this and the standards already established by AFNOR, France proposed the creation of a CEN technical committee in charge of specifications and methods of analysis. The technical committee held several meetings and developed methods of analysis within the auspices of the EEC directive 75/726.

38. As a result of discussions between the Commission of the EEC and the Technical Board of CEN another technical committee was created with the task of starting the preparatory work on Guides for Good Practice in Biosafety. This Committee had already met in Paris in February 1990 and France had undertaken the Secretariatship.

39. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, supported by the Delegations of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, expressed its concern that the scope of the CEN technical committee is too large. The Delegations stressed that while development of methods for fruit juices is a normal activity, health and food safety matters should not be left to the technical committee.

40. The Delegation of Sweden informed the Committee that during a meeting of the CEN technical committee in February 1990 some members expressed their caution against embarking on health issues. The Delegation also informed the Committee that the European Food Law Association (EFLA) would organize a Joint EFLA/EEC Conference on novel foods to be held in Luxembourg on 11-12 October 1990.

41. The Committee agreed to request CEN to prepare a detailed report on their activities and work programme to be considered at the next session of the Committee.

Statement of the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML); International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

42. The Codex Secretariat received written reports from these international organizations concerning outlines of their activities and the coordination existing with Codex in order to avoid duplication of work.

Report on Activities of FAO and WHO Complementary to the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Agenda Item 6)

43. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 90/4 - Conference Room Document 1.

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

44. The Committee was informed on the work of JECFA at its 34th, 35th and 36th meetings and on future works of the 37th JECFA meeting, which will include evaluations and re-evaluations of 31 food additives and contaminants and of the 38th meeting in 1991, which will be entirely devoted to the evaluation of residues of veterinary drugs.

45. Several Delegations expressed concern over the future work of JECFA on the evaluation of food additives and recommended that FAO and WHO should have more meetings on food additives and contaminants, and thus give equal attention to the assessment of both food additives and residues of veterinary drugs.

Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)

46. The Committee noted that the JMPR at its session in September 1989 had allocated acceptable daily intakes (ADIs) for 16 compounds and had set maximum residue limits in food for 30 different pesticides.

Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme

47. The Committee was informed on the activities and the future development of the Programme and noted that efforts are being made to coordinate a special GEMS/Food Contamination Monitoring Programme for Europe.

Proposed Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade

48. The Committee received Conference Room Document 10 which contained a background, the status of organization of the Joint FAO/WHO Conference, its main objectives and expected outputs aimed at providing direction to the Codex Programme and work with GATT.

49. In response to an enquiry by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, the Secretariat reported that the preparation of papers would involve invited speakers as well as FAO and WHO. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, supported by several other delegations, suggested that the Conference and the papers would need careful preparation and it would be necessary to set clear objectives for its conclusions if it were to be successful.

50. The representative of IOCU welcomed the upcoming Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade particularly in view of the several references to consumers' concerns in the document. The planned session on consumers was of special interest for the observer who offered the assistance of his organization in providing speakers. The representative suggested that the following two aspects should be covered: (a) consumer education and information - how to communicate and explain issues to consumers; (b) consumer attitudes - how these can be measured and what current attitudes are.

51. The Delegation of Sweden pointed out that smaller meetings like working groups and consultations often provide more and better results than large conferences. The Delegation suggested that FAO and WHO funds should be better oriented to small meetings and to expert committees like JECFA and JMPR. The Delegation was of the opinion that the Conference on Food Standards in March 1991 should concentrate on risk evaluation and questions raised by the proposals for General Provisions for the Use of Food Additives in Standardized and Non-Standardized Foods (ALINORM 89/12A, Appendix III).

52. The representative of IOCU, referring to the Joint International Conference on the "Acceptance, Control of and Trade in Irradiated Food" (Geneva, December 1988), objected to the statement "the Conference adopted by consensus an international document on food irradiation", in the working document CX/EURO 90/4, Part A-9. The representative pointed out that out of 57 participating countries 11 made dissenting comments and many observers at the Conference were critical of the presentations at the Conference.

Report on FAO Activities

53. FAO continues to assist member countries in developing and strengthening national food control systems, specially promoting training in that field. One assistance project is currently being operated in Malta, to strengthen national food control.

54. Another activity of FAO regards street foods. An Expert consultation on street foods was held in December 1988 in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, where the global street food situation was assessed. The report of this consultation is available from FAO Publications Department (FAO Food and Nutrition Paper No. 46, 1989). The Codex Committee on Food Hygiene has considered a draft of a Code of Hygienic Practice for the preparation and sale of street foods (ALINORM 91/13, paras 35-40).

55. FAO is also largely involved in activities related to mycotoxin control, especially training. A Joint FAO/UNEP/UNEP/COM (USSR) project designed to establish an Asian Training Network for controlling mycotoxins in foods should become operational in 1990.

56. In the field of determination of radionuclides in food, FAO is planning on holding in 1990 two regional training programmes in Ghana and Mexico for food control officials

from developing countries. FAO carries out a study on "Identification of Food Contaminants Affecting International Trade" at a global level under funding by the Government of Finland.

#### WHO Global and Interregional Activities

57. The representative of WHO informed the Committee about its activities in the framework of the information and education of food managers at various levels. Several of the publications covering education in food safety which are issued to this end were presented to the Committee. Other materials were also circulated during the meeting concerning food irradiation, safe use of waste water, prediction of dietary intake of pesticide residues.

