

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, Italy, 4 – 9 July 2005

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 20 - 23 September 2004

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions of the 24th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe are as follows:

Matters for consideration by the Commission:

The Committee:

- expressed its views concerning the role of Coordinating Committees, and in particular the Coordinating Committee for Europe, as requested by the Commission (para. 14);
- agreed to nominate Switzerland for appointment as Regional Coordinator by the 28th Session of the Commission (para. 78).

Other matters of interest to the Commission:

The Committee:

- expressed its views concerning the revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods, following the discussions of the Commission on this issue (paras. 16-20);
- considered issues related to the compatibility of data reporting format for the purpose of risk assessment (paras. 45-54);
- made some recommendations to facilitate the participation of countries in the Region in Codex work, as a follow-up to the Seminar on Codex organized by the Government of the Netherlands in cooperation with the Government of the Slovak Republic, FAO and WHO, immediately prior to the session (paras. 80-83);
- exchanged updated information on food legislation, food control systems and Codex activities in the region (paras. 55-64);
- reviewed the measures taken by governments to improve consumer participation in Codex work and related matters (paras. 65-72).

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1) The 24th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe was held in Bratislava from 20 to 23 September 2004 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Slovak Republic. The Session was chaired by Dr Milan Erban, assisted by Dr. Milan Kováč, Coordinator, and attended by 84 delegates and observers representing 31 member countries, one Member Organization, 4 Observer countries and 3 international organizations. A complete list of participants is appended to the report as Appendix I.

OPENING

2) The meeting was opened by Mr Zsolt Simon, Minister for Agriculture, who welcomed participants and recalled that food safety was a high priority at the national and international level. He recalled that the Slovak Republic had harmonized its national regulations with the EU legislation and had recently become a member of the European Union. He stressed the importance of addressing emerging food safety issues on the basis of updated scientific evidence in order to protect consumers' health and ensure consumer confidence in food control systems. Referring to the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Pan European Conference on Food Safety and Quality, Mr Simon noted that the support of FAO and WHO was essential to improve participation of countries in transition in the Codex process and to establish efficient food safety systems at the national level.

3) Mr Simon highlighted the importance of the Coordinating Committee for the countries in the region in order to facilitate regional cooperation and wished participants all success in their work.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

4) The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda, as presented in CX/EURO 04/1, as its Agenda for the Session.

5) The Committee noted the division of competence between the European Community and its Member States, presented by the Delegation of the European Community as CRD1, according to Rule II.5 of the Rules of Procedure.

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2)¹

Review of the Regional Coordinating Committees

6) The Committee recalled that the 27th Session of the Commission had agreed that a Circular Letter would be issued to all Codex members to invite comments on the role of Regional Coordinating Committees and other areas related to the work of those Committees; and that Regional Coordinating Committees would consider the comments from the governments of their respective regions and forward their views and/or recommendations to the 28th Session of the Commission.

7) The Delegation of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at the session, and referring to the EC common position in CRD 2, highlighted several proposals to strengthen the role of the Coordinating Committee for Europe.

8) The Delegation of the Slovak Republic noted that several countries in the region faced considerable difficulties in the establishment of food control systems at the national level, and could not participate actively in Codex work due to lack of resources. The Delegation stressed the importance of the Regional Coordinating Committee to facilitate their participation in Codex, starting at the regional level, with a view to extending their participation to world-wide Committees, and indicated that the Committee had an important role to develop regional cooperation in order to improve the overall level of consumer protection throughout the region.

¹ CX/EURO 04/2, CL 2004/30-EURO; CX/EURO 04/2-Add.1 was not prepared as no comments were received prior to the meeting; CRD 2, 3, 4 and 5 (comments of the European Community)

9) The Delegation of Georgia, referring to the seminar held prior to the meeting, expressed the view that such initiatives were very useful to develop awareness of Codex work and noted that the Committee provided an important opportunity to facilitate communication and capacity building throughout the region, especially for countries in transition.

10) Several delegations expressed their support for retaining Coordinating Committees in their present form and highlighted the importance of the Committee to identify the needs of countries and to promote regional cooperation as regards food legislation, food control and Codex work.

11) Some delegations stressed the need to develop clear coordinated positions on issues under discussion in Codex in order to give more weight to the views of the region at the world-wide level (in other Codex Committees), and supported a stronger role of the Committee in this respect.

12) As regards regional standards, some delegations expressed the view that in general, priority should be given to the development of world-wide standards and that the purpose of regional standards should be clearly defined and their status under the WTO Agreements clarified where possible, if they were to be considered.

13) As regards geographical coverage, some delegations pointed out that this question was more relevant for other regions. The Committee also noted that member countries decided to which geographical region they wished to belong for the purpose of participation in Coordinating Committees.

14) As a result of these discussions, the Committee supported continuation of the Coordinating Committees with their current role and agreed to reply as follows to the questions from the Commission:

- The role of the Coordinating Committees was essential in furthering the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, especially to define the needs of the countries in the region;
- No specific views could be expressed on geographic coverage as this issue was not of direct relevance to the European Region;
- Regional standards were not developed in the region, but if required their purpose should be clearly stated;
- The role of the Committee in facilitating participation of member countries in Codex was very important, especially for countries in transition;
- The current meeting interval of two years was considered to be appropriate and should be retained in view of the practical and financial difficulties that might arise from annual meetings;
- The respective roles of the Regional Coordinator and the Member of the Executive Committee elected on a geographical basis would require further consideration but no position could be taken at this stage; and
- A main objective of the Committee should be to give the Regional Coordinator and the Member elected on a geographical basis information, support and a basis for their participation in the Executive Committee

15) The Representative of WHO pointed out that interpretation and translation into Russian should be considered in the future in order to facilitate participation of Russian speaking countries and communication between all countries in the region.

Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food

16) The Committee recalled that the Commission had considered the request for advice from the Committee on General Principles concerning the revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food and had noted that the Regional Coordinating Committees could discuss this matter.

17) The Delegation of the European Community, referring to its comments in CRD 5, expressed the view that the Code of Ethics should not duplicate the provisions of the WTO Agreements or existing Codex texts on import and export inspection and certification, but should focus on ethical aspects that

were not covered elsewhere. The Delegation stated that the main objective of the Code was to protect those developing countries that had not yet established food safety legislation or had difficulties in setting up efficient food inspection services to check the safety of imported food in order to prevent that those countries receive imports of unsafe food that does not comply with international standards. The Delegation therefore proposed to delete the reference to the WTO Agreements and other Codex texts on inspection and certification throughout the Code and to make the following amendments:

1) Inserting in the Preamble a new paragraph:

(c bis) Certain countries have not yet been able to establish or strengthen their food legislation and food control infrastructures, and are therefore more vulnerable to the trade of unsafe food, food unfit for human consumption, adulterated food or food misleading for consumers.

2) Paragraph 5.1 concerning the need of appropriate and adequate food standards should be transferred to the General Principles and the rest of Article 5 could be deleted as it is redundant.

3) Paragraph 6.3 could be removed as it is redundant in the light of the Codex Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Control Emergencies and the Codex Guidelines for the Exchange of information between Countries on the Rejection of Imported Food

18) This position was supported by several delegations.

19) The Delegation of Switzerland noted the importance of the Code especially for developing countries and agreed that the current text needed streamlining, and expressed support for the proposal made by the EC regarding the revision of the Preamble.

20) The Committee generally supported the need to develop a Code of Ethics and agreed that the purpose should be to establish a “code of conduct” for international trade in food.

Antimicrobial Resistance

21) The Committee noted the information concerning the FAO/WHO/OIE workshops on antimicrobial resistance and was informed that, following the request of the Commission, the Secretariat had issued a Circular Letter asking the views of Members on this question.

22) The Delegation of the European Community, referring to the discussions of the Committee on General Principles, indicated that it would not be realistic to establish a joint Codex/OIE Task Force or to adopt as Codex standards texts developed by other international organizations, due to the opposition expressed at the 27th Session of the Commission mainly by developing countries. The Delegation recalled the support of the Commission for cooperation with OIE, and noted that if a Codex Task Force with active participation of OIE could not be envisaged, the issue of antimicrobial resistance could be addressed by existing Codex subsidiary bodies, especially the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, and possibly by the Committee of Food Hygiene and the Task Force on Animal Feeding. The need to take account of factors relating to clinical medicine in the risk assessment framework was also stressed.

Other Matters

23) In addition to the Matters referred by the Commission, the Delegation of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at the session, proposed to discuss two other issues, as follows.

Proposed Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety

24) The Delegation of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at the session and referring to the EC common position in CRD 4, expressed the following view: principles for risk analysis applicable by governments should be developed and the Committee on General Principles should proceed with its work on the basis of the Proposed Draft presented in CL 2004/34-GP; the section on risk management should be included as risk analysis should follow a structured approach; and the principles should take into account the possibility for governments of taking provisional measures when available scientific data did not allow a complete risk assessment.

25) This position was supported by the Delegations of Switzerland and Norway and agreed by the Committee.

Traceability/Product Tracing

26) The Delegation of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at the session, and referring to the EC common position in CRD 3, expressed the view that traceability/product tracing was a tool that might be applied within a broader food inspection and certification system for different purposes and that the scope of traceability/product tracing measures should be considered and justified on a case-by-case basis. The Delegation stated that, while drawing up principles for traceability/product tracing, the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems should take into account the work of the ISO Working Group TC 34.

27) It was also recalled that the position of the CCEURO at its last session was “traceability/product tracing could be used for the purposes of food safety or as another legitimate objective, for example to ensure the authenticity that of the product. Both aspects were equally important and should be addressed in the framework of Codex, while ensuring coordination with other international organizations in this area, especially ISO” (ALINORM 04/19, para. 31). This position was supported by the Delegations of Norway and Switzerland. The Committee agreed that Circular Letter CL 2004/6-CCFICS did not correctly reflect the position of the CCEURO.

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3)²

Matters related to scientific advice

28) The Representative of FAO informed the Committee of the progress made on the FAO/WHO consultative process on the provision of scientific advice to Codex and member countries. Upon completion of the first two steps of the consultative process, namely an electronic forum and a workshop completed in January 2004, FAO and WHO had identified key activities to implement recommendations received to date in the process. These activities included 1) elaboration of a Procedural Guideline; 2) establishment of an internal FAO/WHO task force to consider improved coordination; 3) preparation of review papers to address selection of experts, openness of meetings, and use of data; and 4) convening a workshop to enhance participation of experts and use of data from all regions.

29) The Committee was advised that there were parallel FAO/WHO activities ongoing to strengthen the working procedures of certain aspects of scientific advice by FAO and WHO, including the worksharing pilot project on the establishment of MRLs for pesticides in the JMPR process.

