

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

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**ALINORM 97/19**

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

**CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

Twenty-second Session  
Geneva, 23-28 June 1997

**REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CODEX  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

Uppsala, Sweden, 23 - 26 April 1996

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions of the 20th 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 seek the advice of the Executive Committee on the extension of the acceptance procedure to all Codex texts and the review of current adoption procedures (para. 25)
- proposed to prioritize standards and related texts on the basis of the list to be established by the SPS Committee as a first stage (para. 25)
- agreed to nominate Dr. Felipe Mittelbrunn Garcia (Spain) for appointment as Regional Coordinator by the 21st Session of the Commission (para. 60)

### **Other matters of interest to the Commission:**

The Committee:

- expressed its support for pursuing its activities regarding the exchange of information on food legislation and food control; it was especially useful to those countries which were reviewing their national food control systems and could benefit from the experience of other countries (para. 29)
- agreed that coordination efforts should be pursued regarding technical assistance and training in the Region (para. 42)
- 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. 27)
- reviewed the measures taken by governments to improve consumer participation in the formulation of food legislation and encouraged governments to involve consumers in the preparation of Codex meetings at the national level (para. 54)

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**OPENING OF THE SESSION (Agenda Item 1)**

1. The Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe held its Twentieth Session from 23 to 26 April 1996 in Uppsala, by courtesy of the Government of Sweden, under the chairmanship of Dr. Stuart Slorach, Coordinator for Europe, Deputy Director General of the National Food Administration. The Session was attended by 47 delegates from 19 countries and three International Organizations. A complete list of participants including the Secretariat is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.
2. The Chairman invited Mr. Curt Malmberg, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture to open the Session. Mr. Malmberg welcomed the Delegates and informed the Committee that since the previous session in 1994, Sweden had joined the European Union and in the process had harmonized nearly all of its food legislation with that of the EU. He noted that the signing of the GATT Agreement and the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) had also taken place since the last session and with the special status given to Codex standards, guidelines and Codes of Practice in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements, the importance of the work of Codex had greatly increased. He emphasized the importance of clarifying the connection between Codex standards and the SPS and TBT agreements as soon as possible.
3. Mr. Malmberg informed the Committee that Sweden fully supported the principle adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Codex standards should be based on sound scientific principles and risk analysis and he emphasized that other factors such as animal welfare, consumer and ethical considerations should also be taken into account when developing Codex standards. He noted Sweden's support for the role of food labelling in protecting the health of consumers and in promoting fair practices in the food trade, particularly to protect consumers who are allergic to certain food components. Mr. Malmberg drew attention to the important role to be played by consumer organizations in the development of Codex standards more widely acceptable in consumer circles.
4. As countries from within and outside the European Union were participating in the session, Delegations were urged to take the opportunity in the course of their discussions to exchange information and experience on questions related to food legislation and food control in the European Region. Noting the important subjects to be discussed during the Session, Mr. Malmberg 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 96/1.

**MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 3)<sup>1</sup>**

6. The Committee recalled the recommendations of the Commission concerning the scientific basis of Codex standards and related texts and agreed that existing standards should be carefully reviewed in this light; however, consideration should also be given to other aspects in the decision-making process, especially consumer concerns and labelling requirements.
7. With reference to the recommendations of the Expert Consultations on Risk Analysis and their implementation at the level of the relevant Codex Committees, the delegation of Germany drew the attention of the Committee to the need to clarify definitions in these area and to the relevance of Environmental Health Criteria 170 as related to exposure. It was also recalled that a Circular Letter had been sent out to request

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<sup>1</sup> CX/EURO 96/2

further comments on the definitions, which would be examined by the Committee on General Principles with a view to incorporating the risk analysis concept into Codex procedures.

8. The Committee was informed that, following its earlier proposal to appoint host countries as Coordinators, a paper would be prepared for consideration by CCGP. In reply to a request for clarification on the status of the Representative, following earlier consideration of this issue, the CCEXEC (39th Session) had reasserted that the role of the Representative was to represent the Region as Member of the CCEXEC, while the Coordinator, as an Observer, advised the CCEXEC of the views of the Region on Codex matters.