58. The Committee was also informed about the following consultations; consultation on Salmonellosis Control in Agriculture, New Slaughter Technologies to Reduce Cross Contamination, Public Health Aspects of Seafoodborne Zoonotic Diseases, Food Safety Aspects Relating to Application of X-ray Surveillance Equipment and Epidemiological Emergency in Poultry and Egg Salmonellosis.

59. Other matters which were reported to the Committee were the plans of WHO to establish a global data bank on morbidity and mortality of foodborne diseases, the activities of the International Programme on Chemical Safety, the plans of WHO in relation to Iodine Deficiency Disorders, ongoing projects concerning integration of food safety into the Primary Health Care system and the publication of a review entitled "Infant Feeding: The Physiological Basis".

#### WHO Regional Activities

##### Tourism and food safety

60. The International Conference on Tourist Health in Rimini (March 1989) confirmed that diarrhoeal diseases still constitute the most important and frequent form of illness in tourists.

##### Foodborne diseases in Europe

61. The Regional Office organized in Berlin (West) in October 1989, a consultation of national focal points participating in the European Foodborne Diseases Surveillance Programme. The consultation concluded that all recent indicators suggest that foodborne diseases have increased during the last few years to epidemic proportions, primarily due to infections with Salmonella and Campylobacter strains. A wide range of specific recommendations were made, aimed primarily at the further improvement of the control of foodborne infections. The Secretariat informed Committee that a follow-up meeting would be organized in Berlin (West), 26-30 November 1990.

##### Intergovernmental meeting of chief food safety officers

62. The Regional Office organized in Brussels (November 1989) an intergovernmental meeting inviting the chief food safety officers to advise on main strategies and activities in the approaching decade. It was concluded that the strategy for the 1990s should focus on (a) strengthening of international collaboration in the regional programmes on reporting, monitoring and surveillance of food contamination and foodborne diseases, (b) harmonization in education and training of food safety personnel, and (c) implementation of national policies with intersectorial approach to food safety.

European food contamination monitoring programme

63. The European food contamination monitoring programme is being established on the basis of GEMS/Food Programme, and is planned to include all member states in the region.

European food safety conference

64. The European Food Safety Conference which is planned to be organized by the Regional Office in 1993 could play a very important role in the promotion of intersectorial food safety policies.

65. The proposed European Food Safety Conference was considered by the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany to be a critical milestone in development of comprehensive food safety strategy in Europe for the 1990s, promoting intersectorial and international collaboration among the member states. It was emphasized that because of the importance of the Conference, special attention should be given to the preparatory work.

UNDP Food Safety Project

66. Following the First UNDP Steering Committee meeting on food safety in Novi Sad (October 1988) a four-year intercountry project "Effective system applications for food safety" was signed during 1989 by most European countries entitled to receive help from the United Nations Development Programme.

67. The Second UNDP Steering Committee Meeting on Food Safety was held in Budapest (March 1990) and recommended that the project should continue based on the general strategy and prepared plan of work.

68. The Delegation of Sweden welcomed the important information included in the paper on the activities of FAO/WHO, but suggested that the Codex Secretariat consider means of disseminating the upcoming events and meetings well in advance.

69. The Delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom supported the view of Sweden and proposed that thorough information be distributed by the Secretariat to the Codex Contact Points prior to all events. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany noted that annual overviews of important events would be very useful for the Committee. The Delegation of the Netherlands stressed that the objectives and the target groups of the meetings should be clearly indicated.

70. The Delegation of Austria drew attention to the FAO publication "Schedule of proposed FAO conference sessions and training activities". The Delegation also mentioned a Bulletin "FAO Aktuell", published by the Federal Republic of Germany giving details of upcoming meetings. The Delegation strongly stressed the importance of the effective use and circulation of all available FAO and other publications.

71. The Delegation of France emphasized its support for the Joint FAO/WHO activities and expressed its readiness to contribute to the preparation of the Conference on Food Standards.

72. The Committee expressed appreciation for the reported activities of FAO and WHO and strongly supported their further strengthening, extension, and coordination.

Matters related to the Codex Regional European Standard for Natural Mineral Waters  
Maximum Levels for Radionuclides in Natural Mineral Waters (Agenda Item 7 (a))

73. In introducing the document for this item CX/EURO 90/5 the Secretariat drew attention to the prolonged inconclusive discussions of this topic within the Committee and made a strong plea for an effort at finalizing the standard. The Secretariat and the Chairman outlined the three options before the Committee to either delete the provision for radionuclides from the Standard, accept the existing limits as formulated in the proposed amendment, or to agree on new values for the limits.

74. Several Delegations reiterated their position expressed at the last meeting. The Delegation of France maintained that the limit of beta activity of 0.05 Bq/l is impossible to observe and that alpha activity should be based on the annual intake limit.

75. The Delegation of the United Kingdom reconfirmed its view that the WHO guidelines for drinking water should be applied to natural mineral waters. The Delegation agreed that limit values should be deleted from the Standard provided reference is made to the WHO Guidelines.

76. The Delegation of Switzerland drew attention to the difference between natural levels of radionuclides and water contaminated with radionuclides which should be treated like contaminated food. The Delegation reserved the position of his country concerning deletion of the radiation provision as long as the results of an internal study are not known.

77. The Delegation of France proposed to maintain fixed limits and refer the matter to the International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP).

78. The representative of WHO informed the Committee about an ongoing WHO project on a comprehensive revision of the WHO Drinking Water Guidelines, including the limits for radiation that will cover natural and man-made radioactivity.

