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SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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CODEX STANDARDS & HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY AND TRADE

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Codex Standards

Complying with food safety, food quality and nutrition standards is essential to protecting consumers' health, ensuring food security and creating trade opportunities.

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Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

Established in 1963 by FAO and WHO, the CAC develops internationally harmonised food safety, nutrition and food quality standards, guidelines, codes of practice (Codex standards) to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

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CAC Members and Observers

Members: The CAC is composed of 188 Members (approximately 99% of the world's population).

Observers: 219 international organisations, including IGOs and NGOs, currently enjoy observer status within the CAC. Status: 17.11.2017 <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/members-observers/en/>

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Codex standards: a public good

Codex standards are:

- science-based and developed according to risk analysis principles
- universal in their nature i.e. their effective implementation and enforcement protects the world's consumers
- developed in an inclusive, transparent, collaborative and consensual manner
- accessible, free-of-charge from the Codex website (24 hours, 365 days/year) in order to ensure their universal consultation and application by all interested parties.

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>

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Codex & Scientific Advice

FAO/WHO Scientific Expert Bodies e.g. JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA, JEMNU, etc. **provide independent scientific advice to the CAC and Codex Committees**

JECFA Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives

<http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/scientific-advice/jecfa/en/>

JMPR Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues

<http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/pests/jmpr/en/>

JEMRA Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment

<http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/scientific-advice/jemra/en/>

JEMNU Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Nutrition

<http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/68531/en/>

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WHO Estimates of the Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases (2015)



Unsafe food contaminated with biological, chemical and physical hazards poses serious, acute and chronic health risks (ranging from diarrhoea to cancer and even death) to consumers . According to the WHO (2015), **every year, one in ten consumers falls ill following the consumption of contaminated food. Globally, 420'000 die due to foodborne diseases. Source: "Estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases". Available at:**

http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/foodborne-diseases/ferg/en/

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Foodborne diseases are preventable!



However, **targeted action** is needed to prevent consumer infections, suffering and death and all the negative social, economic and development consequences, which are related to unsafe food.

Putting food safety on the political agenda is the first step to reducing FBD and to ensuring safe food and protecting consumers in both the domestic and export markets.

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World Food Safety Day 7th June

Following the decision by the CAC (June 2016), **the FAO Conference adopted a Resolution on 7.7.2017**, requesting the UN General Assembly to declare **7th June World Food Safety Day**.

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Codex & Food Security

Food safety is fundamental to the realisation of nutrition and food security.

- “Food safety is the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use” - CAC/RCP 1-1969, Definitions
- “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” – WFS, 1996
- “People have the right to expect the food they eat to be safe and suitable for consumption.” CAC/RCP 1-1969

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Codex & Food Security

- Codex standards set requirements to ensure food safety e.g.: Maximum levels (MLs) for **food additives** as well as **contaminants** and **toxins** in food and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for **pesticides** and **veterinary drugs** in foods.
- The **General Principles of Food Hygiene** identify the essential principles of food hygiene applicable throughout the food chain (including primary production through to the final consumer), to achieve the goal of ensuring that food is safe and suitable for human consumption.

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Codex & Food Security

Codex GLs and **CoP** recommend best practices for food safety management during production, harvest, post-harvest, storage, processing, handling, transportation, distribution, etc. which when applied effectively lead to the **prevention of food contamination** and a **reduction in food loss and food waste**. For example:

- Code of Practice for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in peanuts
- Code of Practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cereals
- Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Dioxin and Dioxin-like PCB Contamination in Food and Feed
- Code of Practice for the Reduction of Acrylamide in Foods, etc.

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Codex & The Food Trade

- All countries engage in the food trade either as food exporters and/or food importers.
- Codex standards are the international reference in the food trade.
- Codex standards can be applied at the international, regional or national levels
- Codex standards are the benchmark for harmonisation.
- Countries should adopt, adapt or take into consideration Codex standards during the development of their national legislation.

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Codex & WTO



- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) explicitly recognises the competence of the CAC in setting international food safety standards.
- The food quality, nutrition and labelling aspects of Codex standards are covered by the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement).
- **Harmonisation** – The SPS and TBT Agreements encourage national governments to establish SPS and TBT measures that are consistent with international standards.

http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/15-sps.pdf

http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/17-tbt.pdf

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Codex & Health, Food Security and Trade



- Effective implementation and enforcement of Codex standards at the national level protects the health of both domestic and export-market consumers and enables access to lucrative markets thereby generating income, creating wealth and leading to social and economic development.
- Compliance with requirements set in food standards is a prerequisite for access to domestic, regional and international food markets.
- *“Food safety and food standards are crucial to unlock the potential of an important tool to fight hunger, which is trade.”
FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, July 2017*

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Key messages:

- Food safety is critical to ensuring food security and nutrition;
- Inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination and public-private partnerships to ensure food safety are important and should be promoted;
- Food safety should be recognised as a public health and socio-economic priority;
- Stakeholders should implement national food standards based on Codex effectively and the competent authorities should enforce them rigorously;
- Food safety education and training should be prioritised;
- World Food Safety Day, 7th June is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of food safety in each country.

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