## **REPORT ON FOOD SAFETY/FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION SINCE THE 19TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 4)<sup>2</sup>**

### **A. Selected Joint FAO/WHO Activities**

9. In addition to the activities presented in the document, the Committee was informed that preparations were underway to convene a joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Biotechnology, tentatively scheduled to be held in October 1996.

### **B. Selected FAO Activities**

#### **1. World Food Summit (13 - 17 November 1996)**

10. The Committee was informed of consultations which had taken place between the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf, and a large number of Heads of State and Governments on the need to convene a conference on food security. The 28th session of the FAO Conference (October 1995) had called for a World Food Summit at the level of Heads of State or Governments which received the unanimous endorsement of the United Nations General Assembly. The objective of the Summit is to renew the commitment of world leaders at the highest level to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the achievement of lasting food security for all. The summit is expected to lead to the adoption of appropriate policies and strategies at the international and national levels, as well as a plan of action for implementation by all parties concerned. The summit will have a global perspective in dealing with all aspects of food security and will address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition in all parts of the world, while incorporating specific regional dimensions of the problems and their solutions.

11. A series of technical papers highlighting issues and options will be submitted, prepared by FAO, the World Bank, regional development banks, IFAD, WFP and other UN specialized Agencies covering food production and population growth, ethics, environmental impact, nutrition, and international trade. Papers have been invited from all countries for the summit.

12. The Committee was also informed that the technical papers under preparation included discussions on food safety issues as related to food security, including the role played by Codex recommendations.

#### **2. FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)**

13. The Committee was informed of FAO assistance programmes in a number of Central and Eastern European countries to restructure and strengthen food control systems, including redrafting of national food laws to reflect changes to a market economy and harmonization with EC requirements and Codex standards. Discussion of this item emphasized the very practical role to be played by the Regional and Sub-Regional Offices in providing technical support, cooperation and coordination of TCP projects to keep countries and other

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<sup>2</sup> CX/EURO 96/3

Agencies well informed of these activities to prevent duplication. Interest was expressed in FAO guidelines on a model food law, which could be used as a legal framework, but flexible enough to allow for the incorporation of local specificities, food contamination, and food control systems. Interest was also expressed in a data base covering bilateral projects planned or underway in the sub-region by countries, other international organizations and FAO.

### 3. Regional Activities

14. The Committee was informed of FAO activities in Eastern and Central Europe, including a Seminar on Management of Food Control Programmes for Eastern and Central Europe, held in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic (November 1994); a Workshop on Food Security and Quality of Food, held in cooperation with the Food Research Institute of Bratislava, Slovak Republic (September 1994); and a Workshop on Veterinary Drugs held in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary (March 1996).

15. In reply to a question, the Committee was informed that the report of the FAO Expert Consultation on Food Fortification (November 1995) was currently under preparation and the report of the Consultation on Food Allergies (November 1995) had been finalized and would be available to the next session of the Committee on Food Labelling, scheduled to discuss those aspects of the matter relating to food labelling.

16. The Observer from CISDA noted that while consensus had been expressed for the horizontal approach to food standardization, this concept needed further implementation at the country level as import requirements might still rely on detailed vertical legislation. The Secretariat indicated that this issue had been considered specifically by a Joint FAO/PAHO Workshop on Imported Food Control prior to the last session of the CCLAC (April 1995), where it had been recommended to incorporate risk analysis techniques into import control procedures.

### C. Selected WHO Activities

17. The representative of WHO informed the Committee of several recent activities in food safety being implemented by WHO either in the light of the health-relevant Agreements of the World Trade Organization, or, as a follow-up to the FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition (ICN).