79. The Committee agreed to delete the numerical provisions for the radiation in the standard and to request the Secretariat to initiate the corresponding amendment procedures.

Government Comments on the Progress Report on Methods of Analysis (Agenda Item 7(b))

80. The Committee had before it documents CL 1990/2 EURO and CX/EURO 90/6 - CRD 3. The Committee was reminded that the Codex Alimentarius Commission had agreed at its 18th Session that a final text of microbiological and chemical methods of analysis revised by the International Group on Standards for Mineral Water (GISEM) should be circulated for comments prior to the 17th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe. At an expert consultation GISEM reviewed the methods of analysis published in Codex document ALINORM 87/19, Annex VI.

81. Comments and information were received from Hungary, Italy, Thailand and Switzerland. In presenting the document (CX/EURO 90/6 - CRD 3), the Secretariat pointed out that the Committee might decide to submit the revised text of methods of analysis for mineral water to the 19th Session of the Commission at Step 5 with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7 for its adoption at step 8, in consideration of the long work of selection and validation of the methods, undertaken by GISEM and the Coordinating Committee for Europe.

82. The Delegation of France informed the Committee that the microbiological methods for mineral water were ISO methods, validated in collaborative studies and proposed that they be submitted to the Commission for adoption at Step 8, considering that no amendments were proposed in the comments received.

83. The Delegation of the United Kingdom did not object to the proposals on bacteriological methods being moved to Step 5 with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted, but the Delegation had a reservation that certain amendments that it had suggested in technical discussions and which it understood had been accepted, should be included in the final draft which was presented to the Commission. So far as the advancement of the proposals on chemical methods was concerned, the Delegation of the United Kingdom pointed out that there was little point in suggesting the omission of Steps 6 and 7 unless there was a reasonable expectation that the methods would be endorsed by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

84. The Delegation of Switzerland supported the position of the United Kingdom and expressed the opinion that another expert consultation could be made by GISEM.

85. The Delegations of France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Belgium expressed concern for the long discussions sustained for many years on this issue and proposed to move the matter up.

86. The Codex Secretariat proposed that the chemical methods of analysis should be submitted to the Commission at Step 5 with the recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted. The Commission, on the basis of the opinion of the Codex Committee on Methods of analysis and Sampling might decide on the adoption at Step 8.

87. The Committee agreed that the amended list of methods of analysis for mineral waters, as referred to in Circular Letter CL 1990/2-EURO, should be appended to the report as Appendix II and referred to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted for microbiological methods. The proposed accelerated procedure for the chemical methods of analysis is subject to the view point of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

#### Proposed Amendments for Limits for Certain Substances in Natural Mineral Waters

88. The Committee considered Annex II of the document CL 1990/2-EURO which contained a proposed amendment for limits for Arsenic, Barium, Fluoride, Nitrates and contaminants in natural mineral waters elaborated by GISEM.

89. The Committee noted the position of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany and Hungary against the proposal of GISEM and decided to maintain the limits of Arsenic and Barium as defined in the Codex Standards for Mineral Waters.

90. GISEM had proposed an amendment for the limit of fluoride and had suggested that mineral waters which exceeded the maximum concentration set by the Codex Standards (2 mg/l) should include a warning on the label.

91. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany supported by Finland, on the basis of national legislation, recommended that levels of fluoride higher than 1.5 mg/l should be indicated on the label. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that techniques for defluorization were available and used to reduce high levels of fluoride in drinking waters.

92. The Delegation of Belgium underlined that the Codex Standards contained a maximum limit for fluoride and mineral water exceeding this limit must not be marketed. In addition, treatments of mineral water in several European countries were not authorized.

93. The Committee agreed to maintain the Codex Limits of fluoride and, taking into account that treatment of mineral waters for defluorization was permitted in many countries,

decided to propose to the Commission to consider initiating an amendment of Section 3.1 of the Standard at Step 3 of the Codex Procedure.

94. GISEM had proposed an amendment for nitrates and had recommended that the maximum Codex limit of 45 mg/l should be lowered to 10 mg/l for mineral waters intended for consumption by infants and young children.

95. The Delegation of Belgium supported by the Delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria noted that the composition of mineral water intended for consumption by infants and young children was not only characterized by the limit of nitrates but by several other components including sodium and sulphates.

96. The Committee decided to maintain the Codex Limits for nitrate and recommended that the Codex Secretariat should collect more information on mineral waters for infants and children by a circular letter.

97. The GISEM had proposed to change the Codex Limit for nitrite from 0.005 mg/l to 0.03 mg/l. The Delegation of Italy stated that a relationship existed between nitrate and nitrite and that for a set limit of 45 mg/l for nitrate a value of 3.3 mg/l for nitrite should be considered.

98. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that there was not any interaction between nitrate and nitrite and that the Codex Limit of 0.005 mg/l for nitrite was too low and should be changed to 0.02 mg/l.

99. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Federal Republic of Germany and decided to refer it to the Commission at Step 3 of the Codex Procedure.

100. The Committee considered the proposal of GISEM that organic contaminants should not be detected in mineral waters by using reference standard methods adopted for drinking water.

101. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany underlined that the list of organic compounds was too long to establish limits for each product and that the definition of no detectable limit should be avoided. The Delegation proposed that the lower limit for these compounds as defined by EEC, should be considered.

102. The Delegation of the Netherlands supported by the representative of the EEC informed that several limits for pesticides and PCBs were set for drinking water in the directives of EEC and that a harmonization with these limits should be carried out.