30) The Committee was informed of the discussions held at the 53rd Session of the Executive Committee and the 27th Session of the Commission regarding the establishment of criteria for setting priorities for requests for scientific advice to FAO and WHO. The Representative of FAO underlined the need for the identification of extra budgetary funding to enable FAO/WHO to fulfill the list of requests for scientific advice.

31) The Committee noted the detailed information presented in the background paper on the outputs of the FAO/WHO scientific advice. In addition, a few activities of relevance to the Committee were highlighted. The recent FAO/WHO Technical Workshop on Residues of Substances without ADI/MRL in Foods (24-26 August 2004, Bangkok, Thailand) had recommended that the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods should identify compounds not to be used in food animals, and that work on international MRLs for veterinary drugs that had been evaluated by national governments and were currently in use should be completed within the coming ten years.

32) The Committee was advised that as follow up to an Expert Consultation on *Enterobacter sakazakii* and other microorganisms of concern in powdered infant formula (2-5 February 2004) FAO/WHO had issued a call for data specifically related to aspects of the manufacture, preparation and use of powdered infant formula as well as data on the characteristics of potential consumers.

² CX/EURO 04/3

33) The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that risk assessment of biotoxins in bivalve molluscs in response to the request of the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products was ongoing.

34) The Committee was advised of the progress made to date in the preparation of the FAO/WHO guidance document on "Obstacles to the application of HACCP, particularly in small and less developed businesses". An electronic group had been formed and work was ongoing to prepare a draft document for discussion at a technical meeting to be convened in the coming months.

Capacity Building in Food Safety and Quality

35) The Committee was advised of the FAO and WHO capacity building efforts at global and regional level. The Committee's attention was drawn to forthcoming global events including the Second Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 12-14 October 2004.

36) Information was provided to the Committee on a global initiative, the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to enhance collaboration among organizations involved in technical assistance to their member countries. Partners in this initiative included FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO, and the World Bank.

37) Another initiative proposed to enhance communication on food safety matters was the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), to be used for targeted and rapid distribution of information for the protection of public health. Further information would be provided at the forthcoming Global Forum II.

38) Finally, the Committee was reminded of the important role of FAO and WHO in providing global tools, such as manuals and other training materials, to enhance capacity of countries and strengthen food quality and safety programmes. The Committee was advised that in addition to existing tools, new publications were in final stages of preparation including the FAO/WHO Training package on Food Safety Risk Analysis, a Training Manual on Improving Participation in the Work of Codex. Another tool in "Evaluating Capacity Building Needs for Food Control" was also in preparation.

Capacity Building Activities in Europe

39) The Committee was informed that FAO and the Slovak Agricultural University had held a joint workshop for Eastern and Central European countries on the Internet Portal on Food Safety (Nitra, Slovakia, 23-26 March 2003), that WHO and FAO had held a sub-regional workshop for the Development of National Food Safety Strategies in South Eastern Europe (Brijuni, Croatia, 5-7 July 2004) within the framework of the Stability Pact Initiative for social cohesion in the Balkans, and that FAO and the Hungarian Food Safety Office in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of Hungary had held an "International Workshop on the Development of National Food Safety Strategies" (Budapest, Hungary, 6 - 8 September 2004).

40) The Committee noted that a number of regional projects and programmes were being implemented and/or in preparation by FAO and/or WHO in cooperation with other agencies in various areas as set out in the document. The beneficiary countries of these projects included, among others, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as the Republics of Central Asia.

41) The Committee noted that basic texts and standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission were being translated into Russian in order to assist in the development of regional food safety legislation.

42) The Committee was informed that two FAO TCP projects had been approved in 2003, one in Croatia to improve the diversification of value-added production and certification in environmental farming systems, and the other in Turkey to strengthen the food quality and safety system. Technical assistance had been provided by WHO to Tadjikistan on the prevention of major foodborne diseases.

43) The Committee also noted that several other activities and projects were underway in the region, as described in the working document.

44) In reply to a question, the Representative of FAO indicated that the "Guidelines on the Prudent Use of Antimicrobials" prepared by the FAO Veterinary Public Health Group were expected to be

published in the first half of 2005. The Guidelines were written from the veterinary public health point of view and covered all aspects of antimicrobial use in farm animals, including environmental concerns, with the main focus on the production aspects of antimicrobial use.

COMPATIBILITY OF DATA REPORTING FORMATS USED BY FAO/WHO INTERNATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT BODIES AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY FOR RISK ASSESSMENT (FAO/WHO/EC DISCUSSION PAPER)³

45) The Representative of WHO introduced the document and recalled that currently there was a lack of harmonization at the European and the international level of the formats for reporting foodborne diseases and chemical and microbiological food contamination data. In this context, there was a need for compatible reporting formats at the regional and international level to make such data more widely comparable and accessible for risk assessment purposes.

46) Existing systems to collect data on food contamination and foodborne disease in the European Region included:

1) Global environment monitoring system/ food contamination monitoring and assessment Programme (GEMS/Foods); and

2) WHO Surveillance Programme for Control of Foodborne Infections and Intoxications in Europe

47) The Representative of WHO indicated that there was a pressing need to promote the compatibility of data reporting formats of foodborne diseases and chemical and microbiological food contamination used by the European surveillance and monitoring systems to provide data for MRA. This would make information on food contamination monitoring and on foodborne diseases more compatible and valuable for risk assessment and other scientific use as well as for improved food safety management.