18. The Committee was also informed of the WHO Surveillance Programme for Control of Foodborne Infections and Intoxications in Europe and the WHO European Programme on Monitoring and Assessment of Dietary Exposure to Potentially Hazardous Substances (GEMS/Food-EURO). The active participation of Member States in both regional programmes was strongly encouraged. With regard to the coordination of WHO's regional activities, the Committee was informed that a food safety programme would shortly be established in WHO's Regional Office for Europe (Copenhagen) to operate in tandem with the existing WHO European Centre for Environment and Health.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION ARISING FROM THE WTO AGREEMENTS ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES AND TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE (INCLUDING ACCEPTANCE OF CODEX STANDARDS) (Agenda Item 5)**

19. With reference to the recommendations of the Commission concerning the need to facilitate the implementation of the Agreements, the Committee was informed that a number of regional and national workshops had been organized to assist countries to meet their obligations in this respect. In the European Region, one such seminar had been held in Prague in March 1996 for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and another one was scheduled to be held in Moscow in June 1996 for countries of the CIS.

20. The Secretariat introduced the working paper<sup>3</sup> which also included the decisions of the Commission concerning acceptance and an outline of the proposals which would be presented to CCGP, especially the extension of the acceptance procedure to all Codex texts as this would increase transparency and provide a useful source of information for governments; the revised format would include information on the use of Codex texts and equivalence with national regulations, especially for imports; in the case of non-acceptance, countries would indicate whether a higher level of protection or other legitimate objectives were relevant.

21. The Delegation of France presented a document analyzing the relationship between the obligations of countries under SPS and TBT and the Codex acceptance procedure, suggesting this procedure be used to comply with the obligations pertaining to the SPS Agreement, especially under Article 12.4 on the monitoring of international harmonization. Comparison of national provisions with already adopted Codex texts should be carried out only for standards appearing in the list to be elaborated by the SPS Committee under Article 12.4 of the SPS Agreement. Application of a new acceptance procedure extending to all Codex texts implied comparison only with future texts; relevant texts to be included in the list would relate primarily to the work of Codex committees dealing with food safety matters. As a second step, texts related to the TBT Agreement might be included in the comparison exercise. The Delegation also proposed that priority should be given to the revision of standards so identified before they were used as references in international trade. The Committee thanked the Delegation of France for its work, while several delegations and the Observer from the EC expressed their support of the paper.

22. The Secretariat pointed out that under SPS, Codex texts relating to sanitary measures were already a reference in international trade irrespective of the date of their adoption; similarly, any amendment of the acceptance procedure would apply to all Codex standards and texts. It was also recalled that the definition of priorities, as requested by the Commission, was not conditional on the establishment of a list by the SPS Committee, although coordination with WTO was actively pursued.

23. While recalling that general consensus existed on the necessity to review Codex texts regularly on the basis of scientific evidence and in view of their relevance in trade, the Committee questioned how the "major impact on trade" referred to by the Commission should be interpreted, as some delegations felt that emphasis should be put on standards related to problems in trade, while this could also be interpreted more generally.

24. Some delegations expressed the view that notwithstanding the request of the Commission on the prioritization of standards, problems of a more general nature had to be addressed as a prerequisite, as most Codex standards had been adopted in a different context. It was pointed out that, for the purpose of the Agreements, the adoption of standards was now essential whether they were accepted or not. The Observer from the EC, supported by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, expressed the view that in the new environment created by the SPS and TBT Agreements, Codex procedures for adoption should be reviewed.

25. The Committee agreed that further very careful consideration should be given to the implications of the SPS and TBT Agreements for Codex, and made the following recommendations:

- the advisability of extending the acceptance procedure for Codex standards to all Codex texts, including guidelines and recommendations, should be examined;
- the comparison of national provisions with texts already adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission should be limited initially to standards and related texts appearing on the list drawn up by the SPS Committee on the basis of their major trade impact; such texts should therefore relate primarily to the activities of the CCFAC, CCPR, CCRVDF and CCFH;

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<sup>3</sup> CX/EURO 96/4, and comments on the subject in CRD 6 (France), CRD 4 (European Community)

- priority should be given to the review of those standards which are included in the aforementioned list before member states are requested to indicate the differences between national regulations and provisions included in the list;

- national provisions should be compared with standards already adopted by Committees whose activities are primarily related to the TBT Agreement (Commodity committees, Labelling,..) only in the light of the outcome and effectiveness of the exercise proposed in the above paragraph.

- consideration should be given to a review of current Codex adoption procedures to take account of the changed circumstances.

