

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Madrid, Spain, 5 - 8 May 1998

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions of the 21st Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe are as follows:

Matters for consideration by the Executive Committee and the Commission:

The Committee:

- agreed to propose the revision of the Regional Standard for Mayonnaise as new work (para.62)
- agreed to initiate the revision of the Regional Standard for Vinegar, as proposed by the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (paras.11, 68)
- agreed to nominate Dr. Felipe Mittelbrunn Garcia (Spain) for appointment as Regional Coordinator by the 23rd Session of the Commission (para.70)

Other matters of interest to the Commission:

The Committee:

- agreed that the Draft Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees prepared by the CCASIA could not be adopted in the Region (para.39)
- agreed to pursue its activities on the exchange of information on food legislation and food control import and export matters (para. 29);
- agreed that coordination efforts should be pursued regarding technical assistance and training in the Region (para. 21);
- agreed that the recommendations of the Commission to improve transparency in the decision-making process should be followed-up in Codex and in the proceedings of expert committees (para. 14);
- agreed to draw the attention of the Committee on Food Labelling and the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses to the importance of questions related to health and nutrition claims and the need to proceed with work in this area (para. 52);
- reviewed the measures taken by governments to improve consumer participation in Codex work and related matters (paras.42-47).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Twenty-first Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe was held in Madrid, from 5 to 8 May 1998 at the kind invitation of the Government of Spain, under the chairmanship of Dr. Felipe Mittelbrunn-Garcia, Coordinator for Europe. The Session was attended by 72 delegates from 21 Member countries, 2 Observer countries and 5 international organizations. The list of participants is attached to this report as Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (Agenda Item 1)

2. Opening remarks on behalf of the Government of Spain were presented by Mr. José Manuel Romay Beccaría, Minister, Ministry of Health and Consumption. Mr. Romay welcomed the delegates and emphasized that Spain attached great importance to this meeting, especially now that Codex Alimentarius has been recognized by the World Trade Organization as a reference in international food trade.

3. Mr. Romay pointed out that transparency and the use of risk evaluation were some of the attributes characterizing the work of this Ministry in the area of food control and safety, with the objective of protecting consumers' health. He expressed the view that the relation between food and health did not end with the prevention of illness but also included the promotion of health, especially as related to the nutritional properties of those classes of food destined to people with special nutritional needs.

4. In conclusion, Mr. Romay said that this session of the CCEURO would lead to the identification and analysis of key issues in the areas of food safety and control, which are matters of great concern for countries in the Region, and wished the participants all success in their work.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 2)

5. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as presented in document CX/EURO 98/1 and the Supplementary List to the Provisional Agenda (CX/EURO 98/1-Add.1) as its Agenda for the Session. The Committee also agreed to discuss the following issues under Agenda Item 9 "Other Business and Future Work":

- Revision of the Code of Ethics
- Matters arising from the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection Systems

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 3)¹

6. The Committee noted the recommendations of the Commission concerning activities related to risk analysis. The Committee was informed that a Workshop convened in the Netherlands to discuss the use of risk analysis for food additives and contaminants had made several recommendations which were discussed by the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. These recommendations would be taken into account to prepare a discussion paper on the application of risk analysis principles in the work of the Committee (ALINORM 99/12, paras. 12-13).

7. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, expressing the views within the European Union, made the following remarks concerning the matters arising from the Commission: there was general support for the application of risk analysis principles; improved procedures were needed to achieve consensus in the decision-making process; a wider review of the relevance of scientific and other legitimate factors should be carried out; the status of Codex texts should be carefully considered as to its relevance in the framework of WTO.

8. In reply to a question, the Secretariat indicated that the Chairman of the SPS Committee had replied to the request of the Commission concerning the status of Codex texts in relation to the SPS Agreement, and that this question would be considered by the Executive Committee. The Committee

¹ CX/EURO 98/2, CRD 9 (Comments of the European Community)

further noted that the questions related to consensus, consideration of other factors, and the status of Codex texts would be discussed by the next session of the Committee on General Principles.

9. The Committee supported the principle that decisions should be taken by consensus in Codex, especially in view of the importance of Codex texts in the framework of WTO, and that all efforts should be made to achieve this objective in the CCGP. It was also important to consider thoroughly the issue of other legitimate factors, in particular consumer concerns.

