

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda item 3

CAC/43 CRD29

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-third Session

Comments from Members from the CCEURO region¹

Intermediate report of the CCEXEC Sub-Committee on Codex and the Pandemic

–Strategic challenges and opportunities

The Members of CCEURO would like to thank the Chair of the Sub-Committee and the Codex Secretariat for working at pace to produce the intermediate report in time for CAC43. The Region would also like to acknowledge the enormous efforts made by the Codex Secretariat, FAO and WHO to maintain the momentum of Codex work in the difficult and unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Members of CCEURO support the swift transition to a Codex that uses electronic tools to improve its resilience and to ensure the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2020-2025 despite interruptions or postponements of physical meetings. The Region is also keen to ensure that there is due consideration of all of the alternative ways of working when physical meetings are not possible. It is important to better understand the extent to which the current rules and procedures are fit for purpose or require adaptation to advance Codex work in these situations.

The Members of the Region are concerned that it may not be possible to meet physically during the first half of 2021. Therefore, we would welcome a discussion at **CAC43 to agree the possibility of convening subsidiary bodies scheduled to take place in the first half of 2021 with the help of electronic tools.**

For further work, the Members of the Region suggest providing **background information in the report on how the pandemic has impacted specific work in Codex committees.** In particular, an overview of work items that should be finalised or adopted by CAC44, and new work that might be viewed as urgent in light of experiences gained during the pandemic (e.g. remote and virtual audit and verification or the use of e-certificates in CCFICS) would be helpful.

Furthermore, the Members of CCEURO acknowledge the challenges associated with the organisation of virtual meetings and support that the **Codex Secretariat**, in cooperation with FAO and WHO, **informs the Sub-Committee about the changes to working mechanisms needed to implement meetings with the help of electronic tools.** The Region would also welcome information on **how other international organisations** deal with the issue.

Taking into account the experience gained in the on-going work on “Committees working by correspondence”, the scheduling of the 32nd session of CCGP offers a timely opportunity for an open and inclusive discussion on ways to address the procedural challenges raised by meetings organised with the help of electronic tools. CCGP is there to deal with such procedural and general matters as referred to it by CAC. The Members of CCEURO therefore request that the report of the Sub-Committee **be referred to CCGP** ahead of CAC44.

In conclusion, the Members of CCEURO would welcome:

¹ Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan

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- CAC discuss and agree the possibility of convening subsidiary body sessions with the help of electronic tools at its 43rd session;
 - the Sub-Committee, in its further work, address background information on how the pandemic has impacted or will likely impact specific work in Codex committees;
 - the Codex Secretariat, in cooperation with FAO and WHO, inform the Sub-Committee on the proposed changes to working mechanisms needed for the CAC and its subsidiary bodies to hold meetings with the help of electronic tools and provides information on how other international organisations have continued their work during the pandemic; and
 - the final report of the Sub-Committee be referred to CCGP32 to allow for an open and inclusive discussion on the parts of the report that fall within CCGP's remit.