26. The Committee agreed to inform the CCEXEC of these proposals prior to consideration by the CCGP, as all Coordinating Committees had been requested to consider these issues and report to CCEXEC. The Committee was also informed that a general document on acceptance procedures would be prepared by the Secretariat and presented to the CCGP, as requested by the Commission.

#### **Transparency in the decision-making process**

27. The Observer from Consumers International stressed the importance of transparency in Codex and Expert Committees, reasserting its earlier request for the participation of consumers' representatives in the latter and in CCEXEC as observers. She noted with satisfaction that consumers organizations had actually been asked by FAO to identify experts for such meetings. The Committee agreed that this practice should be made general and followed-up, including for expert consultations. It was also important that experts make a declaration of interest. The Representative of WHO indicated that this possibility had been referred for consideration to the WHO Legal Office. The Committee suggested that a paper explaining the procedures applied by FAO and WHO for the selection of experts be presented to the CCGP.

28. The Representatives of FAO and WHO recalled that the working procedures of JECFA, JMPR and 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.

#### **HARMONIZATION AND COOPERATION IN FOOD CONTROL MATTERS IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 6)<sup>4</sup>**

- 1) **Updated survey of national food control authorities**
- 2) **Exchange of information on import/export matters**

29. Several delegations and the Observer from Consumers International agreed that exchange of information on these matters was useful to build up confidence between food control services in the Region and develop cooperation. The Delegation of Malta expressed its thanks to FAO for its assistance in order to carry out the approximation of its national food legislation to international standards.

30. The Delegation of Hungary informed the Committee that the following ministries: Health, Agriculture, Industry and Trade, and Environmental Protection, shared responsibility for food legislation matters, and that national legislation had been revised along the lines of the EC White Paper, and taking into account FAO/WHO recommendations. The Delegation of Estonia indicated that its food legislation had been revised to comply with EC requirements and food control was being reorganized, in cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers and FAO, especially in order to improve coordination between responsible ministries.

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<sup>4</sup> CX/EURO 96/5 (comments of Malta, Norway, United Kingdom), CRD 1 (Netherlands), CRD 2 (Sweden), CRD 3 (Finland), CRD 4 (EC), CRD 5 (Sweden), CRD 7 (Czech Republic)

31. The Delegation of Denmark expressed the view that consideration should be given to the way control services are financed, as the cost of inspection was an important issue. The Delegation of Finland presented a paper focusing on the evaluation of national legislation and control provisions in the framework of the country's recent accession to the EU. The Delegation of France indicated that a number of Guidelines for Good Hygienic Practice had been prepared to assist the industry in meeting the requirements of EC Directive 93/43 on food hygiene. The Delegation of the Czech Republic indicated that the implementation of the HACCP system was carried out according to EC requirements, as well as laboratory accreditation, while training of inspectors for the application of HACCP still needed improvement. The Observer from Consumers International noted that in addition to sharing information on structures in place concerning food control, it would be useful to share information on how these structures operated in practice. It would be especially useful to those countries currently reviewing their food control systems to learn about the strength and weaknesses of those systems. The Committee was also informed that FAO had published a number of manuals on food control (Food and Nutrition Paper series No. 14).

32. The Observer from the EC indicated that national rules relating to food control had been extensively harmonized on the basis of Directive 89/397/EEC on the official control of foodstuffs and Directive 93/99/EEC on additional measures on the official control of foodstuffs. Provisions were made for administrative cooperation between Member states regarding the planning as well the results of control programmes. In addition, a small Community Inspectorate was responsible for auditing national control systems.

33. In reply to a question on the updating of the WHO/Europe directory of food control authorities, the Representative of WHO indicated that this work had been discontinued but consideration might be given to the establishment of a database to this effect, especially as WHO information on food safety was already available on Internet. The Chairman also drew the attention of the Committee to the work of CCFICS concerning exchange of information on import/export matters.

