

## INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO) held its 30<sup>th</sup> Session in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 3 to 7 October 2016 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and The Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Session was chaired by Dr. Martijn Weijtens, Deputy Director, Department of Food Quality, Ministry of Economic Affairs and co-chaired by Dr. Zhandarbek Bekshin, Deputy Chairman, Committee for Consumer Protection, Ministry of National Economy. The Session was attended by 35 Member countries, 1 Member Organization, 1 Observer country and 1 Observer organization. The list of participants is presented in Appendix I.

## OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr. Kuandyk Bishimbayev, Minister, Ministry of National Economy, opened the Session on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan. Mr. Dirk Jan Kop, Ambassador of The Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Tajikistan opened the Session on behalf of The Kingdom of the Netherlands. Dr. Branko Bulatovic, FAO Representative, Dr. Melita Vujnovic, WHO Representative, and Mrs. Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, also addressed the Committee.

## Division of Competence<sup>1</sup>

3. The Committee noted the division of competence between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>2</sup>

4. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session.
5. The Committee noted that a document on relations between FAO and WHO policies, strategies and guidelines and Codex work and a summary of the Workshop on CTF2 would be considered under Agenda Item 11 "Other Business" at the request of WHO.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE FROM A CODEX / FOOD SAFETY PERSPECTIVE (Agenda Item 2)<sup>3</sup>

6. The Chair provided a brief background on Key Note address and introduced Dr. Jaap Wagenaar, Professor of Veterinary Microbiology and Immunology, Utrecht University, The Netherlands, as Keynote speaker on the topic of "antimicrobial resistance from a Codex and food safety perspective". The Chair further informed the Committee that, in addition to the keynote speech, presentations on issues related to AMR would be presented by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as an overview on current developments on AMR in Codex by the United Kingdom.
7. The FAO Representative, on behalf of FAO and WHO, called the attention of the Committee that this was a new standing agenda item on the agenda of RCCs as part of the ongoing revitalization process to raise awareness amongst members of the Region on a high-light priority issue, its importance for countries of the Region, and facilitate political interest and "buy-in" to food safety and quality matters.
8. The Committee deliberated on the issues raised in the Key Note Speech and noted the following views from CCEURO members:
  - There are a variety of approaches on how CCEURO members are addressing AMR within their countries as shown in the keynote speech presentations made as well as further information submitted during the exchange of views amongst CCEURO members on this matter.
  - Good animal husbandry practices are at the base of containment of AMR and there are shared responsibilities of producers, users and regulators in ensuring such good practices.
  - Environmental issues, including manure, are critical aspects that should be taken into account when considering measures to address AMR.
  - The application of the precaution principle is necessary and justified as the cost of AMR in animal husbandry cannot be fully measured at this point in time.
  - The phase-out of antibiotics used as growth promoters should be considered a matter of urgency.

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<sup>1</sup> CRD1 (Annotated Agenda for the division of Competence between the European Union and its Member States).

<sup>2</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/1

<sup>3</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/2

- Safe pharmacological systems must be in place in countries and non-profit prescription is an important element in reaching this goal.
  - Exchange of information and experiences on latest development on AMR through networking of laboratories, regulatory agencies, etc. as well as events such as conferences, seminar, workshops, etc. is an important tool to wind up knowledge on AMR. In this regard, the Conference on AMR that would take place in Sochi (Russian Federation) in May 2017 would be an important gathering of information on the status of art on AMR worldwide.
  - CCEURO members attach great importance to fighting AMR being this a matter of priority in countries of the Region.
  - CCEURO members are keen to cooperate with Codex members and international organizations in combatting this global threat for human health collaboratively.
  - The TF/AMR will assist to reinforce the current measures in place with new regulatory measures to combat AMR. The Task Force thus provides a unique global forum to discuss measures to contain AMR based on the latest available science and technology.
  - CCEURO members should actively engage in Codex work on AMR to ensure the views, needs and concern of the Region are properly taken into account.
9. The FAO Representative informed the Committee of the FAO Action Plan on AMR for 2016-2020. This plan had been aligned with the Global Action Plan on AMR and the intergovernmental standards of OIE on responsible and prudent use of veterinary drugs. The plan was aiming at assisting governments develop national strategies and action plans for tackling AMR and AMU in food and agricultural sectors<sup>4</sup>.
10. The Representative noted that Codex members had been invited to use FAO Action Plan on AMR as a resource when mobilizing and supporting inter-sectorial and coordinated national processes for developing national Strategies and Action Plans on AMR by May 2017. The four key areas for action on AMR in the food and agriculture sector were as follows: (i) Improving awareness of AMR issues among farmers and producers, veterinary professionals and authorities, policymakers, and food consumers; (ii) Building national capacities for surveillance and monitoring of AMR and antimicrobial use (AMU) in food and agriculture; (iii) Strengthening governance related to AMU and AMR in food and agriculture; (iv) Promoting good practices in food and agricultural systems and the prudent use of antimicrobials.

### **Conclusion**

11. The Committee:
- Noted that AMR is a high priority safety issue for the Region.
  - Noted that there is an urgency on discuss AMR issues within Codex.
  - Noted that CCEURO members should actively and collaboratively participate in Codex work on AMR so that the views, needs and concerns of the Region can appropriately be reflected in the documents developed by the TF/AMR.