48) The Representative stressed the need for cooperation of the national institutions in the European Region to facilitate the development of compatible reporting formats for surveillance and monitoring data. Further input from collaborating national institutions was necessary to improve the existing systems and procedures to facilitate electronic data collection.

49) There was also a need to continue strengthening the collaboration between international risk assessment bodies, European Institutions and European scientific bodies, in particular the new European Food Safety Authority, and to fit such collaboration into a broader context of international, global work on food safety data collection.

50) An FAO/WHO consultative process on the provision of scientific advice initiated in 2003 included consideration of principles used by other national, regional and international risk assessment bodies, and especially the alignment with EFSA activities with a view to the development of improved systems for the provision of scientific advice.

51) The Delegation of the European Community recalled that there was a considerable lack of harmonization of data generated to perform risk assessment studies, which prevented the full exploitation of such data, and therefore supported further action in order to address this important issue, as proposed in the discussion paper. The Delegation also stressed the need for quality control of occurrence and consumption data as these data were used to calculate population group intake, which was the basis for risk assessment. The Delegation suggested that the Committee ask FAO and WHO to draw the attention of the relevant Expert Committees to this issue.

52) In addition the Committee noted the following EFSA activities related to data reporting. Under Directive 2003/99/EC on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents, the task of EFSA was to examine the data collected by member countries on zoonoses and zoonotic agents; foodborne outbreaks; antimicrobial resistance; and to produce an EC report. For this purpose EFSA was creating a new database and internet reporting system. A Task Force on zoonoses was established including national contact points, the European Commission, EFSA, with WHO as an observer to review the

³ CX/EURO 04/3-Add.1

reporting system. It was also noted that a meeting with WHO would take place to discuss the GEMS/Foods programme and explore possibilities for further collaboration.

53) The Representative of FAO expressed support to the efforts to improve compatibility of data reporting formats and recognized the important role of national and regional data in international FAO/WHO scientific advice activities. Support was also given to the recommendation in the paper that any future European initiatives in this area be efficiently coordinated with other initiatives with a view to ensuring global applicability and global work on food safety data collection. The Committee was reminded of the ongoing FAO/WHO review processes to improve the quality, quantity, transparency and timeliness of scientific advice and the parallel activities on worksharing for setting MRLs for pesticides, and the harmonization project for JECFA and JMPR. In this context, and to ensure adequate coordination and efficient use of resources, FAO supported the EC proposal to refer this matter to FAO/WHO to facilitate exchange of information. In this way, FAO/WHO would be in a position to consider the best mechanism or fora to meet the request of the EC. The Representative also stressed the importance of considering the end users of data, such as the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committees, when increasing compatibility of data reporting.

54) The Delegation of Switzerland supported further work in order to ensure harmonisation of data reporting at the regional level. The Delegation of Cyprus drew the attention of the Committee to the difficulties arising from the lack of compatibility of data for the purposes of risk assessment and supported further activities to address this important issue.

FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 4) ⁴

1) Updated survey of national food legislation and food control systems, Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees

2) Cooperation activities in food control and training

55) The Committee recalled its earlier decision to exchange information on a regular basis on food legislation and food control activities in the region, including Codex activities at the national level. In addition to the written comments, the Committee noted the updated information provided by several countries, as follows.

56) The Delegation of the Slovak Republic informed the Committee that national regulations had been harmonized with the relevant EU legislation as part of the accession process and that national requirements were applied when no EU legislation existed. The Ministry of Health was responsible for legislation concerning additives, chemical contaminants, microbiological contaminants, foods for special dietary uses, natural mineral waters and contact materials, while the Ministry of Agriculture was responsible for food labelling, residues of veterinary drugs, good manufacturing practice and requirements for individual foods. The responsibility for food control was also shared between these Ministries in the framework of a National Programme for Official Food Control.

57) The Delegation of Norway indicated that a new food law had been recently enacted, and that a new food safety authority had been established under the responsibilities of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Fisheries. The responsibilities for food control had been clarified in order to ensure food safety at all stages of the food chain, and an independent risk assessment body had been established in order to separate the risk assessment process from the risk management process.

58) The Delegation of Italy noted that the responsibility for food legislation and control was shared by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. Inspection at the local level was carried out by local sanitary services reporting to the Ministry of Health, or by special units with national and local competence. Food analysis was also carried out by the Customs services mainly for compliance with taxes regulations.

⁴ CX/EURO 04/4 (comments of Austria, European Community, Finland, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom), CX/EURO 0474-Add.1 (comments of Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden), CRD 7 (comments of the Slovak Republic), CRD 8 (comments of Turkey)

59) The Delegation of Turkey informed the Committee that its new food law, enacted in June 2004, covered production, marketing and inspection and was harmonized with EU legislation. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Directorate General of Protection and Control, was responsible for food control, including licensing and authorizations for food businesses, while the Ministry of Health dealt with emergency situations in public health. Training of food inspectors was carried out through a national programme covering the main food safety areas, and especially GMP, HACCP, mycotoxins and chemicals monitoring. Special emphasis was put on HACCP training in order to facilitate the introduction of the HACCP system in several areas of food production. The Delegation also indicated that EU projects were underway in Turkey as regards laboratories and all food control issues.