10. The Committee noted that Committee on Food Hygiene had forwarded the Proposed Code of Hygienic Practice for Packaged (Bottled) Drinking Waters to Step 5 of the Procedure, with the understanding that further discussion was required on some sections of the Code. The Delegation of France pointed out that this document provided a good example of a constructive risk-based approach, which had allowed the Committee to reach consensus on complex issues.

11. The Committee was informed that the last session of the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables had decided not to proceed with the conversion of the Regional Standard for Vinegar into a world-wide standard, but to refer it to CCEURO for revision as the format and the methods of analysis should be updated.

REPORT ON FOOD SAFETY/FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION SINCE THE 20TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 4)

12. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 98/3, presenting the activities of FAO and WHO in the area of food safety and food control within the last two years.

a) Joint FAO/WHO activities

13. The Secretariat informed the Committee of a number of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultations that had taken place since 1996, the recommendations of which had been used in the discussion of essential Codex issues, especially risk assessment, risk management and biotechnology.

14. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work of FAO and WHO in organizing expert consultations on various important issues whose recommendations could be used by Codex committees. However, it recalled that more transparency should be given to the ways such expert consultations were established and conducted, as it was fundamental to create confidence in the work of these expert meetings. The Delegation of Spain expressed the view that geographical representation should be better taken into account in the selection of experts. The Delegation also expressed its concern that the recommendations could be directly incorporated into Codex documents although they were of an advisory nature and were not part of the standard-setting process, with specific reference to the discussion of the recommendations of the Expert Consultation on Risk Management at the Commission. The Committee however noted as an example that the recommendations arising from the Consultations on risk assessment and risk management had been discussed extensively in concerned Codex Committees and that this process was ongoing.

15. The Representatives of FAO and WHO recalled that the working procedures of expert consultations were governed by the General Rules of FAO and WHO, experts were selected on the basis of their competence but did not represent their government, and geographical distribution was carefully taken into account as a major concern of the parent organizations was to ensure adequate representation of developing countries.

B) FAO activities

1) World Food Summit

16. The Committee was informed of the outcome and follow-up activities of the World Food Summit which was held in Rome in November 1996 with the objective of renewing the commitment of world leaders at the highest level to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the achievement of food security for all.

2) Expert Consultations

17. The Committee was also informed of a number of Expert Consultations held in the course of the last year, including a FAO Expert Consultation on Animal Feeding and Food Safety (Rome, March 1997), which had made a proposal for a Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding, currently under consideration by concerned Codex Committees, and a Joint FAO/IAEA Expert Consultation on Validation of Analytical Methods for Food Control (Vienna, December 1997).

18. The Committee noted that a series of Training of Trainers Course - Quality and Safety based on GMPs and HACCP System was being developed by the Food Quality and Standards Service, Food and Nutrition Division of FAO, aimed at promoting a common approach to the application of HACCP based on the Codex Guidelines. Following pilot training courses in other regions, and in response to requests from Central and Eastern Europe countries, two TOT Courses for 8 countries in the sub-region would be held in May 1998.

3) Regional FAO Activities

19. The Committee was informed of FAO activities in Central and Eastern Europe as related to food control and risk assessment, and of specific action intended to promote and facilitate Codex work in the region: FAO Meeting on the Work of Codex in Central and Eastern Europe, held in Budapest, Hungary, in March 1997; a National Workshop on Codex Work held in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in April 1997. A Regional Workshop on the Establishment and Administration of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees was currently being organized for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Community of Independent States and was to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, at the end of June 1998.

20. The Committee also noted that FAO Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) had been carried out to assist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in modernizing and updating their food control systems in Bulgaria, Czech and Slovak Republics, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and the three Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

21. With regard to the Technical Cooperation Programmes, the Delegations of Norway and Sweden pointed out the close cooperation existing between Nordic countries in the area of food control and safety, and the cooperation of the Nordic Council with neighbouring countries such as the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Western areas of Russia, etc. The Delegations also expressed the willingness of the Nordic countries to continue their close cooperation with FAO in the organization of activities leading to the strengthening of the food control system in these countries. In this respect, the Committee noted that technical cooperation work had already been carried out jointly between the Nordic Council and FAO and agreed that it would be useful to pursue such cooperation in the future.