### **FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION (Agenda Item 3a)<sup>5</sup>**

#### **PRIORITIZATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM (Agenda Item 3b)<sup>6</sup>**

##### **CRITICAL AND EMERGING ISSUES IN FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY**

12. The FAO Representative introduced the item and stressed that within the evolving food safety context there was a growing need for a proactive approach to identify both critical and emerging issues in food quality and safety. This had been recognized at CCEXEC70 (2015) and RCCs could play an important role on this matter within the revitalization process. At the same time this would assist FAO and WHO to shape strategies to address critical and emerging food quality and/or safety issues and would also help FAO and WHO to provide proactive guidance to address the priority issues. This would also improve the ability of CAC to respond in a timely manner to needs identified by Codex members.
13. The Representative highlighted some findings of the survey as follows:

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5996e.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/3; CX/EURO 16/30/3-Add.1.

<sup>6</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/4

- Food fraud and adulteration is one of the most frequently reported issues by respondents. It was noted that different types of fraud exist including, for example, counterfeiting of pharmaceutical and phytosanitary products, misrepresentation through inappropriate labeling, etc.
- Chemical contaminants are a great concern, particularly “emerging contaminants” like endocrine disruptors or marine bio-toxins that, due to climate change, are being detected in parts of the world where their occurrence was not experienced before. In addition, on well-known contaminants, like mycotoxins, there are some emerging features which need to be considered, such as new occurrence patterns due to climate change, masked forms of mycotoxins and co-exposure to multiple mycotoxins. The upcoming JECFA meeting on contaminants (November 2016) will look at the co-occurrence and co-exposure of aflatoxins and fumonisins.
- AMR is also one of the key issues identified, reflecting also the importance given to this issue as discussed in the Agenda Item 2.
- Increasing e-commerce of food related products is posing considerable challenges to food control.
- With the rapid and continuous development of new technologies in the agri-food sector, it is important to evaluate both the benefits and risks related to the use of new technologies in food systems.
- While water re-use/recycling is growing due to increasing water scarcity, it is important to keep monitoring water quality parameters including data on contaminants that could enter or re-enter the food chain thus posing food Safety and public health challenges.

14. The Committee noted presentations from EFSA and Germany on critical and emerging issues in food quality and safety and thanked them for their valuable inputs in the discussion of this matter.

#### **PRIORITIZATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM**

15. The WHO and FAO Representatives introduced the item and facilitated a discussion on the relevance of the critical and/or emerging issues identified, which issues the Committee considered most important to address, and possible approaches to do so.
16. Several delegations thanked the Secretariat for the information gathered from the survey and the accompanying documents. It was mentioned that it would be helpful if a qualitative angle in the assessment of such data could be applied in the future. The food fraud issue was highlighted – also in light of ongoing work being handled by CCFICS - and proposed that a collaborative approach be established between CCEURO and other regions. Given that critical and emerging issues will be a standing item on the agendas of regional committees, it was recommended that CAC hold a regular discussion on critical and emerging issues in which the entire Codex membership could participate.
17. It was agreed that AMR is an area that should be prioritized more prominently. AMR is a high priority at the international level, which is reflected by the adoption of the Global Action Plan on AMR<sup>7</sup> during the World Health Assembly in 2015, the FAO Action Plan on AMR 2016-2020<sup>8</sup> elaborated in the support of the implementation of Global Action Plan on AMR, specific OIE resolutions on AMR, and the recent high level meeting of the UN General Assembly on AMR<sup>9</sup>. Inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration, cooperation and information-sharing is key to tackling AMR. The AMR concerns food safety since AMR can spread through the food chain. The CCEURO members has been encouraged/invited to consider supporting the inter-sectoral processes at country level on developing inter-sectoral holistic national Action Plans on AMR with a One Health approach. It is of uttermost importance that also Codex addresses AMR.
18. The globalization of food trade and new distribution channels in particular e-commerce of food and accompanying/associated risks to food safety and consumer protection were highlighted as important issues that need to be addressed within CCEURO and across regions.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/global-action-plan/en/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5996e.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-meeting-on-antimicrobial-resistance>

19. The FAO representatives informed about the FAO/WHO tools, capacity building events and materials provided in support of strengthening national food safety systems to increase compliance with the requirements of WTO Agreements on SPS and TBT, including strengthening capacities for food safety risk communication, raising capabilities for Food Safety Early Warning preparedness and response, the latest tool for the comprehensive assessment of national food safety systems that has been tested in various regions.. The FAO representative also noted the previous and/or on-going work of FAO and WHO on emerging issues, such as marine bio-toxins (also in light of climate change impact), the new technologies implications for food safety, including nanotechnologies and whole genome sequencing. The WHO Representative informed about INFOSAN a voluntary network of 186 Member States, which aims to promote rapid exchange of information during food safety related events, and thereby support the containment of international spread of hazards through the food chain. Countries were encouraged to actively participate in INFOSAN<sup>10</sup>. The WHO representative also informed about the tripartite collaboration between FAO, OIE and WHO which also addresses health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces and aims to prevent and control cross-border spread of relevant hazards.
20. While recognizing the importance of keeping critical and emerging issues a standing item on the agenda of CCEURO, it was suggested that to also have a discussion at CAC reflecting on the experiences and information gathered through all RCCs on critical and emerging issues, also identifying more concrete and precise areas that RCCs would recommend the Commission and relevant committees to work on.