60) The Delegation of Iceland stated that the responsibilities for food control were shared between the Ministry of Agriculture (veterinary services) for products of animal origin, the Ministry of Fisheries for fish and fishery products and the Ministry of Environment for other foods. The establishment of a single agency for food safety had been proposed and was under discussion. Food legislation for fish was harmonized with EC legislation and the export control system for fish and meat products met the requirements of the EC.

61) The Delegation of Denmark indicated that the Veterinary and Food Administration, that was responsible also for zoonoses, had been reorganized in 1997 to cover the whole food chain and to ensure a rapid reaction in case of emergency. This administration had recently been transferred to a new Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs, now assuming all responsibilities for food safety. In order to achieve the organizational separation between risk assessment and risk management, a separate research institute had been established to carry out risk assessment.

62) The Delegation of the Czech Republic recalled that its legislation had been harmonized with relevant EU legislation and noted that in other areas, national regulations were largely based on Codex standards. The National Codex Committee, that included representatives from official authorities, industry and consumers, had been operational for many years and the establishment of a new committee was underway to improve participation in Codex, communication and diffusion of information on Codex.

63) The Delegation of Cyprus indicated that its recently adopted food law had been harmonized with the EU legislation. The Ministry of Health had the main responsibility for food control, while the Ministry of Agriculture carried out export control and the Ministry of Environment was also involved. An extensive network of specialized laboratories, coordinated by the Central State Laboratory, carried out food analysis for the purposes of food control and monitoring, and the results were used as a basis for risk assessment of chemicals. The establishment of a food safety agency was underway in order to coordinate all food safety activities.

64) The Delegation of Germany, in addition to its written comments, drew the attention of the Committee to a publication on "Consumer Health Protection: who does what" and to the document presented at the last session of the Committee as CRD 2 "Consumer Protection: the German Perspective". The Delegation emphasized that a strong separation between risk assessment and risk management was established in Germany.

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN CODEX WORK AND RELATED MATTERS **(Agenda Item 5)**⁵

65) The Delegation of Germany recalled that as indicated in earlier sessions, consumers were closely involved in Codex work at the national level and consumer representatives participated in the national delegations in Codex meetings if they so wished.

66) The Delegation of Switzerland indicated that the consumer representative nominated by the Federal Council received all documents and was involved in the preparation of Codex meetings. Participation in the national delegation was open to consumer organizations, and a representative of consumers had attended the last session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

⁵ CX/EURO 04/5 (comments of European Community, Finland, United Kingdom), CX/EURO 04/74-Add.1 (comments of Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden), CRD 6 (comments of Consumers International)

67) The Delegation of Norway noted that consumer organizations were widely consulted by the Food Safety Authority to develop country positions and participated in the national delegation to several Codex meetings.

68) The Delegation of Belgium indicated that consumers organizations were involved in the preparation meetings prior to Codex meetings but did not participate in the sessions due to lack of funds. The Delegation of the Netherlands pointed out that funding was the main difficulty for consumer participation in Codex meetings.

69) The Delegation of Denmark noted that consumer interests were also represented by international consumer organizations in Codex Committees and suggested that this might be a possibility for national consumer organizations to exercise influence in Codex, when it was not possible to attend as part of a national delegation.

70) The Delegation of Georgia pointed out that, apart from the funding difficulties, the problem of consumer participation was related to a lack of capacity and knowledge about Codex work and suggested that FAO and WHO could assist in the development of consumer awareness at the national level.

71) The Representatives of FAO and WHO informed the Committee that specific training activities to strengthen consumer associations were part of FAO and WHO technical assistance programmes, especially to enhance their input to national food safety policy and Codex work and that information material had been developed for that purpose. However it was not possible to fund specifically the participation of consumer organizations in Codex meetings, as applications for the Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex were to be submitted by the Codex Contact Points.

72) The Committee noted that Consumers International had presented its comments in CRD 6 and that the results of the survey on consumer participation carried out in 2004 had been made available to delegates.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 6)⁶

73) The Coordinating Committee recalled that it was the standing practice in Codex for a Coordinating Committee to nominate a Coordinator, for formal appointment at the following session of the Commission. The Committee noted that while there were 42 countries in the Region, the Slovak Republic was not eligible for Coordinator, having served as Coordinator for two consecutive terms.

74) The Committee noted that Lithuania, Poland and Switzerland had expressed their willingness to serve as Coordinator.

75) The Delegation of Switzerland stated that if the country was to be nominated as Coordinator, it would actively seek coordination with Lithuania with a view to convening the next session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe in Lithuania.

76) The Delegation of Lithuania stated that it was willing to offer a venue to the next session of the Coordinating Committee and expressed its concurrence with the proposal made by the Delegation of Switzerland.

77) The Delegation of Poland indicated that it would support the nomination of Switzerland as Coordinator and expressed its desire to serve as Coordinator subsequent to the term of office held by Switzerland.

78) The Committee unanimously agreed to nominate Switzerland for appointment as Coordinator for Europe by the 28th Session of the Commission, with the understanding that Switzerland, once appointed, would consider holding the next session of the Coordinating Committee in Lithuania, in close cooperation with the government of the latter. The Delegation of Switzerland accepted this nomination, thanked all the countries for their support, and committed itself to furthering inter-country coordination in the Region as Coordinator for Europe.