#### **ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND HARMONIZATION OF FOOD LEGISLATION IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 7)<sup>5</sup>**

34. The Committee recalled its agreement at its 19th Session that a regular update should be presented on harmonization of food legislation at the regional level, in view of the implications for regional and international trade. In the same way, cooperation activities currently developed at the regional or subregional level, as well as bilaterally, should be encouraged to facilitate harmonization or equivalence between food control systems in the Region. It had been pointed out that this exchange of information would be useful to a number of countries which were currently reviewing their food legislation and food control systems. In addition to government comments provided in response to the circular letter, several delegations gave the following information on these matters.

##### **1) FOOD LEGISLATION**

35. The Delegation of the United Kingdom informed the Committee that the key theme in food legislation in that country was de-regulation, in particular, reviewing regulations and Codes of Practice and removing those not considered to be absolutely necessary. This approach was taken to remove potential burdens on industry and to place emphasis on simplified legislation more easily understood, as well as sensibly and realistically enforced. The Delegation expressed the view that Codex should concentrate on standards considered to be essential, especially in view of the obligations created by the WTO Agreements.

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<sup>5</sup> CX/EURO 96/6 (Comments of Malta, United Kingdom and Norway), CRD 1 (The Netherlands), CRD 2 (Sweden), CRD 3 (Finland), CRD 4 (European Union) and CRD 8 (Czech Republic).

36. The Secretariat informed the Committee that in a workshop recently held on food control in Latin America, similar concerns had been expressed by countries on the matter of limiting standardization activities to only essential standards and to introduce a risk based approach to food control (see also para. 16).

37. The Observer from the EC drew attention to the major developments toward regional integration which have taken place in the Region since the 19th Session of the Committee. He recalled that in January 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU, bringing its total membership to 15. Close association has been maintained with the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). In addition, the EU has recently entered into a Customs Union with Turkey, establishing arrangements for the recognition of EC technical legislation by that country. Furthermore, bilateral negotiations are in progress with Switzerland to define a closer relationship between that country and the EU. He drew attention to a White Paper on the preparation of the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe for integration into the internal market of the EU, setting out measures which associated countries should take to prepare their economies to operate within the rules of the EU internal market, including the harmonization of domestic law with EC legislation, with a view to future EU membership. An extract of the White Paper covering the foodstuffs sector was included in CRD 4.

38. The Observer also pointed out that in 32 countries of the European region (15 EU Member states, 3 member states of the EEA, 11 applicant countries for EU membership, with the possible addition of Slovenia, and bilateral agreements with Switzerland and Turkey) food legislation would follow EC rules. Activities related to the official control of foodstuffs, as part of the pre-accession strategy, would increasingly be along the lines of integration into the internal market of the EU.

39. The Observer from the EC expressed the view that under these circumstances, it was necessary to launch a long-term process of reflection about the future role of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe, and suggested that detailed consideration be given to this question at a future meeting on the basis of contributions from all countries within the Region (see also para. 57).

## **2) Cooperation activities in food control and training**

40. The Delegation of Finland informed the Committee of a series of seminars, financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, to be held between the Nordic countries and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) on food control and training in support of economic integration and harmonization of food legislation.

41. The Delegation of Norway informed the Committee of its active participation in an informal forum called Food Law Enforcement Practitioners (FLEP) which promotes the exchange of information and cooperation between European experts in the European Economic Area (EU and EFTA countries) to further develop mutual confidence and trust in the resolution of practical control problems and to promote the adoption of good practice. The forum, whose secretariat is currently held by the Netherlands, had carried out several projects through the use of workshops. Information was provided on a symposium organized by FLEP in 1995 on HACCP and the FLEP Bulletin.

42. The Delegation of the Netherlands recalled an informal meeting, held at the time of the 20th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, between FAO and donor countries and agencies which had encouraged initiatives and coordination for TCP, also in respect of food control training. He expressed interest in a follow-up to the meeting and encouraged FAO to take an initiative in close cooperation with donor countries and other organizations in this field.

## **ACTIVITIES OF CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 8)<sup>6</sup>**

43. The Committee had an exchange of views on the work of national contact points (CCP) and emphasized the difficulties faced by CCPs to coordinate work and distribute documents; as Codex papers were often received late, there was no time to consider issues in detail and prepare the country position in coordination with responsible ministries, consumers, industry and all interested sectors. As documents themselves were sometimes long and complex, efforts should be made both at the national level and by the Codex Secretariat, to highlight the key issues to be discussed. It was also noted that the considerable amount of documentation produced was inherent to the nature of Codex work, especially in view of the review process currently underway, the increased frequency of meetings in some areas, and increased country participation in Codex, a very positive development in itself.