### Conclusions

21. The Committee:
- Supported this exercise and recommended that a qualitative angle in the assessment of the data / information submitted is applied in the future when prioritizing needs of the region on food quality and safety and identifying possible approaches to address such issues.
  - Noted that overall, the priority issues identified are: (i) food fraud and food adulteration; (ii) issues related to new technologies and climate change; (iii) issues related to globalization of trade, contaminants (including mycotoxins) and foodborne pathogens; (iv) AMR and new distribution channels; (v) challenges in food safety management along the food chain; (vi) issues related to food additives.
  - Noted that some of the priority issues identified are already being dealt with in subsidiary bodies of CAC, e.g. CCFICS is currently considering issues related to food fraud and food adulteration; contaminants (including mycotoxins), food additives and foodborne pathogens are being discussed in CCCF, CCFA and CCFH, respectively and critical and emerging issues in this area can be raised in these committees; AMR is being considered in the framework of a TF/AMR.
  - Noted that other priority issues identified e.g. globalization of trade or new distribution channels are not currently considered in any Codex fora, however, issues related to globalization and their relevance on food quality and safety are dealt with by other organizations like INFOSAN, and noted that making any specific recommendations in regard to these issues was premature.
  - Noted that as critical and emerging issues will be a standing item on the agendas of RCCs, CAC / CCEXEC should hold regular discussions on critical and emerging issues to allow broader participation of Codex membership.

### ONLINE PLATFORM FOR INFORMATION SHARING ON FOOD SAFETY CONTROL SYSTEMS

22. The WHO Representative introduced the item and referred to the revitalization process and the replacement of different aspects of data and information collection that had previously been done using circular letters (CL). Data and information on national food control systems had previously been collected through a CL, but the response rate had been low and had not allowed for easy access to the information, nor for analysis of the data and information provided. CAC38 (2015) had requested FAO and WHO to develop, in collaboration with the Codex Secretariat, a prototype for information-sharing on food control systems to be ready for testing at the round of RCCs in 2016-2017. In response FAO/WHO developed a prototype of an on-line platform. The primary use and purpose of the platform was to facilitate information exchange between member countries, in addition to allowing for analysis of information.

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[http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas\\_work/infosan/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/infosan/en/)

23. The WHO Representative informed the Committee that considerations related to value of the information, interest in sharing between countries, feasibility of providing the information and clarity and focus in questions had been taken into consideration in determining the set of questions. Questions related to legal frameworks would be linked to and populated by the use of the FAO database on legal instruments (FAOLEX). CCPs would be responsible for gathering information from their countries and uploading information. Once information was published in the on-line system, it would be accessible to all, except for Part F consisting of the self-assessment questions taken from the FAO/WHO Food Control Assessment Tool and consistent with those in the IHR monitoring and evaluation scheme.
24. The WHO Representative requested delegates to provide feedback on the prototype on-line platform including: whether it is fit for purpose; whether the questions included are suitable; other questions that might be included; suggestions for improvement and future development.

### **Discussion**

25. The Chair referred to the request from the Committee at CCEURO29 to know more about institutes working on food safety in countries of the region and it appeared that this had been included in the questions.
26. A delegation called attention to the EU country profiles on food safety which included more or less the same information as that of the on-line platform. One member mentioned that their federal authority for risk assessment published a food safety almanac, including a compilation of information on food safety authorities in other countries. The query was raised on whether a way could be found to transfer information from these sources or provide links.
27. A suggestion was made to consider providing drop down menus to facilitate the choice of answers for some questions, particularly for countries where the national language is not one of the languages of the platform.
28. Difficulties in providing complete information on all monitoring systems was highlighted and a suggestion made to simplify and lighten the burden of populating the system.
29. The WHO Representative noted that the feedback provided would be taken into consideration into future work on the platform.

### **Conclusions**

30. The Committee:
  - Recognized the importance and usefulness of such a platform in view on information exchange, communication and sharing of best practices and contacts among Codex members.
  - Agreed to continue work on the platform and asked FAO and WHO to take account of the suggestions made in view of continuing its development.

### **USE OF CODEX STANDARDS IN THE REGION: RELEVANCE OF EXISTING REGIONAL STANDARDS AND NEED FOR NEW STANDARDS (Agenda Item 4)<sup>11</sup>**

31. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item and noted that the Agenda Item was part of revitalisation process for the RCCs, and it was also a common standing Agenda Item for all the six RCCs. The Secretariat pointed out that the online survey (conducted using software Survey Monkey) aimed at finding quicker and better ways for: collecting, analysing and presenting data; as well as, addressing the challenge of low responses rates experienced during the use of CLs in data collection.
32. The Secretariat explained that the survey focused on the use of the widely known specific horizontal standards (mainly focused on food safety), under the following two broad categories: (i) numerical food safety standards (i.e. MRLs of pesticides in food and feed, MLs contaminants in food and feed and MLs for food additives) and (ii) general subject standards (i.e. General Principles of Food Hygiene (including HACCP system) and General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985)).
33. The Secretariat highlighted the key findings of the survey on the degree of application of Codex standards and some of the qualitative challenges limiting their uptake in the region as reported by respondents. She explained that overall Codex standards and related texts were taking into account when developing national regulations and standards on food quality and safety. Deviations were more evident with numerical standards such as MLs and MRLs basically due to different approaches in risk assessment between EFSA and the FAO/WHO scientific advisory bodies to Codex or the need to adjust such standards to the specific needs of the countries due to e.g. different consumption patterns, contamination levels, etc. Compliance with general food safety texts such as labeling and hygiene were more widely accomplished and deviations mainly referred to the need to build up on additional requirements to address the specific needs of countries of the Region.

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<sup>11</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/5

34. As regards the limitation in the uptake of Codex standards due to their unavailability in Russian, the Secretariat informed the Committee that funds had been allocated to get all Codex standards and related texts translated in the languages of CAC including Russian and that this was an ongoing process.
35. The Committee noted presentations from the Russian Federation and EU on their experiences on the use of Codex standards thanked them for their valuable inputs in the discussion of this matter.

### **Discussion**

36. The Committee agreed to focus its discussion on the questions put forward in paragraph 13 of CX/EURO 16/30/5 as follows:

#### *Scope of the survey*

- General standards elaborated by CCFICS should also be taken into account in the next survey, as these standards were important in international food trade and should be adhered to;
- Consideration should also be given to including some specific commodity standards as these could provide some useful information on the use of these standards by Codex members;
- Standards related to critical issues of interest to the region, (e.g. standards and related texts developed by CCNFSDU) should also be included;

#### *Storage and Use of the results/information*

- The results of the survey should be stored for future reference; as it could be useful in assessing the impact of some actions, like the relationship between translation of Codex standards and their uptake in the CCEURO region, a sub-set of the online platform on sharing information on food control systems could be an option to storage such information;
- The survey provided useful data and information to countries; that the data could be aggregated such that the outcomes of the survey reflected both the regional and global perspective; and that such results could be used by other regions to inform the Commission and the wider membership about the status of the use of Codex standards in the different parts of world.

#### *Other considerations*

- Translation of Codex standards into additional languages of CAC would be useful to facilitate transposition into national legislations
- Technical assistance or other sources of support in this area should be considered by CCEURO members in order to facilitate uptake of Codex standards into national regulations;
- Consideration should also be given to the need to take into account regional and national specifics, demographics including possible national deviations to Codex standards and in this regard technical assistance may also be needed to assist countries to build up their national regulations on Codex standards;

### **Conclusion**

37. The Committee:
  - Noted and that there was support to continue with this exercise in RCCs.
  - Noted the comments and suggestions made, and that these would be taken into account in the next round of survey for consideration by CCEURO members.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 5)<sup>12</sup>**

38. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item and informed the Committee on the latest discussion on the revitalization process in RCCs and the preparation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The Committee agreed to discuss the matter on the strategic plan under Agenda Item 7.
39. The Chair noted that CCEURO dealt with diverse horizontal matters, and that while the new approach on revitalization was for information, it was important for CCEURO to reflect on how best the revitalization processes could be reshaped to make it useful and meaningful to the Region.

### **Discussion**

40. The Committee agreed to exchange views on the revitalization process in general and noted the following issues would assist in shaping the process:

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<sup>12</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/6

- In addition to raise the profile of RCCs by bringing together food safety regulators to discuss key food quality and safety matters relevant to the Region that may fill in Codex, FAO and WHO work plans to better address the needs and concerns of the Region, revitalization of CCEURO should still serve as an opportunity to pull together the CCPs in the Region to meet and share experiences, and also undertake capacity building activities such as training on Codex related work;
- RCCs should provide networking opportunities for members as discussions tend to focus on cross-sectional or horizontal issues; promote mutual understanding, build trust, and establish confidence between members. Furthermore, RCCs should also assist in unifying approaches within the Region and thus should enrich submission on needs and concerns of the Region to the Commission;
- The support and leadership provided by the parent organizations (i.e. FAO and WHO) and the Coordinator on revitalization, has created a clearer direction for CCEURO, generated interesting discussions in the Region, and provided more effective representation in CCEXEC;
- CCEURO is the oldest among the six RCCs, with the largest memberships and therefore revitalization should provide an opportunity for the Region to widen the horizons; build bridges, enhance mutual understanding and build confidence among members; and with different RCCs.
- Besides considering the common Agenda items provided for under the revitalization process, other RCCs, e.g. CCNASWP, CCASIA, also consider regional standards, and successfully organize a number of side events which promote networking among members within these two regions. Such experiences from other regions will assist in the continuous improvement of the processes in the CCEURO region.
- In future consideration needed to be given to development of regional standards aimed at addressing specific regional needs e.g. fortification of wheat flour with iron.