⁶ CX/EURO 04/6, CRD 9 (comments of Switzerland)

79) The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Slovak Republic, for its active contribution to Codex work during its two terms of office, especially to Dr Milan Kováč for his efforts to promote coordination and participation of all countries in the Region and to Dr Milan Erban for his excellent chairmanship of the Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 7) ⁷

80) The Delegation of the Netherlands brought to the attention of the Committee document CRD 10 containing a summary of the findings in the seminar organized in Bratislava on 19 September 2004 in cooperation with the government of the Slovak Republic, FAO and WHO. This Pan-European event had been initiated and financed by the Governments of the Netherlands in conjunction with the Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2004.

81) The Representatives of FAO and WHO stated that the seminar provided an excellent opportunity for disseminating information for enhancing effective participation of countries in Codex work and that the Organizations would look forward to organizing a similar event in conjunction with the next session of the Committee. The Representative of WHO acknowledged that the contribution of WHO Liaison Officers on Non Codex member countries were instrumental in enabling the participation of these countries in the seminar. The Representative of WHO further informed the Committee that selected Codex standards and related texts were available in Russian language on CD-ROM.

82) On the basis and in recognition of the outcome of the seminar, the Committee agreed that:

- Countries in the European Region which are not yet members of Codex should actively consider becoming members, for the mutual benefit of Codex and the countries themselves;
- Codex members from the European Region should identify their needs for training/ capacity building/ technical assistance related to food safety and quality and, where appropriate, contact the WHO Regional Officer for Europe and/or the FAO Sub-regional Office in Budapest to explore ways to meet their needs;
- In order to make the best possible use of available resources and to avoid duplication of effort, international, regional and national organizations providing assistance in capacity building to improve food safety and promote fair practices in the food trade should coordinate their activities more closely;
- The Codex Secretariat is requested to explore the possibility of providing Codex texts and general information about Codex on CD-ROM; and
- The Coordinator for Europe should examine the possibility of organizing, in coordination with FAO and WHO, a seminar prior to the next session of CCEURO. This seminar should preferably be focused on specific issues being dealt with by Codex.

83) The Committee also noted that general advice on communication and other useful information on Codex presented at the seminar held on 19 September 2004 was available on a CD-ROM.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 8)

84) The Committee noted that the 25th Session was tentatively scheduled to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in the second half of 2006, the exact date to be determined in consultation between the host country, the Coordinator and the Codex Secretariat, subject to confirmation by the Commission.

⁷ CRD 10 (Codex Alimentarius Seminar – Outcome and Recommendations)

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject Matter	Step	Action by	Document Reference in ALINORM 05/28/19
Role of Regional Coordinating Committees		28 th CAC	para. 14
Nomination of Coordinator		28 th CAC	para. 78
Revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food	3	22 nd CCGP	paras. 16-20
Exchange of information on Food Legislation and Food Control		Governments 25 th CCEURO	paras. 55-64
Consumer Participation		Governments 25 th CCEURO	paras. 65-72

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS / LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

Chairman: Milan Erban
Président: Drotárska cesta 31
Presidente: 811 04 Bratislava 1, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +4212 62 80 14 00
 Fax: +4212 62 80 14 00
 Email: trison@hotmail.com

Coordinator: Milan Kováč
Coordinateur: Director of Food Research Institute
Coordinaador: Ministry of Agriculture
 Priemysel'ná 4 - P.O.Box 25
 824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +421 (2) 55 57 46 22
 Fax: +421 (2) 55 57 14 17
 Email: codex@vup.sk

ARMENIA/ARMÉNIE

Valeri Azoyan
 Cheef of Food Safety and Rural Social
 Development Department
 Ministry of Agriculture RA
 36, Abovyan St., Apt. 43
 Yerevan
 Phone: (374 1) 52-48-60 (1-23)
 Fax: (374 1) 52-37-93
 Email: azoyan_v@yahoo.com

Gegham Snapyan
 Head of Laboratory „Paren“ State Enterprise
 Codex Contact Point Coordinator
 375023.RA.Yerevan. Getari,Y
 Republic of Armenia
 Phone: (3741) 52 65 98
 Email: snapyang@rambler.ru

AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE

Alexander Zilberszac*
 Head of Unit
 Bundesministerium für gesundheit und frauen
 Radetzkystrasse 2
 A-1031 Wien, Austria
 Phone: 00 43 17 11 00 46 17
 Email: alexander.zilberszac@bmgf.gv.at

Erhard Höbaus
 Head of Division
 Nutrition and Quality and Assurance
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,
 Environment and Water Management
 Stubenring 12
 A-1012 Vienna, Austria
 Phone: +431 71100-2855
 Fax: +431 71100 2901
 Email: erhard.hoebaus@lebensministerium.at

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE/BELGICA

Laurence Doughan*
 Inspector of Health
 Ministry of Health
 Bd. Pachéco 19/5
 1010 Brussels, Belgium
 Phone: 0032 2 210 48 65
 Fax: 0032 2 210 48 16
 Email: laurence.doughan@health.fgov.be

BULGARIA/BULGARIE

Emanuil Yakomirov Emanuilov
 Junior Expert at Public Health,
 Border Inspection and Veterinary Certification
 Directorate - National Veterinary Service
 15A Pencho Slaveikov blvd.
 1606 Sofia, Bulgaria
 Phone: ++359 2 851 33 43
 Fax: ++359 2 954 95 93
 Email: Emanuil.Emanuilov@nvms.government.bg