103. The Committee agreed that limits for organic contaminants should be set in the near future, on the basis of existing national and international regulations. A background paper should be prepared on this issue to be discussed at the next session of the Coordinating Committee.

#### Implications of Biotechnology on International Food Standards and Codes of Practice (Agenda Item 8)

104. For the discussion of the item the Committee had before it document CL 1989/48-GEN which contained a document on the implications of Biotechnology on Food Standards prepared for the Secretariat by external consultants.

105. The Secretariat introduced the document and highlighted its broad conclusion with which the Commission agreed: viz., that the safety evaluation of biotechnologically prepared

food should concentrate on the finished product; that the safety assessment of foods produced or modified through the use of transgenic technique should focus on inserted traits; that the applications of new biotechnology could be evaluated under the existing Codex system. The Commission had also indicated that further study of this paper and its implications was needed.

106. The Observer from EEC informed the Committee about two recent EEC Directives on the Contained Use of Genetically Modified Microorganisms (90/219/EEC) and on the Deliberate Release to the Environment of Genetically Modified Organisms (90/220/EEC). The Observer also pointed out that the Council had received a draft proposal for trade in novel foods based on prior permission involving the evaluation of toxicity and nutritional value.

107. The representative of IOCU drew attention to the need for preparing requirements for food labelling at an early stage to avoid misleading the consumer and creating a situation similar to food irradiation.

108. The Delegation of Norway stated that while the evaluation of food additives produced by genetically modified organisms may follow the procedures for traditional food additives, these procedures should not be applied to the assessment of novel foods. The Delegation suggested that JECFA should pay more attention to the development of concepts and approaches for the evaluation of biotechnologically produced foods. The Delegation proposed that the Commission considered giving priority to the definition of novel foods and novel processes and their evaluation.

109. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany introduced the comments of its Government on CL 1989/48-GEN and concluded that more items had to be included in the Codex document on biotechnology and that clearer and more operational statements should be formulated in the evaluation of the quality and safety of foods derived from genetically modified organisms.

110. The Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that while EEC was elaborating rules and controls for the marketing of novel and biotechnology foods, the Codex Alimentarius Commission should develop a positive attitude to meet the demands for guidance from the international community. The Delegation suggested that the Commission should consider allocating to a specific body the responsibilities for Codes of Practice on the use of biotechnology in foods which should also cover issues relating to novel foods and processes.

111. The Delegation of France supported the statement of the Delegation of the United Kingdom and expressed satisfaction with the document. The Delegation informed the Committee about a report of the Conseil Supérieur d'Hygiène Publique de France concerning aromatic substances produced through biotechnology.

112. The Committee noted that a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Assessment of Biotechnology in Food Production and Processing as related to Food Safety is being convened in Geneva 5-9 November, 1990. The Consultation will review current and projected products and applications of biotechnology in foods and food additives, will review the technology and identify applications with potential hazard and will assess the relevance of current safety evaluation strategies and procedures.

113. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the proposed basic Codex document on the implications of biotechnology for food standards and agreed to recommend to the Commission to pursue its role in the field of biotechnology. The Committee requested the Secretariat to keep it informed of future meetings on the safety assessment, guidelines and other developments concerning biotechnologically produced foods.

Survey on Cooperation and Implementation of Food Legislation (Agenda Item 9)

114. The Committee had before it Documents CX/EURO 90/8 and CX/EURO 90/8 - Add. 1 - CRD 7 (comments received from the Federal Republic of Germany). In introducing the paper the Secretariat explained that the issue of cooperation and coordination of activities concerning food control in Europe had assumed a specific role in the light of the completion of the EEC market in 1992 and the recent events in the Eastern European countries, with an expected intensification of cooperation. The Secretariat emphasized the importance and the role of the Codex Contact Points at regional level to improve a major involvement of governments in Codex work, food control, promotion of food safety and exchange of information between European countries.

115. The Delegation of Sweden informed the Committee that the Codex Contact Points of Nordic countries had established close contacts in order to transfer information and develop a major harmonization in inspection services and recognition of laboratories and analytical results.

116. The Delegation of the United Kingdom supported by the Delegation of the Netherlands appealed for more concrete indications from the Commission on what should be done in view of the different status and functions of the Codex Contact Points in the European member countries, all of which were in one of the three different economic groupings in Europe.

117. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany supported by France, Belgium and Switzerland proposed that a new approach and methodology of work should be implemented by the Codex Contact Points of the European countries in order to develop future work and improve the system of communication through strengthening their capacity as centres of information. As a first step the Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed to include telephone and fax numbers in the list of participants at this session.

118. The Committee agreed that the Codex Contact Points should be more actively involved in coordination and implementation of food legislation at regional level. The Committee agreed to request the Secretariat to improve communication in the network and to prepare draft guidelines for consideration at the next session.

Methods of Control for Radionuclide Contamination of Foods in International Trade (Agenda Item 10)

119. Two documents were circulated for this item: CX/EURO 90/9 prepared by the Secretariat and CX/EURO 90/9 - Add. 1 containing the position of the Delegation of Norway. In introducing the first document, the Secretariat traced the main lines and the concepts of the development of limits for radionuclides in food within FAO and WHO, focusing on the discussions concerning the adoption of the guideline levels during the 18th Session of the Commission (ALINORM 89/40, paras. 90-102).