41. The FAO Representative welcomed the presentations made during the session especially those that complemented the keynote speech and priority issues on food quality and safety. The Representative therefore proposed that the theme “Innovations in food and agriculture” be considered as a regular side event to promote sharing of information on local culture and scientific achievements within countries of the Region and also as part of foresight for early information on potential food safety implications.
42. The WHO Representative called attention to recent developments in the CCNASWP region where the previous Coordinator had given substantial assistance to the new Coordinator as well as providing financial assistance for many countries of the region to attend CCNASWP. These were excellent examples of South-South cooperation and providing mentoring or assistance to build capacity between countries in the same region.
43. With regard to CCASIA, the Representative highlighted that the region was similar in some aspects to CCEURO as it was very heterogeneous in the level of Codex capacity in the different countries of the region. At the same time different approaches were adopted to the revitalization process with members of CCASIA strongly supporting, for example, a broader approach to themes being addressed in the keynote speeches. A theme that recurred repeatedly throughout CCASIA was the commitment to information-sharing and communication.

### **Conclusion**

44. The Committee:
  - Noted the views expressed by members; and agreed that revitalization would involve learning from each other the best practices.
  - Noted that the learning exercise will entail an inclusive process as well as application of relevant languages of CAC in the work of CCEURO.
  - Agreed that CCEURO should continue to exchange views on the important subject of “innovation in food and standards perspective” to help tap into the ongoing best practices.

### **CODEx WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 6)<sup>13</sup>**

45. The Chair introduced the item and informed the Committee that the use of growth promoters continued to be of concern in the CCEURO region. He also recalled that the EU had opposed the development of Codex standards in the field of growth promoters, and that previous discussions of these substances (e.g. ractopamine) in Codex had proven to be rather harmful and polarizing to the Codex process in general.

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<sup>13</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/7

46. The Chair summarized the key points raised in CX/EURO 16/30/7(REV) and drew the attention of the Committee to some discussion points raised in the document e.g. animal welfare, use of Codex/JECFA resources, consumer perception and trade disputes.
47. The Chair highlighted that it was important for CCEURO members to exchange views on use of Zilpaterol in order to carefully develop positions and prepare strategies for the upcoming discussion of this matter in Codex as well as to be able to explain these positions to the broader Codex audience. The objective of the paper was therefore to stimulate exchange of views that would shape the directions of discussions on Zilpaterol and how best to better proceed.
48. The Co-Chair noted that in Kazakhstan red meat was an important part of the diet, as it provided the largest part of protein in the diet and mentioned the need to prepare delegations to get equipped with relevant data and information on the situations pertaining to their countries.

### **Discussion**

49. The Committee held a general discussion on the issues raised by the Chair in document CX/EURO 16/30/6 and noted the following views and concerns of CCEURO members:
  - There are fundamental differences among Codex members on the use of substances such as Zilpaterol as growth promoters.
  - The polarized discussion around growth promoters such as ractopamine and the subsequent vote did not benefit worldwide harmonization through the standard setting process in Codex.
  - JECFA and Codex should focus their scarce resource to work on issues of global importance, rather than on assessing and discussing MRLs for substances used as growth promoters. In this regard, note was made that there was no consensus on the investment of scarce Codex and JECFA resources to have zilpaterol high on the priority list of CCRVDF
  - In several CCEURO member countries, the use of growth promoters was prohibited through legislation, and such legislations would not change in the foreseeable future.
  - The ongoing global action on Antimicrobial Resistance by the United Nations, as well as the call by FAO and WHO on the reduction of the use antibiotics as growth promoters requires a consistency approach between the work of Codex and the Policies and Strategies of the parent organizations.
  - There is a general support within CCEURO members for having use of these substances phased out, and lack of support to invest additional Codex resources in addressing this matter.
  - Dedication of Codex resources to Zilpaterol and related substances could be perceived as an encouragement towards their use.

### **Conclusion**

50. The Committee:
  - Noted unanimous views of CCEURO members on the use of growth promoters and the establishment of Codex MRLs for such substances expressed during the discussion.
  - Reaffirmed the need for Codex, including JECFA, to focus their scarce resources on subjects of global importance, rather than investing much effort into those that would affect negatively Codex processes.
  - Recalled that the issue of AMR is at the top of the Codex agenda, and endorsing work on growth promoters might have a negative effect on achieving the objective to combat AMR.

## **MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019 (STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCEURO 2014 – 2019 – STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION) (Agenda Item 7)**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCEURO 2014-2019 – STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

51. The Delegation of The Netherlands introduced the item and explained that CCEURO29 (2014) considered the draft regional Strategic Plan and agreed that Netherlands and Ukraine would further elaborate the plan for consideration at its next session. The Delegation recalled that the main goal of the regional plan was to enhance effectiveness of CCEURO region in Codex meetings and also address specific regional needs and concerns.



52. The Delegation noted that since 2014, a new situation had emerged including the ongoing revitalization of the RCCs; and discussions within CCEXEC70 and CAC38 on the development of the new Codex Strategic Plan (2020-2025). She pointed out that the evolving situation therefore called for a re-assessment by CCEURO on the need to continue with the development of a regional strategic plan; or to work towards contributing to the development of the Codex Strategic Plan taking into account the needs and concerns of the Region. The Delegation informed the Committee that CCNASWP and CCASIA had decided to discontinue developing their regional strategic plans but rather contribute to the global strategic plan; and that CCEURO should also consider this pathway.
53. The Chair noted that Codex had already an overarching strategic plan (2014-2019); and that it would be important for CCEURO to participate in the discussions of the new strategic plan. He therefore proposed that the Committee should discontinue the development of the regional strategic plan but instead prepare to actively contribute to the proposed new strategic plan 2020-2025.