44. The Observer from Consumers International expressed the same concerns and also recommended that National Codex Committees should be established where they did not exist and include consumers' organizations, and also noted that a further constraint on their participation in NCCs was a lack of organizational resources. Some delegations indicated that, in their countries, general coordination bodies had the responsibility to consider national or EC food legislation as well as Codex matters, and this arrangement allowed for efficient use of resources.

45. The Secretariat expressed its thanks to host governments for their assistance in the preparation and distribution of documents, as this greatly facilitated its task, and, while noting that the size and complexity of documents depended on the subject, indicated that further efforts would be made to improve distribution and identify major issues more clearly, especially in the CLs. The Committee was also informed that short Codex Facts and Notes focusing on key issues were published regularly and available on Internet, as well as a number of Codex documents.

46. Some delegations also noted that country comments should be sent on time and that the new context created by WTO Agreements had contributed to more involvement in Codex matters. The Chairman thanked the delegations for their positive approach and took note that efforts would be pursued at all levels to improve the efficiency of working arrangements in the Codex system.

## **CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS (Agenda Item 9)<sup>7</sup>**

47. The Chairman recalled that a document on consumer participation had been prepared by Consumers International for the last session of the Commission, but as it had not been discussed thoroughly due to time constraints, it would be presented again to the CCGP; moreover, this issue would be considered again by the next session of the Commission.

48. The Delegation of Malta stressed the importance not only of consumer participation in the decision process, but of developing consumer awareness and education on food safety issues so they could protect themselves better; this would also facilitate compliance with food safety regulations by the industry.

49. The Observer of Consumers International expressed her appreciation of the ongoing consideration of this issue by regional Codex committees and highlighted the difficulties faced by consumer organizations to be represented at the national and international level, due to financial constraints and reduced staff. She stressed the importance of receiving working documents well in time so that consumers' position could be

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<sup>6</sup> CX/EURO 96/7 (Comments of Norway, United Kingdom), CRD 2 (Sweden)

<sup>7</sup> CX/EURO 96/8 (comments of Austria, Malta, Norway, United Kingdom), CRD 2 (Sweden)

thoroughly discussed and determined, and also indicated that efforts were made to develop the awareness of consumers regarding Codex matters and food safety in general. In this respect, Codex activities should be publicized more widely, especially to the general public. The Observer was also of the view that rapid action should be taken in Codex in order to address emerging issues in a more timely manner, and the use of modern technology (such as E-mail and Internet) should be developed. She also suggested that governments consider requests for funding of consumers' organizations for specific work on Codex matters.

50. The Delegation of Sweden indicated that the National Food Administration involved consumers at different stages of the decision-making process, and had conducted a survey on the perceptions of consumers regarding food safety, which helped the NFA to orient its action in order to develop consumer awareness in this area. The Delegation of France expressed its agreement with the recommendations of CI and indicated that many of them were implemented in France, especially in the preparation of Codex meetings as an effort was especially made to clarify the questions under discussion by concentrating on the main issues. These delegations expressed their interest for the system of consumers panels, as developed in the UK.

51. The Delegation of the United Kingdom indicated that this system had been established as the authorities had to deal with a large number of consumers organizations and sought as wide a representation of consumers' interests as possible. The Delegation highlighted the difficulties inherent to this process, as many people did not express their views through established consumers organizations and were not informed of issues such as food safety.

52. The Delegation of the Netherlands indicated that the information provided to the CCEURO in 1994 on consumer representation and participation was still applicable, and emphasized the importance of transparency of all Codex work, especially for consumers. The Delegation of Finland noted that consumers concerns in that country related mostly to developments in the EC and that awareness of Codex matters should be developed, especially in the light of the SPS and TBT Agreements.