120. The Delegation of Norway introduced the second document. While supporting the establishment of Codex guideline levels for radionuclides in food, the Norwegian Food Control Authority voiced serious objections to the guidelines remaining applicable only one year following a nuclear accident. The Delegation pointed out that the guideline levels were safe enough and could be applied permanently. The introduction of the concept of a limit enacted for one year following an accident represented an unacceptable deviation from the principles for the evaluation of food additives, contaminants and pesticide residues. The Delegation proposed that this problem be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee.

121. The Observer from EEC, in giving an outline of the radionuclide limits within the Community, pointed out that they were very close to the Codex guidelines, but had been established on a permanent basis. The Delegation informed the Committee about the large amount of radionuclide data received from a monitoring network in countries within and outside the Community.

122. The Delegation of Austria showed understanding for the proposal of Norway and agreed that for some long lasting contaminations permanent limits should be established. In case of future accidents which could lead to contamination of foods, the emergency limits should remain in effect for far less than one year. After a short transitional period, limits should be established that are as low as possible and in accordance with the actual level of contamination. These limits could remain in effect for more than one year.

123. The Delegation of Sweden reported about a considerable post-Chernobyl monitoring which had shown that contamination disappeared very slowly but that the levels found presented no health risk.

124. The Delegation of Hungary stated that while the Codex guidelines were acceptable, there should be also limits for a longer period under normal conditions.

125. The Delegation of Switzerland expressed reservations concerning the establishment of permanent limits and pointed out that currently the situation with the radionuclide contamination in his country is well under control.

126. The Delegation of the Netherlands suggested that a circular letter requesting comments on the proposed change also be sent to countries outside the European region because of the worldwide concern with radionuclide contamination.

127. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, supported by other delegations, expressed concern about the possibility of a circular letter reopening discussions on issues which had taken great effort to settle. The Codex guideline levels as accepted at the 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission are open to review when necessary. Radionuclide monitoring results from United Kingdom give no cause for concern on food safety problems.

128. The Committee agreed with the proposal of the Secretariat to await the results of the discussion on the status of Codex guidelines at the upcoming 37th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius.

#### Biologically/Organically Produced Foods in European Countries (Agenda Item 11)

129. The Chairman reported that the discussion of this topic was initiated at the 16th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe and that the Commission at its 18th Session had considered it of great importance for other countries and regions of the world. (ALINORM 89/40 para 244).

130. The Committee was informed that the issue was also discussed at the First Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific and that this Committee had agreed on the importance of establishing guidelines for biologically/organically produced foods under the guidance of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling. This Committee had also decided that the formation of a Working Group was premature, although it was recognized that important inputs were necessary from other Codex Committees (ALINORM 91/32, paras. 71-73).

131. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 90/10 - CRD 4 introduced by the Delegation of Austria. The document referred to background information on biologically/

organically/produced foods and Austrian regulations on this issue. Comments and information in reply to the Circular Letter (CL 1990/1-EURO) were received from Finland, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, France, New Zealand, Japan and from the Association of Microbial Food Enzyme Producers (AMFEP).

132. In all these contributions there appears to be a line of common principles such as avoidance of synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers and minimizing of contamination of soil and agricultural products. Another important principle is the idea of a closed system of agricultural production.

133. Differences exist among various countries concerning the minimum transition period to achieve "organic" status, and the proper labelling. There is agreement that the terms "biological", "organic" or other refer to the production method and not to the nature of the product. The use of these terms however varies considerably from country to country.

134. Considering the fact that in a number of European countries a large percentage of the "biologically/organically produced foods" offered on the market are imported, a further important point would be an effective inspection and certification system.

135. The written comments supported the involvement of Codex as a forum which could advance and simplify trade through harmonization of regulations. Most of the comments informed of the lack of legislation at national level and several European countries made reference to the EEC proposal on the production and labelling of organic foodstuffs which is currently under consideration. Several countries indicated that there was a growing demand for biologically/organically produced foods and there was a need for standardization at international level to prevent non-tariff trade barriers and to give assurances to the consumer on products labelled as "biologically/organically produced foods".

136. The representative of the EEC informed the Committee that the issue needed urgent regulation in the EEC and that a draft regulation had been put before the Council. Considering its impact on international trade, the subject of organic foods should not be regarded as matter of interest limited to Europe. The representative of the EEC stated that the Committee should present this issue to the Commission at its next session.

137. The Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that the question was of international interest and that the organically/biologically produced foods basically needed to be defined in terms of production technology. There was no way to identify differences either by appearance or by analytical methods. There are apparently no significant differences in terms of safety and nutrition. The label is the only way for the identification of the product by the consumer. Although labelling terminology was important, it was secondary to the need to agree a definition of the production techniques for organically produced foods.

138. The Delegation of Sweden referred to the problems of terminology concerning biologically/organically produced foods. The Delegation suggested that the Executive Committee and the Commission should look at this problem and that a consultant should prepare a background paper for the agenda of the next Commission meeting.

139. The Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany supported by Finland underlined that labelling is a key factor for biologically/organically produced foods. The Delegation pointed out that an effective control at farm level could be carried out effectively by autonomous organizations under supervision by the Government.

140. The Delegation of Finland recommended the elaboration of a Codex Code of Practice and the Delegation of Belgium noted that specific attention should be devoted to a general regulation for agricultural production and to a system of notification and inspection.

141. The representative of IOCU welcomed the discussion on organic food which could be easily misused by consumers. The observer supported the statement of the Delegation of the United Kingdom for a very strict labelling policy and also suggested that in the case of organic foods a labelling symbol might be appropriate. The observer stressed the need for government control and expressed doubt that voluntary autocontrol organizations would work.