C) WHO ACTIVITIES

22. The Representative of WHO highlighted some of the major WHO activities described in document CX/EURO 98/3. He presented a note-verbale of the Director-General of the WHO on cholera and international food trade. The note-verbale stated that the placing of embargoes on the importation of food from cholera affected countries was not the appropriate course of action to prevent the risk of potential contamination. He also introduced a recent WHO publication entitled: "Food Safety and Globalization of Trade in Food" which explains the implications of the WTO Agreements to the public health sector.

23. Regarding the activities of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Representative of the WHO reported that the WHO EURO Programme on Food Safety had not been operating for about 3 years, but it would commence its activities from June 1998 with the appointment of a new Food Safety Scientist. The major work of the Programme would be the consideration of existing surveillance systems including review of reporting methodology. Emphasis would be given to the microbiological contamination of food including risk analysis. Special attention would be paid to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathies (BSE) and related human diseases.

HARMONIZATION AND COOPERATION IN FOOD CONTROL MATTERS IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 5)²

Updated Survey of National Food Control Authorities

24. In addition to the information provided in the documents above referenced, the Delegation of France indicated that a new Agency for scientific assessment would be established very soon to coordinate scientific work carried out by different bodies in relation to food safety, and that further review of the food control system was underway.

25. Following a question by the Delegation of Hungary on the need for advice on the harmonization of food control procedures and systems, the Committee noted that FAO had published a series of training manuals covering all essential aspects of food control.³

26. The Observer from the EC informed the Committee of the changes in the structure of the European Commission on food legislation, the management of scientific committees and food and veterinary inspection at the Community level.

2) Exchange of Information on Import/Export Matters

27. The Committee was informed of the activities of an informal forum called Food Law Enforcement Practitioners (FLEP). The Delegation of Spain pointed out that the Committee should be open also to information from other international organizations of the same type. The Secretariat indicated that invitations to the regional Committees were sent to all international organizations participating in the work of Codex. The Committee was informed that FLEP, whose secretariat is currently held by the Netherlands, operated as an informal network for exchange of information and cooperation between officials responsible for enforcement in the European Economic Area (EU and EFTA). Its objectives were to facilitate the solution of practical food control problems in order to obtain uniform practices throughout countries of the European Economic Area. The Committee noted that other countries outside the EEA might attend FLEP meetings as Observers and this was the case of some countries of Central and Eastern Europe like Slovenia and the Czech Republic.

28. The forum has carried out several projects through the use of workshops focusing on different matters of interest such as HACCP, future challenges in food control, etc. The Delegation of the Netherlands invited countries interested in these activities to provide a list with addresses; subsequently the Netherlands would send them information on FLEP.

29. In reply to a question on the status of FLEP in the CCEURO, the Delegation of the United Kingdom, expressing the views of several delegations, explained that this was an informal body which offered a useful forum for exchange of practical information on actual food import/export problems, the interpretation and enforcement of regulations. The Delegation of Spain emphasized that this informal forum was not habilitated to interpret legislation. The Committee noted the work being undertaken on cooperation in practical enforcement matters and indicated its wish to continue being kept informed about such activities.

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND HARMONIZATION OF FOOD LEGISLATION IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 6)⁴

Food Legislation

² CX/EURO 98/4 (comments from Hungary, Norway, Slovak Republic, United Kingdom, Poland), CRD 4 (Sweden), CRD 5 (Spain), CRD 7 (Ireland), CRD 9 (European Community), CX/EURO 98/8 (CI)

³ Food and Nutrition Paper Series No.14

⁴ CX/EURO 98/6 (C, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, United Kingdom) CRD 4 (Sweden), CRD 6 (Finland), CRD 7 (Ireland), CRD 8 (Czech Republic)

30. The Delegation of Poland informed the Committee of the current harmonization process leading to changes in its national food legislation to bring it in line with the latest European directives in view of Poland's application for accession into the European Union. It indicated that cooperation with Nordic countries and countries of the EU had been carried out in order to assist the country in training food inspectors as well as modernizing its food control system. In this regard, preparation of projects of regulations on food hygiene, inspection of sanitary conditions for imported food products and veterinary requirements for animal products had been prepared. The process of harmonization was supported by countries from the European Community.

