



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

*30th Session, 3 – 7 October 2016
Astana, Kazakhstan*

COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Agenda Item 3 a and b

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION and PRIORITISATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM

(CX/EURO16/30/3 and CX/EURO 16/30/4)

A. Food Safety and Quality Situation in Countries of the Region

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for their paper on Food Safety and Quality Situation in Countries of the EURO region (CX/EURO 16/30/3) and for the information gathered from the survey on critical and emerging food safety and quality issues. The information gathered is useful in feeding into agenda item 3 b on the prioritisation of the needs of the region.

Identifying issues that could be of regulatory significance for action at either the regional or global level is useful in driving forward the Codex agenda and in ensuring Codex remains able to provide workable and timely responses to the food safety and quality challenges ahead. It is important to find the balance between being proactive on this front whilst also respecting the Codex mandate and not straying into areas which can be better addressed by the work of other organisations. In this respect, the EUMS consider the survey to have been both useful at collecting ideas and in helping us to now prioritise those areas where we feel resources should be channelled.

Notwithstanding the overall usefulness of the exercise, the approach did prove to be somewhat cumbersome as the topics that have come forward have been enormously broad in range. Equally, there seems to be a tendency to prioritise the areas for action on the basis of the frequency with which the issue was named. This would seem to overlook qualitative effects such as the cost of inaction, which are additional considerations that would allow us to determine where to focus our efforts. Finally some attempt at standardising, or providing some form of template to conduct such work in the future, in advance of issuing the survey, could have been helpful to avoid overlap or repetition. The EUMS would therefore encourage the FAO and WHO to thus introduce a qualitative angle to their assessment in order to prioritise critical and emerging issues on both a quantitative and qualitative basis.

CCEURO might also wish to consider the possibility to be informed of, and to feed into, similar work conducted by other regions. This would provide a welcome insight into the work of other regions and help avoid duplication and overlap of effort and resources.

Given that critical and emerging issues will be a standing item on the agendas of regional committees, it would be useful if CCEURO were to consider recommending the CAC to hold a regular discussion on critical and emerging issues in which the entire Codex membership could participate.

B. Prioritisation of the Needs of the Region and Possible Approaches to address them

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for document (CX/EURO 16/30/4) on the Prioritisation of the Needs of the EURO Region and Possible Approaches to address them.

The EUMS welcome the opportunity to discuss what the priorities for CCEURO might be with other members of the region. We also hope to share some examples which are relevant to our experience in the EU.

In addition, the EUMS would like to propose in the area of food fraud – in light of ongoing work being handled by CCFICS – that a collaborative approach could be established between CCEURO and other regions. This would be in line with one of conclusions of CAC38 where it noted interregional co-operation as an opportunity to exchange experience in the context of the revitalisation of regional committees. Members from CCEURO, CCNASWP and CCNEA (where the proposal for food fraud originated) are involved in moving the work forward. It could thus be useful to propose interregional co-operation between CCEURO, CCNASWP and CCNEA to describe the desired outcomes of the work on food fraud/authenticity.

Agenda Item 7**MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-19 – STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION****(CX/EURO16/30/8)**

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for document CX/EURO 16/30/8 on the Codex Strategic Plan, outlining the discussion that has taken place within CCEURO on a regional Strategic Plan.

The EUMS agree with the recommendation to no longer proceed with presenting a draft CCEURO Strategic Plan for the period 2014-19 given the fact that the General Strategic Plan is a tool that is readily accessible to, and used by, the members of the region. Equally, we agree to discontinue the development of an official Strategic Plan for CCEURO preferring to engage more fully with seeking opportunities to bring the general Strategic Plan to life.

In this regard, given that the Codex Strategic Plan is set to be a standing item on the agenda of the CCCEURO – as with all regional committees, the CCEURO could consider the usefulness of using this item to familiarise members of the region with the objectives and content of the general Strategic Plan, to encourage the delivery of its main aims & outcomes and to ensure that input from the region is conveyed whenever a new Strategic Plan is drawn up for Codex.

Agenda Item 9**STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL CODEX PROCESS**

The Member States of the European Union (MSEU) are pleased to submit the following views on stakeholder participation in the national Codex process.

The MSEU believe that involvement of stakeholders in the process to prepare national positions on Codex standards is in general very useful and important. The establishment of the initial national position and its subsequent review can indeed benefit significantly from the input and views provided by stakeholders, in particular those who will be directly concerned by future Codex standards or those who will be involved in ensuring their implementation. In addition, seeking input from stakeholders at an early stage can avoid problems later and can also contribute significantly to the acceptance of the Codex standards once adopted.

The modalities for stakeholder involvement may vary significantly from one EU Member State to another. This depends on a number of factors, such as the competences, the working methods and the available resources of the national Codex contact points in the Member States. Stakeholder involvement may take the form of a formal and continuous consultation process, e.g. through regular meetings or via permanent dialogue platforms. Stakeholders may also be involved on an ad-hoc basis, e.g. by inviting them to participate in an electronic consultation process or an internet-based survey on a specific issue.

As regards the level of involvement of stakeholders and their concrete input into the national Codex process, this is largely determined by the extent to which they are familiar with the role and functioning of the Codex Alimentarius. In situations where the level of involvement seems insufficient, the national Codex contact points could endeavour to identify specific target groups that can be invited to provide input.

Finally, as regards transparency in the participation of stakeholders (including consumers) in the national Codex process, here again the situation may vary from one EU Member State to another. In general, we consider openness and accountability towards the general public essential requirements for stakeholder involvement at national level.