142. The Delegation of Switzerland informed the Committee that this issue had been discussed in Switzerland without reaching any final decision. Another difficulty concerning biologically/organically produced foods is their labelling when they are used as ingredients in mixed foods.

143. The Delegation of the Netherlands proposed that Codex should include biologically/organically produced foods in its activities for the elaboration of a Code of Practice, the definition of labelling and enforcement provisions.

144. The Committee reached a consensus on several key aspects concerning biologically/organically produced foods and agreed on a number of corresponding recommendations.

- (a) The "organic foods" are basically defined in terms of production technology and the Committee suggested that the appropriate agricultural production units in FAO be advised to give adequate attention to this type of production.
- (b) Labelling is a central element in dealing with "organic foods" and the Committee strongly recommended that this issue be given particular attention in any regulatory provisions.
- (c) The relevant control should be applied at production site and two possible approaches should be considered: (a) control by official government authorities, (b) control through voluntary producers organizations which are under government supervision.
- (d) The high consumer interest in these foods and their increasing production and potential for international trade require that this issue is taken up by Codex and be given high priority.
- (e) The Committee decided to have an extensive background document on organic foods for discussion at its next session.
- (f) The Committee agreed to request the Secretariat to present these discussions at the next 37th Session of the Executive Committee with a view of inclusion of the item of biologically/organically produced foods in the agenda of the 19th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Committee is ready to assist in preparing a background document for the Commission, considering the experience and leading role of the European region in this area.

Progress Report on the Food Safety Activities in the Region of Europe (Agenda Item 12)

145. No paper was prepared for this item and the representative of WHO reported on this topic. The Committee was informed that only a few countries had replied to the circular letter CL 1990/8-EURO and due to the lack of sufficient information a substantial report could not be prepared. The WHO representative suggested that those countries which were

in the process of replying should continue to send in their replies. The collected information would be studied and a report on this activity would be prepared and sent to the delegates attending this meeting. The Committee was also invited to give some suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the monitoring programme. Many Delegations informed the Committee that they are in the process of replying. Some of the delegates suggested that due to the complexity of interpretation of morbidity data of foodborne diseases, it would be more appropriate to base the analysis on more comprehensive programmes such as the WHO European Foodborne Disease Surveillance Programme. Some of the Delegations also expressed difficulties in obtaining information necessary for the questions on economic loss and programme resources. However, it was concluded that some of the data could be provided through Codex Contact Points, and delegations were encouraged to respond to the Circular Letter.

Survey of the Use of Irradiation Processes in Food in Countries of the Codex Region of Europe (Agenda Item 13)

146. The Committee had before it paper CX/EURO 90/12. The IAEA representative presented a general report on the work of IAEA, FAO and WHO in the field of food irradiation.

147. An International Conference on the Acceptance, Control of and Trade in Irradiated Food was held in Geneva, Switzerland in December 1988, under the aegis of FAO/IAEA/WHO/ITC-UNCTAD/GATT.

148. The Committee was informed that ICGFI was elaborating Guidelines for controlling "Good Irradiation Practices", was developing a system of certifying irradiated foods, was in the process of establishing a Register of Licensed Irradiation Facilities and had formalized training of personnel of food irradiation facilities.

149. The Committee was informed that an IAEA Coordinated Research Programme in the field of Analytical Detection Methods for Irradiated Foods had been in operation. It was also noted that the Joint FAO/IAEA Division had carried out a survey of national regulations on food irradiation.

150. Finally the Committee noted a low number of formal acceptances of the Codex General Standard on irradiated foods by countries.

151. The representative of IOCU expressed doubts whether IAEA, not a disinterested party was in fact working in the interest of consumers. He noted the epidemics of foodborne diseases and agreed that action needed to be taken to eliminate the problem. He also pointed to the WHO view expressed in the pamphlet "In Point of Fact" that food irradiation could be used to treat poultry until a Salmonella-free product could be achieved.

152. The IOCU representative welcomed mandatory labelling recommended by Codex and expressed the view that ultimately it would be the consumer who would decide whether to buy irradiated food or not.

153. The representative of IAEA pointed to the fact that work on irradiation was a combined effort among FAO, WHO and IAEA and rejected the statement made by the representative of IOCU about IAEA's lack of impartiality regarding the interests of consumers. He also pointed to other applications of food irradiation (e.g. preservation of onions or potatoes) where matters of hygiene did not arise. Should an acceptable method of production/processing of poultry be worked out leading to a Salmonella-free product, the use of terminal decontamination, including irradiation, would no longer be justified. However, present information and scientific opinion justified treatment of poultry to improve its hygienic quality.

154. The Committee thanked the representative of IAEA for the information provided and invited the Joint FAO/IAEA Division to continue to report to the Committee on development in the field of food irradiation.

Nomination of Coordinator (Agenda Item 14)

155. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 90/13 entitled "Nomination of Coordinator". The document set forth Rule II.4 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which governed the appointment of a Coordinator.

156. The Committee noted that the present Coordinator for Europe, Prof. Woidich was serving his second term and that he would not be eligible under Rule II.4(b) to hold the office of Coordinator for Europe for the next succeeding term.

157. The Committee agreed that Mrs. Barbro Blomberg of Sweden should be proposed for nomination as Coordinator for the next term.