31. The Polish Delegation also informed the Committee about the current work on the introduction of accreditation systems in laboratories and equivalent systems of inspection. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy Regulation No 402 from 1994 for packaged food labelling was one of the first legislative texts based on the directives of European Union and the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Packaged Foods. Consumers needs relating to special information on the labels concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients as well as potential allergens had also been taken into account in Polish legislation.

Cooperation Activities in Food Control and Training

32. The Committee had before it the above referenced documents containing information provided by member countries on cooperation activities in food control and training in the Region. No additional comments were made by the delegations during the Session.

ACTIVITIES OF CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 7) ⁵Error! Bookmark not defined.

1) Draft Regional Guidelines for Asia

33. The Committee recalled that following the decision of the Coordinating Committee for Asia to elaborate Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees, the Committee on General Principles had recommended that the document should be circulated to all Coordinating Committees in order to determine the opportunity of elaborating world-wide guidelines or regional guidelines. The Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean had expressed the view that they did not correspond to the situation in the region and the other regional Committees had not yet discussed this question. The Committee further noted that the last session of the CCASIA had forwarded the draft to the Commission at Step 8 for adoption as Regional Guidelines.

34. Several delegations expressed their support for the general principles set out in the guidelines, which provided valuable guidance as regards the general role and responsibilities of Codex Contact Points. However they pointed out that the organization and procedures proposed were too prescriptive and were not likely to facilitate Codex work in the region.

35. Some delegations indicated that in their countries, coordination was carried out by committees or other structures which considered food legislation matters in general, whether related to national, regional or international issues (including Codex); in those cases, it was not necessary to establish a separate National Codex Committee to ensure effective coordination of Codex work. The essential objective of any such body was to ensure adequate information and effective participation of all interested sectors in order to define national policy and positions on the widest basis.

36. It was also noted that the consultation mechanisms proposed in the guidelines did not correspond to current practice and were likely to create unnecessary constraints in an area where efficiency was essential. This might lengthen the decision process and delay communication when responding to Circular Letters. Some delegations also pointed out that the document did not allow for sufficient flexibility and that member countries should be able to organize their contact point and related structures in accordance

CX/EURO 98/6 (Draft Guidelines prepared by CCASIA), CX/EURO 98/7 (comments of United Kingdom, Slovak Republic, Norway, Consumers International), CRD 9 (European Community)

with their specific requirements at the national level. It was noted that certain provisions of the guidelines could cause problems, especially the translation of Codex texts into the local language and the fact that participation of official delegates in Codex meetings could be funded by the industry.

37. The Observer from Consumers International expressed the view that the Guidelines provided a useful framework for the organization of contact points and National Codex Committees, especially as it recognized the need for effective participation of consumers and other interested sectors. The Observer drew attention to the fact that its members reported great variations in how national Codex Contact Points and Codex Committees were functioning in practice. The inclusion of such recommendations in a Codex document such as the Procedural Manual would contribute to promote consumer participation, especially in those countries where Codex structures and activities still needed to be developed. The Delegation of Sweden pointed out that the participation of consumers representatives in national delegations required careful consideration as this could facilitate their access to Codex sessions, but they might also prefer to retain their independent status; in any case they should be associated to the preparation process.

38. The Committee agreed with the view of the Delegation of Norway that general recommendations in this area were useful but should not be developed through the step procedure, as they did not relate to food safety or trade issues; they were more related to Codex working procedures and might therefore be included in the Procedural Manual. In this respect, the Committee noted that the Executive Committee would consider another proposal from CCASIA on the inclusion of a section on the essential functions of Codex Contact Points in the Procedural Manual, for consideration by the Committee on General Principles.

39. The Committee agreed that further consideration of the principles included in the guidelines would be useful but that the Guidelines as currently drafted did not correspond to the situation in the countries of the region; they could not be generally applied in Europe and should not be progressed through the Step procedure in their present form.

2) Codex activities

40. Some delegations provided updated information on the organization of Codex work in their countries, as follows. The Delegation of Italy, stressing the increased importance of Codex matters in general, indicated that a National Consultative Committee was responsible for Codex work as a whole, and operated through a number of specialized sub-committees, which included all interested sectors.

41. The Delegation of France underlined the role of official authorities in the training of consumers in Codex matters. The Delegation of Norway pointed out that although its National Committee had ceased to operate as a separate body, a number of specialized committees had assumed its coordinating role and covered all matters related to food legislation matters, including Codex work.