### Discussion

54. The Committee noted the following views from delegations in this regard:
- Following discussions in CAC and CCEXEC in the framework of the revitalization of RCCs and the next update of the current Codex Strategic Plan, the development of regional strategic plans are no longer relevant therefore full engagement in contributing to the implementation of the global plan seem more appropriate at present;
  - Noted that the existing draft document of the regional strategic plan would be vital during the discussions of the proposed new Codex Strategic Plan and therefore the document should remain accessible to CCEURO members as an internal document, that would be used to provide guidance on actions leading to strengthening the work and role of CCEURO within the Region (e.g. on the CCEURO website).
  - CCEURO should take advantage of having the Codex Strategic Plan as a standing Agenda Item on all the agendas of RCCs: to familiarize members of the Region with the goals, objectives and activities of the global plan; to encourage the delivery of its main aims and outcomes; and to ensure that inputs from the Region are conveyed when a new Strategic Plan is drawn up by Codex.
  - There were some elements in the regional plan that should not be lost; but should rather be further developed and implemented, such as the organization of pre-session meetings for CCEURO members prior to/in the margin of Codex meetings. Such an activity would assist in strengthening communication and information exchange, building trust and understanding and identifying common views on which shared position could be presented.

### Conclusion

55. Noting the emerging situation in Codex processes including the revitalisation of RCCs, and the general support by members to actively participate in the development of the new Codex Strategic Plan, the Committee agreed to discontinue the development of the regional strategic plan, and to keep the draft regional plan as an internal reference document that would inform its activities.

### LANGUAGE POLICY IN CCEURO (Agenda Item 8)<sup>14</sup>

56. The Codex Secretariat introduced the paper and noted that the Committee first considered the use of Russian as a working language at CCEURO29 (2014) where the proposal by Coordinator to request the Commission to consider the possibility to finance translation and interpretation services in Russian for the operation of CCEURO was agreed. CAC38 (2015) noted the language regime discussion in CCEURO and agreed that the Coordinator in collaboration with the Codex Secretariat should prepare a paper in order to assist CCEURO in its deliberations on ways to accommodate Russian as a working language in CCEURO.
57. The Secretariat explained that the document contained factual information on the use of Russian language in Codex, in particular, in sessions of CAC and CCEURO, and referred to the changing situation in Codex membership for the past 15 years with a growing affiliation of Russian-speaking countries which had a primarily impact on the work of CCEURO.

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<sup>14</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/9

58. The Secretariat further referred to the Rules of Procedure governing language regime (Rule XIV) and budget expenses (Rule XIII) of CAC and its subsidiary bodies in particular RCCs and noted that Rule XIV.4 stated that the languages of subsidiary bodies set up under Rule XI.1(b) (which included RCCs) shall include at least two of the languages of CAC. In addition Rule XIII.2 states that the estimate of expenditures shall make provisions for the operating expenses of CAC and the subsidiary bodies established under Rule XI.1(b)(ii) (which correspond to RCCs). In line with these requirements, the Codex Secretariat covered the cost of translation and interpretation services for three languages of CAC i.e. English, French and Spanish as languages of CCEURO. Besides, the Coordinator (The Netherlands at present) covered the cost of translation and interpretation services of an additional language of CAC i.e. Russian.
59. With regard to the possibility to include Russian language, considering that the Codex Secretariat already provided for three as opposed to the minimum of two languages for the operation of CCEURO, and as the Coordinator was providing extra-funding to make available an additional language of CAC i.e. Russian, the Secretariat reiterated that, it was not in the position to sustainably provide more resources for translation and/or interpretation services for an additional language in CCEURO (i.e. Russian) under the current budget situation. She further informed the Committee that in accordance with Rule XIV.2 other languages which are working languages either of FAO or WHO may be added by CAC under the specific conditions described in this Rule.
60. The Representatives of FAO and WHO highlighted the importance of RCCs to the work of Codex and to the parent organizations. Information-sharing, communication and inclusiveness had been highlighted by CCEURO members as key to building trust and mutual understanding and these were also central to all work undertaken by FAO and WHO in support of Codex. At the same time, the representatives of FAO and WHO recalled the discussion that had taken place at CAC38 (2015), and they further highlighted the need of having available funds for Codex used in the most effective way, as well as the need to take into consideration the multiple areas of work that require sustainable funding (e.g. scientific advice, capacity development, AMR etc.). These aspects, together with the importance to carefully consider which languages would better foster inclusive engagement in the committee's deliberations, required careful evaluation so that the Codex membership could take informed decisions. FAO/WHO reiterated their readiness to support this in the best ways possible.
61. The Chair noted that the current situation in the Region presented a very different setting than fifty years ago (when CCEURO was established), with Russian as the language most widely spoken in the European region, and therefore stressed the need to adapt to the evolved situation by having Russian as a language of CCEURO. He invited CCEURO members to provide their views on the matter.