Galia Kostadinova
 Senior Expert at International Relations,
 European Integration and Staff Training Directorate
 National Veterinary Service
 15A Pencho Slaveikov blvd.
 1606 Sofia, Bulgaria
 Phone: ++359 +2 952 27 16
 Fax: ++359 +2 954 95 93
 Email: Galia.Kostadinova@nvms.government.bg

CROATIA/CROATIE/ CROACIA

Marijan Andrašec*
 Director General
 State Office for Standardization and Metrology
 Ulica grada Vukovara 78
 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
 Phone: ++ 385 1 610 63 20
 Fax: ++ 385 1 610 93 20
 Email: marijan.andrasec@@dznm.hr

Tea Havranek
 Senior Adviser
 State Office for Standardization and Metrology
 Ulica grada Vukovara 78
 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
 Phone: ++ 385 1 610 60 05
 Fax: ++ 385 1 610 93 21
 Email: teah@dznm.hr

Damir Karlović
 University Professor
 Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology
 Pierottijeva 6
 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
 Phone: ++385 1 482 62 50
 Fax: ++385 1 482 62 51
 Email: dakar@pbf.hr

Marijan Katalenić
 Head of department
 Food Safety Department
 Croatian National Institute of Public Health
 Rockefellerova str. 7,
 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
 Phone: ++385 1 48 63 255
 Fax: ++385 1 46 83 007
 Email: katalenic@hzjz.hr

CYPRUS/CHYPRE/CHIPRE

Eleni Ioannoy-Kakouri
 Senior Chemist
 State General Laboratory Ministry of Health
 44, Kimonos street
 1451 Nicosia, Cyprus
 Phone: 0035722809120
 Fax: 0035722316434
 Email: ekakouri@sgl.moh.gov.cy

**CZECH REPUBLIC
 RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE
 REPÚBLICA CHECA**

Eva Příbylová*
 Director of Food Production Department Codex
 Contact Point
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Tešnov 17
 117 05 Praha 1, Czech Republic
 Phone: +420 221 812 795
 Fax: +420 222 314 117
 Email: pribylova@mze.cz

Dita Havlová
 Head of Foreign Affairs Unit
 Czech Agricultural and Food Inspection Authority
 Kvetná 15
 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic
 Phone: +420 542 426 635
 Fax: +420 542 426 647
 Email: dita.havlova@szpi.gov.cz

DENMARK/DANEMARK/DINAMARCA

Knud Østergaard*
 Head International Affairs
 Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
 Mørkhøj Bygade 19
 DK - 2860 Søborg, Denmark
 Phone: +45 339 56120
 Fax: +45 339 56299
 Email: koe@fdir.dk

ESTONIA/ESTONIE

Leena Albreht
 Head of Planning and Monitoring Department
 Health Protection Inspectorate
 Paldiski road 81
 Tallinn 10617, Estonia
 Phone: +372 6943525
 Fax: +372 6943501
 Email: leena.albreht@tervisekaitse.ee

Katrin Lõhmus
 Senior officer - Ministry of Agriculture of Estonia
 Lai 39/41
 15056 Tallinn, Estonia
 Phone: +372 6256509
 Fax: +372 6256210
 Email: katrin.lohmus@agri.ee

Kairi Ringo
 Head of the Food Safety Office
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Lai 39/41 - 15056 Tallinn, Estonia
 Phone: +372 6 256 212
 Fax: +372 6 256 210
 Email: Kairi.ringo@agri.ee

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
 COMMUNITÉ EUROPÉENNE
 COMUNIDAD EUROPEA**

Jérôme Lepeintre*
 Administrator
 European Commission
 Health and Consumer Protection Directorate –
 General (SANCO)
 F101 4/78
 B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
 Phone: +32 2 299 37 01
 Fax: +32 2 299 85 66
 Email: jerome.lepeintre@cec.eu.int

Valérie Rolland
 Administrator
 European Community
 European Food Safety Authority
 10 rue de Genève
 B-1140 Brussels
 Phone: +32 2 337 25 18
 Fax: +3227266813
 Email: valerie.rolland@efsa.eu.int

FINLAND/FINLANDE/FINLANDIA

Anne Haikonen*
 Counsellor, Legal Affairs
 Ministry of Trade and Industry
 Ratakatu 3 - P.O.Box 32
 FIN-00023 Government, Finland
 Phone: +358 9 1606 3654
 Fax: +358 9 1606 2670
 Email: anne.haikonen@ktm.fi

FRANCE/FRANCIA

Catherine Chapoux
 Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la
 Pêche et des Affaires Rurales - DGAL
 251, rue de Vaugirard
 75732 Paris CEDEX 15, France
 Phone: (33) 01 49 55 84 86
 Fax: (33) 01 49 55 44 62
 Email: catherine.chapoux@agriculture.gouv.fr.