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS.(Agenda Item 8)⁶

42. The Delegation of the United Kingdom expressed the view of the European Union countries that, in order to improve consumer participation, the debates in all Codex committees should be made as transparent as possible and that it would be useful for all texts to include a paragraph summarizing their implications for consumers. These views were supported by the Observer from Consumers International.

43. The Observer from Consumers International pointed out that progress had been made as regards involvement of consumers but that many difficulties, for example resource constraints, remained for their organizations to participate actively in Codex work at the national level. In particular, it was important for consumers representatives to be informed of the outcome of Codex sessions; several delegations indicated that such feedback information meetings were current practice in their countries.

6 CX/EURO 98/8 (comments of Germany, Norway, Slovak Republic, United Kingdom, Consumers International), CRD 4 (Sweden), CRD 5 (Spain), CRD 6 (Finland), CRD 7 (Ireland), CRD 9 (EC)

44. The Observer from Consumers International suggested that in view of the complexity of Codex documents, it would be useful to include a summary outlining the main implications for consumers. The Secretariat indicated that further efforts would be made to identify essential issues in Codex texts more clearly in the elaboration process, especially in the CLs, but that the Commission had recommended to limit explanatory material to the minimum necessary. The Committee also noted that Codex sessions were open to the public, with the exception of CCEXEC and that documents were available on the Internet⁷.

45. The Observer from Consumers International reiterated its earlier proposal for the inclusion of consumers representatives as observers in the Executive Committee. Some delegations felt that this question required careful consideration as to its implications, and pointed out that the Executive Committee and the Committee on General Principles had already discussed this proposal and taken a decision which was confirmed by the Commission; therefore it did not appear necessary to reopen the debate at this stage. The Delegation of Sweden asked for clarification on which type of observer status Consumers International wished at CCEXEC, and the Observer indicated that they would welcome any steps in the sense of transparency.

46. While discussing this issue, some delegations sought clarification on whether the Executive Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Commission, could not admit observers as specified in Rule VII.3. The Secretariat recalled that the status of CCEXEC was defined in Article 6 of the Statutes and its composition in Rule III, while other subsidiary bodies were governed by Article 7 and Rule IX. In particular, membership of the CCEXEC was limited to the officers listed in Rule III. As to the participation of observers, Rule VII.3 applied only to Members of the Commission participating as observers in a Committee (such as a Coordinating Committee) and not to Non-Governmental Organizations. Some delegations expressed the view that further advice was required concerning the implications for member countries of Rule VII.3 as related to Rule III and the Committee proposed that a paper on this question should be prepared for consideration by CCGP. The Committee was also informed that the next session of the CCGP would consider the procedures for the participation of NGOs in the work of Codex.

47. Some delegations pointed out that although governments made constant efforts to involve consumers in Codex work, lack of interest or preparation on their part appeared to be an obstacle to their effective involvement. Consequently, efforts should be made by consumer representatives to develop consumer awareness and education in food legislation matters. Special emphasis should also be put on food safety matters in order to ensure better prevention in the area of foodborne diseases.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 9)

1) Nutrition and Health Claims

48. The Delegation of Spain presented CRD 1, which intended to draw the attention of the Committee to the need for careful consideration of nutrition and health claims. The Delegation pointed out that many unsubstantiated claims could be found on all types of foodstuffs; in particular, the use of references to therapeutic or health properties of food was increasing, which created considerable confusion to the consumer, and may even become a public health problem. The Delegation indicated that these concerns should be taken into account by the Committee on Food Labelling and the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses when considering the following questions: nutrition claims, health claims, vitamins and minerals.

49. Several delegations pointed out that as the document had not been distributed in advance, it was not possible for them to take a position on these issues; moreover, questions relating to labelling and nutrition should be addressed in the relevant committees, which were aware of the importance of such problems. The Coordinating Committee was not competent to take a position in this field, although it could draw the attention of its member countries to the issues under consideration, including vitamins and

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/es/esn/codex>

minerals. The Delegation of Spain pointed out that it had distributed the document at the session with the purpose of facilitating an open debate and not a to initiate a technical discussion.

50. The Observer of Consumers International stressed the problems faced by consumers due to the confusion created by certain claims, as indicated in the document prepared by Spain, and expressed the view that health claims should not be allowed.