### **Discussion**

62. The Delegation of Spain noted that the Committee had been using Spanish as a third language which had contributed to making the work of the Committee a global point of reference. The Delegation recognized multilingualism as one of the fundamental values of the multilateral system and considered very interesting the inclusion of additional languages in this Committee, however this must not undermine linguistic practices that had been followed up to date.
63. The Delegation of France supported the position by Spain, noted that their country was very attached to multilingualism, and that they were also in favour of having Russian as a working language.
64. The Delegation of the Russian Federation noted that WHO and FAO classified Russian as an official language, noting that Russian was widely spoken in the European region either as a first or second language of communication, and therefore it made sense to have Russian as an official language of CCEURO.
65. Several delegations indicated that a number of countries of the Region were members of the Eurasian Economic Union where Russian was an official language and that the availability of Russian language in CCEURO and Codex in general would facilitate national and regional harmonization with Codex standards as well as more active participation of CCEURO members in the work of Codex at both regional and worldwide level.

### **Conclusion**

66. The Committee:
  - Noted the unanimously support to the inclusion of Russian as a language of CCEURO and
  - Agreed to request the CAC40 to consider funding translation and interpretation services in Russian for the effective operation of CCEURO.

## **THE INVOLVEMENT OF RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NATIONAL CODEX PROCESS (Agenda Item 9)<sup>15</sup>**

67. The Chair introduced the item and pointed out that Codex process was based on the principles of openness, inclusiveness and transparency in terms of participation and access to documents, which were made publicly available on the Codex website. He further noted that membership of Codex was composed of member countries, one member organization, international organizations, e.g. OIE, industry, trader and consumers' associations, as well as the general public.
68. The Chair further noted that preparations for Codex meetings by all stakeholders were essential and these would involve consultation processes at the national or regional level, which were not always easy. He noted the difficulty in involving some stakeholders, including consumer organizations, and in conveying the importance of Codex standards, which were the basis for legislation on food safety in many countries. He further noted that an additional step taken in many cases was the involvement of Parliamentarians at the national and European level.
69. He also asked CCEURO members to share their experience on matters related to transparency and stakeholder involvement in developing national positions, and proposed that to stimulate discussions on this matter, presentations be made by the delegations of Denmark, Germany and an observer member from outside the region (United States of America).

### **Discussion**

70. The Committee discussed document CX/EURO 16/30/10 as well as information presented by Denmark, Germany and USA and noted the following issues raised by CCEURO members:
  - Different mechanisms exist in different countries for consulting and involving stakeholders in developing national positions. These could be informed of formal meetings with stakeholders; specialized Committees, etc.
  - Stakeholders' involvement in the Codex standard setting process is relevant and it should be encouraged by members, also in view of a greater engagement by governments on Codex work.
  - Consumer participation is also deemed important, but difficulties were highlighted by members including: limited resources to support participation, documents in languages that consumer organizations do not usually use, and documents written in technical language, which were normally not fully understood.
  - Involvement of industry and other stakeholders could lead to conflict of interest, however there were various possibilities in managing such conflicts/situation i.e. in some countries industry was not to constitute part of delegation, while in others they could be part of the delegation, but strict rules were in place to avoid misunderstandings of their participation.
  - Various mechanisms for sharing Codex documents and information including bi-weekly newsletter, publication of positions in official government gazettes, and emails.
  - Establishing a Codex information system in governments could be one possibility to ensure transparency and reach more stakeholders, and noted that this could be done by adding links to national websites on food safety on the CCP profiles on the Codex website.
  - There are guidelines at the Commission level on how to involve NGOs at the international level, which is considered important in the Codex framework.

### **Conclusion**

71. The Committee noted that:
  - Transparency and stakeholder participation is an important part of Codex work.
  - Different ways of ensuring transparency and stakeholder involvement exist in different countries.
  - It is easier to involve industry than consumer organizations however efforts should be made to involve all interested parties, including consumer organizations, when discussing Codex documents in preparation for Codex meetings
  - CCEURO members will continue sharing best practices in order to learn from each other.

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<sup>15</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/10

**NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 10)<sup>16</sup>**

72. The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to CAC40 (2017) that Kazakhstan be appointed as Coordinator for Europe for the first term. The Delegation of Kazakhstan thanked all delegations for their support and accepted the nomination.
73. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking as Chair of CAC, thanked The Netherlands for their excellent contribution to the work of CCEURO in their four year tenure as the Regional Coordinator, and highlighted that the networking events organized by The Netherlands, not only advanced the mandate of CCEURO but also added value to its work through mutual exchange of information and coordination on Codex work within the Region. She wished Kazakhstan, success in its endeavors as newly nominated Coordinator of CCEURO and called upon Members of the Region to support Kazakhstan in their leading role as Coordinator of CCEURO.

**OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 11)<sup>17</sup>****RELATIONS BETWEEN FAO AND WHO POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES AND CODEX WORK – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION FROM CCEXEC71 AND CAC39**

74. The WHO Representative introduced the document which was for information purposes only. The Representative highlighted that, as Codex was a joint program operating under FAO and WHO, and the membership of FAO and WHO was basically identical to that of Codex, there was an expectation that Codex standards would not contradict FAO and WHO policies, strategies and guidelines. Instead, Codex work should be supportive of the resolutions adopted by FAO and WHO governing bodies. FAO and WHO presented an analysis paper on this matter at CCEXEC71 (2016), however due to the late availability of the document, full discussion could not take place. CAC39 (2016) thus decided that the discussion should pursue at CCEXEC73 (2017) to allow countries ample time to appraise the paper.
75. The WHO Representative reminded the Committee that linking up Codex work with WHO policies and strategies adopted by the World Health Assembly sometimes took time as was the case for the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. For the Global Action Plan on AMR, it went moderately fast. The Representative informed the Committee that in CCASIA20 (2016), WHO had taken a more proactive role and proposed new work on labelling that could accompany the proposal from one country to develop a regional commodity standard on an alcoholic beverage. Although the new work proposal was not approved by CCASIA for other reasons, there was good support from CCASIA to WHO's initiative to help ensure that Codex work was coherent with and supportive of policies and strategies adopted in FAO and WHO.

**WORKSHOP ON CTF2**

76. The WHO Representative briefed the Committee on the Workshop on CTF2 that took place Monday 3 October prior to the plenary session. The full information on the side event was available in CRD 9.

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 12)**

77. The Committee was informed that its 31<sup>st</sup> Session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to Members following the appointment of the Coordinator by CAC40 (2017) and consultation with the Codex Secretariat.

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<sup>16</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/11

<sup>17</sup> CX/EURO 16/30/11; CRD 9 (Summary on the Side Event on CTF2).

## Appendix II

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PROF. JAAP WAGENAAR,  
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ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR) FROM A CODEX / FOOD SAFETY PERSPECTIVE**

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is recognized as an increasing problem of global concern. The recent O'Neill report showed that, when no action is taken to intervene, the number of death per year attributable to AMR will increase from 700,000 in 2016 to 10 million in 2050 (O'Neill, 2016).

Global organizations recognized this problem and WHO, FAO and OIE, all adopted resolutions on containment of AMR in their respective general assemblies in 2015. The General Assembly of the UN adopted a resolution on AMR in September 2016. The Codex Commission decided in July 2016 to (re)install a Task Force on AMR.

People in the general population are exposed to AMR in different ways, amongst them through resistant bacteria present in the food chain. Examples that are known for decades are Salmonella and Campylobacter that became resistant due to the use of antimicrobials in animals and humans became exposed and infected after the contamination of food of animal origin. A more recently discovered example is Extended Beta-Lactamase producing Escherichia coli (ESBL), although there are still many questions to solve about transmission routes.

The attribution of AMR in humans pathogens to the use of antimicrobials in animals is difficult to estimate. This is (partly) due to the fact that this will be the resultant of a series of percentages for each combination of antimicrobial class-bacteria species. Some stakeholders propose to wait with actions till more quantitative data are available. In Europe, however, actions are proposed based on the precautionary principle: if there is a plausible risk for public health, actions can be implemented to protect the public for this harm. The driving force for AMR is the use of antimicrobials in animals and humans. Therefore, an important intervention is to reduce antimicrobial use (AMU). Here is a huge challenge as predictions indicate that in 2030 there will be a 67% increase in use of antimicrobials in animals in the world.

In the Netherlands a >60% reduction of AMU in production animal from 2007-2015 has led to a reduction in AMR as measured in the surveillance system and with no or very limited effects on animals health and welfare. The reduction of use of 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> generation cephalosporins in poultry, pig and cattle has resulted in a reduction in ESBL-producing bacteria in these production animals. These example show that a reduction in use (either for all classes or specific antimicrobials) has an effect on AMR.

Policy to reduce use of antimicrobials in animals around the world requires a tailor-made approach for regions and countries. In countries with over the counter availability of antimicrobials, lack of professional advice, lack of regulation and enforcement of laws, problems with counterfeit drugs, and with basic shortcomings in animal health, the reduction of use will meet more challenges than making changes in countries where at least part of these challenges are already regulated.

Given the urgent need for reduction in use of antimicrobials, a couple of measures can be considered, depending on the situational context. To reduce the use of antimicrobials the following options are proposed: i) as the ban of antimicrobial growth promoters has not led to serious economic or animal health problems in Europe since the ban (2006), this seems to be a feasible measure; ii) the most prioritized Critically Important Antimicrobials for human use (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> generation cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones) should not be available for use in animals unless it has been shown (through culture and susceptibility testing) that no alternatives are available; iii) group treatment should be replaced by individual treatment (taking into account that for poultry individual treatment is not an option for production animals); iv) animal health must be optimized through e.g. vaccination and increased biosecurity instead of using antimicrobials as management tool.

Antimicrobials should be available by prescription only. Surveillance systems for AMR and AMU should be in place, preferably also with registration of animal health and welfare parameters. Mandatory targets for reduction given by the authorities are important to enforce the reduction. Finally, there should also be attention for the environment; for both residues (low concentrations of antimicrobials resulting in selection pressure) and the transmission of resistant bacteria through the environment. All stakeholders have their responsibility; amongst them food producers, veterinarians and regulators. Only when we work together following a One Health approach, exemplified by the Tripartite collaboration of WHO, FAO and OIE, we can make the changes that are urgently needed.