158. The Delegation of Sweden stated that the Swedish Government was prepared to host the next session of the Committee.

159. The Committee expressed its warm appreciation to Prof. Woidich and Mrs. Blomberg and to the respective Governments.

Other Business (Agenda Item 15)

160. None.

Future Work (Agenda Item 16)

161. Taking into consideration the terms of reference for the Regional Committees and having heard the comments and proposals from several delegations, the Committee decided to include in its future work the following topics:

- (a) Implementation and enforcement procedures - ways of using standards and other documents.
- (b) Improving coordination between member states with regard to the Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme.
- (c) Training is going to be one permanent item on the agenda in order to reply to the demand for harmonization of inspection, laboratory and other services after 1992.
- (d) Improving contacts with consumer organizations.
- (e) Further improvement of rapid information within the Codex system.
- (f) Biologically/Organically produced foods.
- (g) Implications of biotechnology and novel foods.
- (h) Coordination of food standards, harmonization of legislation is going to be essential in overcoming of non-tariff trade barriers.

Date and Place of Next Session (Agenda Item 17)

162. The Committee was informed that following the Commission's decision on the appointment of the Coordinator, the 18th Session of the Committee would be held in Stockholm end May or beginning of June 1992.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Recommendation	Step	For Action by:	Document Reference (ALINORM 91/19)
Terms of Reference for Regional Coordinating Committees (Regional Standards)	--	Secretariat CCEXEC	paras. 10-14
Sampling plans for mayonnaise	--	Secretariat CCMAS/CC EUROPE	paras. 15-16
Maximum Levels for Radionuclides in Natural Mineral Waters	5	Secretariat CAC Governments	paras. 73-79
Microbiological Methods of Analysis for Natural Mineral Waters	5/8	Secretariat Governments CAC	para. 87 Appendix II, Part A
Chemical Methods of Analysis for Natural Mineral Waters.	5/8	Secretariat Governments CCMAS/CAC	para. 87 Appendix II, Part B
Amendment of Section 3.1 of the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (defluorization)	3	Secretariat Governments CAC	para. 93 Appendix III, Part A
Amendment of Section 4 referring to Contaminants (nitrites)	3	Secretariat Governments CAC	paras. 98-99 Appendix III, Part B
Composition of mineral waters intended for consumption by infants and young children	--	Secretariat Governments CC EUROPE	para. 95
Limits for organic contaminants in natural waters	--	Secretariat Governments CC EUROPE	para. 103
Implications of Bio-technology in international food standards		CAC Secretariat	paras. 104-113
Survey on Cooperation and Implementation of Food Legislation	--	Secretariat	paras. 114-118
Radionuclide Contamination of Foods in International Trade	--	CCEXEC	para. 128

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Step	For Action by:	Document Reference ALINORM 91/19
Biologically/organically produced foods	--	Secretariat CCEXEC	paras. 129-144
Progress Report on Food Safety Activities	--	WHO	para. 145
Survey on the Use of the Irradiation Process in Food	--	Secretariat IAEA	para. 154

ALINORM 91/19  
APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS  
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METHODS OF ANALYSIS FOR CONTROL OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE  
CODEX STANDARD FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS  
(CODEX STAN 108-1981)

A. METHODS OF BACTERIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

(At Steps 5/8 of the Procedure with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted - ALINORM 91/19, para. 87):

- i) Detection and enumeration of Pseudomonas aeruginosa, ISO 8360-2: 1988;
- ii) Detection and enumeration of coliform organisms and presumptive Escherichia coli, ISO/DIS 9308-1;
- iii) Detection and enumeration of faecal streptococci, ISO 7899-2: 1984;
- iv) Detection and enumeration of the spores of sulfite-reducing anaerobes (clostridia), ISO 6461-2: 1986.

B. METHODS OF CHEMICAL ANALYSIS FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

(At Steps 5/8 of the Procedure with a recommendation that Steps 6 and 7 be omitted, pending endorsement of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling - ALINORM 91/19, para. 87):

1. PARAMETERS REQUIRING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEFINING METHODS

1.1 Determination of Total dissolved solids

- 1.1.1 Gravimetric method described in the document CODEX STAN 108-1981, para. 8.2.1.1.
- 1.1.2 Additional test: Determination of total constituents as indicated in CODEX STAN 108-1981, para. 8.2.1.1.

1.2 Determination of total organic matter

- 1.2.1 Permanganate digestion: Method described in the document CODEX STAN 108-1981.
- 1.2.2 Determination of permanganate index: ISO 8467: 1986.
- 1.2.3 Organic carbon in water: AOAC XV 973.47 - infrared analyzer method.

2. PARAMETERS OF WHICH THE CONCENTRATION SHALL NOT EXCEED THE LIMITS SET IN CODEX STAN 180-1981

2.1 Arsenic (0.050 mg/l)

- 2.1.1 Reference method. ISO 6595: 1982 - Silver diethyldithiocarbamate spectrophotometric method.
- 2.1.2 Alternate method. AOAC XV 986.15 - Atomic absorption with formation of hydride.

**2.2 Barium (1 mg/l)**

- 2.2.1 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 65-66. Method: Flame atomic absorption method.
- 2.2.2 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 67-68. Method: Flame atomic absorption after concentration.

**2.3 Borate (boric acid) (30 mg/l calculated as H<sub>3</sub>BO<sub>3</sub>)**

- 2.3.1 Temporary method. Spectrophotometric molecular analysis with 1,1'-dianthrimide. (Handb. Lebensm. Chem., 1969 - Handb. Spurenanal, 1974).
- 2.3.2 Temporary method. Molecular spectrophotometric analysis with carminic acid (ASTM 1973 - Handb. Spurenanal, 1974).