51. The Secretariat recalled that the Guidelines on Nutrition Claims, adopted as a final text by the 22nd Session of the Commission, included two parts: the text and the Table, which had been developed respectively by the CCFL and the CCNFSDU, following an earlier Commission decision. As the text was finalized, no further work was required in the CCFL. Part A of the Table was adopted with the text and further work was needed only on the expression of conditions for claims per serving and on Part B of the Table (protein/fibre/vitamins and minerals). The Committee also noted that the Guidelines had been considered extensively by both Committees and had been adopted through consensus. As regards health claims, the question was under consideration in the CCFL and the Committee invited member countries in the region to submit their comments in this respect to that Committee. The Delegation of Spain expressed the view that it would be preferable to consider this question in the CCNFSDU.

52. The Committee agreed to draw the attention of the CCFL and the CCNFSDU to the importance of questions relating to nutrition and health claims and the need to proceed with work in this area in order to provide appropriate guidance and recommendations at the international level.

2) Special Dietary Foods for Coeliacs: Proposals for a Method of Analysis

53. The Delegation of Spain introduced CRD 2 which considered the level of gluten in the Draft Standard for Gluten-Free Foods and the methods of analysis for its determination, with a view to identifying key issues and drawing the attention of the CCNFSDU and the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling to this urgent problem. The Delegation expressed its concern as to the current level, which would not protect affected patients, and as to the proposed method, which was likely to produce false negatives as it identified mainly gliadins; the development of new methods should therefore be taken into account before finalizing the draft. The Delegation also pointed out that it would be useful to convene an expert consultation on this question.

54. Several delegations recognized that they were not in a position to discuss such technical and complex issues, especially in view of the late availability of the document. The Committee was not in any case competent to consider the level of gluten and the corresponding method, which should be addressed in the competent committees on the basis of scientific evidence. The Delegation of Spain explained that it had sought to promote an open debate and not a technical discussion.

55. The Secretariat recalled that the CCNFSDU was aware of the difficulties inherent to the revision of the standard, which had been extensively discussed in the latest sessions, and the Commission had recommended that all relevant elements should be taken into account in the finalization of the standard. At the present stage, the draft only included an "outline of a method", which would not appear in the final text, but no specific method was actually recommended. This question was to be addressed by the CCNFSDU, as the CCMAS did not propose methods for specific products, which should be selected by the specialized committees. The responsibility of CCMAS was only to endorse such methods and to propose general methods for all foods, and this had been reasserted following a similar request from CCNFSDU in 1995.

56. The Committee noted the concerns expressed and encouraged member countries to communicate all relevant information and proposals on the method as well as the level to the CCNFSDU, in order to facilitate the discussion of the standard at its next session (September 1998).

Proposed Draft Amendment to the Regional European Standard for Mayonnaise (CODEX STAN 168-1989)

57. The Committee recalled that the Commission had agreed with the proposal of the Committee on Fats and Oils to discontinue work on the conversion of the Regional Standard into a world-wide one. The

Committee considered document CRD 3, which compared the Codex Standard for Mayonnaise and the Code of Practice developed by the Comité des Industries des Mayonnaises et Sauces Condimentaires de la Communauté Économique Européenne (CIMSCEE), underlining the modifications suggested by this organization.

58. The Observer of CIMSCEE recalled that mayonnaise was the main product in the range of emulsified condiment sauces. He expressed the view that there was a need to update the standard in order to simplify the document and to bring it into line with new trends in the European market, consumers expectations and changes in the regulations concerning the use of additives, labelling, etc. He asked the CCEURO to propose the revision of the Codex Regional Standard for Mayonnaise to the Executive Committee.

59. Several delegations indicated that they had not had time to consider this issue in detail since the document was not made available during the Session and therefore they could not prepare their position in coordination with their national experts. Some delegations also expressed the opinion that careful consideration should be given to the opportunity of revising the standard as not enough justification had been provided by CIMSCEE. Other delegations pointed out that all standards should be kept under regular review and that this had been recognized when the conversion of the standard was initiated. They also recalled that the Commission had asked its subsidiary bodies to simplify standards; in this respect, the work already done by the Committee on Fats and Oils could be taken into account in the revision.