53. The Delegation of Spain informed the Committee that a decree in that country established the rights of consumers to participate in the different steps of the decision process, through the Consumers Council where all organizations were represented. Consumers organizations participated in the Interministerial Commission for Food Legislation (CIOA), responsible for coordination of food legislation and Codex matters, their organizations being provided with all relevant documentation.

54. The Chairman, while thanking delegations and CI for the valuable information provided, invited them to continue their efforts to develop awareness of and participation in Codex matters.

#### **INFORMATION ON FOOD CONTAMINATION IN EUROPE (Agenda Item 10)**

55. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 96/9, presenting a brief introduction to a publication made available by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health entitled "Concern for Europe's Tomorrow"<sup>8</sup>. The book was based on the report of the Second European Conference on Environment and Health held in Helsinki in 1994 in collaboration with the European Commission. The book addressed a number of environmental health issues including food contamination, while identifying the fields where more efforts to obtain information were requested.

56. The Delegation of Sweden informed the Committee that studies which had been carried out in Sweden on chemical contaminants, pesticide residues and microbiological contaminants were available from the National Food Administration<sup>9</sup>. Information on the role of the Scientific Committee for Food and Scientific

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<sup>8</sup> Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, P.O. Box 10 10 61, D-70009 Stuttgart, Germany

<sup>9</sup> CRD 5 (Sweden)

Co-operation in the Risk Assessment Process in the European Union was presented in CRD 4. The Chairman drew attention to the fact that many countries of Europe participate in GEMS Food and supply statistical data on food contamination in that manner as well as to various Codex Committees.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 11)**

57. The Committee discussed its role as a forum for discussion of matters of particular importance to member countries of the region including items such as the relationship with the WTO and the SPS and TBT Committees in light of the important status held by Codex in this area. In the past, important issues such as the role of science and risk analysis in Codex standards had been discussed which provided useful information to the Executive Committee and the Commission in their work. The view was put forward by the Observer from the EC that the growing membership of the EU within the region might make it necessary for the Committee to reconsider its role in the future. Countries not members of the EU were of the view that the Committee served an important role in the discussion of points of interest to all countries of Europe and the Committee was felt to play an important role in informing the Executive Committee and the Commission of the views of member countries on important Codex issues through the European Representative and the Coordinator. This was the general view of the Committee. It was especially important for countries not members of the EU to be informed of current discussions within Codex at the level of the Coordinating Committee.

58. In reply to a question by the Delegation of Switzerland, it was recalled that the Committee, in conformity with its terms of reference, could discuss matters scheduled for consideration at the CCEXEC as well as other Codex Committees. The Chairman invited countries to contact France, as the Regional Representative, or the Coordinator concerning matters they wished to be addressed in Codex.

#### **NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 12)**

59. The Committee had before it document CX/EURO 96/10, setting out the Rules governing the appointment of the Coordinator (Rule II.4), which had been amended by the 21st Session of the Commission. As Dr. Slorach was completing his second consecutive term as Coordinator for Europe, it was necessary for the Committee to nominate a new Coordinator.

60. The Delegation of Italy, supported by all delegations, proposed that Mr. Felipe Mittelbrunn Garcia of Spain be nominated for appointment as Coordinator for Europe by the 22nd Session of the Commission and until the end of the 23rd Session of the Commission. Mr. Mittelbrunn Garcia accepted the nomination of the Committee.

61. The Committee expressed its warm appreciation to Professor Slorach and to the Swedish Government for their support of the Committee's work during the last four years.

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 13)**

62. The Committee was informed that its 21st Session was tentatively scheduled to be held in Spain in the Spring of 1998. The exact date and venue would be determined between the Spanish and Codex Secretariats, subject to confirmation by the Commission.

## SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject Matter	For action by	Document Reference in ALINORM 97/19
Nomination of Coordinator	22nd CAC	para. 60
Acceptance and adoption Procedures	CCEXEC Secretariat - CCGP	para. 25-26
Exchange of Information on Food Legislation and Food Control	Secretariat - Governments 21st CCEURO	paras. 29-33
Cooperation and training	Secretariat - Governments 21st CCEURO	paras. 34-42
Consumer Participation	Secretariat - Governments 21st CCEURO	para. 54

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