**2.4 Cadmium (0.01 mg/l)**

- 2.4.1 Reference method. ISO 8288: 1986 - Flame atomic absorption spectrometric method.
- 2.4.2 Alternate method. AOAC XV 986.15 - Anodic Stripping Voltammetry; AOAC XV 974.27 - Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry.

**2.5 Chromium VI (0.05 mg/l)**

- 2.5.1 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 86. Spectrophotometry with Diphenyl Carbazide.

**2.6 Copper (2 mg/l)**

- 2.6.1 Temporary method. AOAC XV 960.40 - Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry.

**2.7 Fluoride (2 mg/l)**

- 2.7.1 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 245-247. Ion selective electrode method.
- 2.7.2 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 247-250. Spectrometric molecular analysis of the Alizarin-Lanthanum compound.

**2.8 Mercury (0.001 mg/l)**

- 2.8.1 Reference method. ISO 5666-3: 1984. Determination of total mercury by flameless atomic absorption spectrometry.
- 2.8.2 Alternate method. AOAC XV 977.22 - Flameless atomic absorption, Spectrometric method.

**2.9 Manganese (2 mg/l)**

- 2.9.1 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 121-122. Flame atomic absorption method.
- 2.9.2 Temporary method. ISO 6333: 1986 - Formaldoxime spectrometric method.

**2.10 Nitrates (45 mg/l calculated as NO<sub>3</sub>)**

- 2.10.1 Temporary method. (Handb. Lebensm. Chem., 1969). Molecular spectrophotometry with sodium salicylate.
- 2.10.2 Temporary method. ISO 7890-2: 1986. 4-fluorophenol spectrometric method after distillation.
- 2.10.3 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 280-283. Spectrophotometric method after reduction of Cd-Cu column.

**2.11 Lead (0.05 mg/l)**

- 2.11.1 Reference method. ISO 8288: 1986 - Flame atomic absorption spectrometric method.
- 2.11.2 Alternate method. Codex Contaminants Vol. XVII. AOAC XV 974.27 - Flame atomic absorption spectrometry.

**2.12 Selenium (0.01 mg/l)**

- 2.12.1 Reference method. AOAC XV 986.15 - Atomic absorption with formation of hydride.
- 2.12.2 Temporary method. Examination of water pollution control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 320-322. Molecular spectrometry using 2,3 Di- aminonaphtalene.

**2.13 Sulphide (0.05 mg/l calculated as H<sub>2</sub>S)**

- 2.13.1 Temporary method. (Handb. Lebensm. Chem., 1969 - Handb. Spurenanal, 1974).

**3. PARAMETERS GOVERNING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MINERAL WATERS AND/OR THEIR LABELLING**

**3.1 Hydrogen carbonate**

- 3.1.1 Reference method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 170-175. Titration using pH-meter.
- 3.1.2 Alternative approval method. AOAC XV 920.194 - Titrimetric method for carbonate and bicarbonate in water.

**3.2 Chloride**

- 3.2.1 Reference method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 202-205. CODEX ALINORM 76/23, Appendix IV. Potentiometry with AgNO<sub>3</sub>.
- 3.2.2 Alternate method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982), Vol. 2 205-208. Titration with Hg (NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>.

**3.3 Sulphates**

- 3.3.1 Reference method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 331-333. Gravimetry with BaCl<sub>2</sub>.

**3.4 Sodium**

- 3.4.1 Reference method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 148-151. Flame spectrophotometry.

3.4.2 Alternate method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 151. Atomic absorption spectrophotometry.

3.5 Potassium

3.5.1 Reference method. Examination of Water Pollution Control. WHO Pergamon Press (1982) Vol. 2, 145.

3.6 Calcium

3.6.1 Reference method. ISO 6058: 1984 - EDTA titrimetric method.

3.6.2 Alternate method. ISO 7980: 1986 - Atomic absorption spectrometric method.

3.7 Magnesium

3.7.1 Reference method. ISO 6059: 1984 - EDTA titrimetric method.

3.7.2 Alternate method. ISO 7980: 1986 - Atomic absorption spectrometric method.

3.8 Dissolved iron

3.8.1 Reference method. ISO 6332: 1988 - Spectrometric method using 1,10-phenanthroline.

4. CONTAMINANTS

4.1 Total cyanide (0.01 mg/l calculated as Cn)

4.1.1 Reference method. ISO 6703-1: 1984.

4.2 Nitrites (0.005 mg/l calculated as NO<sub>2</sub>)

4.2.1 Reference method. ISO 6777: 1984 - Molecular absorption spectrometric method.

4.3 Phenols (analytical threshold)

4.3.1 Defining method. ISO 6439: 1984. 4-aminoantipyrine spectrometric methods after distillation.

4.4 Surface active agents (analytical threshold)

4.4.1 Defining method. ISO 7875-1:1984 - Methylene Blue spectrometric method.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CODEX STANDARD FOR NATURAL  
MINERAL WATERS (CODEX STAN 108-1981)

PART A: (Para. 93 of ALINORM 91/19)

3.1 Treatment and Handling

- 3.1.1 Treatments permitted include [defluorization] and separation from unstable constituents by decantation and/or filtration, if necessary accelerated by previous aeration.

PART B: (Paras 98-99 of ALINORM 91/19)

- 4.4 Nitrites Not more than [0.02 mg/l], calculated as NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>.
-