60. The Delegations of Norway and Switzerland indicated that, while not opposing the revision in principle, they could not take a position on this issue and they should consult at the national level with their industries, which were not members of CIMSCEE. They agreed that the Committee should propose a revision in principle without committing itself to the actual contents of the revised standard.

61. The Delegation of Germany pointed out that although it did not oppose the revision in principle, adequate justification should be provided to introduce such significant amendments as were included in the Table attached to the document (fat contents and egg yolk). In this regard, the Committee noted that the Code of Practice was only a reference document and necessary adjustment would be made when discussing the revision of the standard.

62. Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to submit to the Executive Committee a proposal for new work on the revision of the Regional Standard for Mayonnaise.

4) Code of Ethics

63. The Delegation of the United Kingdom informed the Committee of the consideration being given by the countries in the European Union to the revision of the Code of Ethics, scheduled for consideration by the next session of the Committee of General Principles: support was expressed for continued consideration of the Code in the framework of that Committee, since it was recognized that the Code referred to several aspects of Codex work.

64. Some delegations indicated that they had not yet considered this question in detail, but recognized the need to revise the Code to take into account the provisions of the WTO Agreements, the work carried out by the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems on import and export matters and the general approach to food safety matters, as evidenced in the work on such documents as the General Standard for Food Additives and the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food.

65. Some delegations suggested that the revised Code could be expanded to address other general issues: the status of Codex texts, consumer concerns, technological need, good agricultural practice, procedures for dealing with contaminated food and the precautionary principle. The Observer from Consumers International welcomed the revision of the Code which should be better focused in relation to consumer protection and consumer concerns.

Matters Arising From the Codex Committee On Food Import And Export Inspection and Certification Systems

66. The Delegation of the United Kingdom informed the Committee of the views of the countries in the European Union concerning the work of CCFICS. The Committee had been created with the understanding that it would carry out specific tasks and reexamine the need for its work to continue. The time had come to examine the question of whether the CCFICS had now completed its work assignments. Some delegations expressed their appreciation for the work carried out so far by CCFICS while expressing their concerns as to the possibility that it extend its work to areas beyond those specified in its terms of reference. If that was the case careful consideration should be given to the task assigned to the Committee, especially on the question of equivalence applied to Codex standards.

67. The Delegation of Norway pointed out that the work of CCFICS was not initially scheduled to be discussed by the Committee and that it could not take a position on such issues; further information should be provided by countries in the EU as to their specific concerns. It was however noted that the position of the EU countries was presented for information purposes only.

Future Work

68. The Committee noted that in addition to standing items on the Agenda, the next session of the Committee would consider Proposed Draft Revised Regional Standards for Mayonnaise and for Vinegar, subject to the approbation of the Executive Committee.

NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 10)

69. The CCEURO had before it document CX/EURO 98/9, containing the Rules governing the appointment of the Coordinator, as amended by the 21st Session of the Commission, and laid down in the 10th Edition of the Procedural Manual (Rule II.4). The Committee was informed that Dr. Felipe Mittelbrunn-Garcia had served his first term and he was eligible under Rule II.4 (b) to hold the office of Coordinator for Europe for the next succeeding term.

70. The Delegation of France, supported by all delegations, proposed that Dr. Mittelbrunn-García be nominated for appointment as Coordinator for Europe by the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and until the end of the 24th Session of the Commission. Dr. Mittelbrunn-García accepted the nomination of the Committee.

71. The Committee expressed its warm appreciation to Dr. Mittelbrunn-García as well as to the Spanish Government for their continued support of the Committee's work.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 11)

72. The Committee was informed that the next session of CCEURO was tentatively scheduled to be held in Spain in the first half of 2000. The exact date and venue would be determined by the Spanish and Codex Secretariats, subject to confirmation by the Commission.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject Matter	Step	Action by	Document Reference in ALINORM 99/19
Proposals for new work: - Revision of the Regional Standard for Mayonnaise - Revision of the Regional Standard for Vinegar	1	CCEXEC Secretariat Governments 22nd CCEURO	para. 62 paras. 11, 68
Nomination of Coordinator		23rd CAC	para. 70
Exchange of information on Food Legislation and Food Control		Governments 22nd CCEURO	para. 29
Cooperation and Training		Governments 22nd CCEURO	para. 21
Consumer Participation		Governments 22 nd CCEURO	paras. 42-47