Roseline Lecourt
 Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de
 l'Industrie - DGCCRF
 Chargée de mission
 Télédéc 051
 59, boulevard Vincent Auriol,
 75703 Paris CEDEX 13, France
 Phone:(33) 01 44 97 34 70
 Fax: (33) 01 44 97 30 37
 Email: roseline.lecourt@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr

GEORGIA/GÉORGIE

Sofia Kemkhadze*
 Senior Analyst
 Restructuring Assistance and Policy Advice for the
 Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia
 Office 345, 41 Kostava st
 Tbilisi 0123, Georgia
 Phone: +995 32 334164; +995 32 332671
 Fax: +995 32 333698
 Email: Sophie_Kemkhadze@dai.com

Avtandil Korakhashvili
 Senior Analyst
 Restructuring Assistance and Policy Advice for the
 Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia
 Office 345, 41 Kostava st
 Tbilisi 0123, Georgia
 Phone: +995 32 334164; +995 32 332671
 Fax: +995 32 333698
 Email: Bidzina_Korakhashvili@dai.com

GERMANY/ALLEMAGNE/ALEMANIA

Hermann Brei*
 Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and
 Agriculture
 Rochustrasse 1
 D-53123 Bonn, Germany
 Phone: +49(0)228-529 4655
 Fax: +49(0)228-529 4965
 Email: Hermann.Brei@bmvvel.bund.de

Clara Meynen
 Federation of German Consumer Organisations
 Markgrafenstrasse 66
 D-10696 Berlin, Germany
 Phone: +49(0)30-25800-444
 Fax: +49(0)30-25800-418
 Email: meynen@vzbv.de

HUNGARYHONGRIE/HUNGRIA

János Domoki*
 Head of Department
 National Institute of Food Hygiene and Nutrition of
 the National Public Health Center
 Gyáli út 3/a.
 Budapest, H-1097, Hungary
 Phone: +3614766443
 Fax: +3612155293
 Email: domokij@okk.antsz.hu

ICELAND/ISLANDE/ISLANDIA

Thordur Asgeirsson*
 Director of Fisheries
 Directorate of Fisheries
 Ingolfsstraeti 1
 101 Reykjavik, Iceland
 Phone: ++354 569 7900
 Fax: ++354 569 7991
 Email: thordur@fiskistofa.is

ITALY/ITALIE/ITALIA

Brunella Lo Turco*
 Secrétaire General du Comité National Italien du
 Codex Alimentarius
 Ministero delle politiche agricole e forestali
 Via Sallustiana 10
 00100 Roma, Italy
 Phone: 00390646656512
 Fax: 0039064880273
 Email: QTC6CODEX@politicheagricole.it

Albina de Marco
 Ministero delle politiche agricole e forestali
 Via Sallustiana 10
 00187 Roma, Italia
 Phone: 00390646656520
 Fax: 0039064880273

KAZAKHSTAN/KAZAJSTÁN

Zhaxybike Suleimenova
 Chief of the Department for Standardization,
 Metrology and Technical Policy
 Committee for Standardization, Metrology and
 Certification of
 Ministry of Industry and Trade
 Avenue 10
 P.O.Box 478000
 Kabanbai Batyra 10
 Astana, 473000 Republic of Kazakhstan
 Phone: 7 317 2 24 02 48; 7 317 2 24 25 31
 Fax: 7 317 2 24 13 03
 Email: sgt2004@mail.ru

Bakhitgul Tleubecova
 Head of Department of Sanitary – Hygienic
 Supervision of Committee of the State Sanitary-
 Epidemiological of Supervision
 Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan
 66 Moskovskaya
 Astana, 473000 Kazakhstan
 Phone: 8 317 2 3178 11
 Fax: 8 317 2 3178 07
 Email: sangu@minzdrav-rk.kz

LATVIA/LETTONIE/LETONIA

Uldis Armanis
 Director of Latvian Food Centre
 Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia
 Kr. Valdemara 38
 Riga, LV 10101 Latvia
 Phone: +371 7021713
 Fax: +371 702 755
 Email: uldis.armanis@lpc.gov.lv

Aija Kazocina
 Senior officer, Veterinary and Food Department
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Republikas Laukums 2
 Riga, LV – 1981 Latvia
 Phone: +371 7027022
 Fax: +371 7027205
 Email: aija.kazocina@zm.gov.lv

Iveta Veinberga
 Deputy head of Food Division
 Veterinary and Food Department
 Ministry of Agriculture - Republic of Latvia
 Republikas Laukums 2
 Riga, LV – 1981 Latvia
 Phone: +371 7027507
 Fax: +371 7027205
 Email: iveta.veinberga@zm.gov.lv

LITHUANIA/LITHUANIE/LITUANIA

Angele Liubeckiene*
 Head of Quality Division of the Food Safety and
 Quality Department
 Ministry of Agriculture of Lithuania
 Gedimino av. 19,
 Vilnius, LT-01103 Lithuania
 Phone: +370 5 2391132
 Fax: +370 5 2391212
 Email: Angelel@zum.lt

Albertas Barzda
 Director
 National Nutrition Center Ministry of Health
 Kalvariju st.153
 LT 08221 - Vilnius, Lithuania
 Phone: +3705 2778919
 Fax: +3705 2778713
 Email: rmc@vilnius.omnitel.net

**THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF
 MACEDONIA
 EX-RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE
 MACÉDOINE
 EX-REPÚBLICA YUGOSLAVA DE
 MACEDONIA**

Blagoja Aleksoski*
 Director, Republic Institute for Health Protection
 50 Divizija St. 6
 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
 Phone: ++389 2 3 147 051
 Fax: ++289 2 3223 354
 Email: blagoja_al@yahoo.com

Vladimir Kendrovski
 Head of Department for Hygiene and Food Safety
 Republic Institute for Health Protection
 50 Divizija St. 6
 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
 Phone: ++389 2 3 147 053
 Fax: ++289 2 3223 354
 Email: kendro@mt.net.mk

MALTA/MALTE

John Attard Kingswell
 Manager Health Inspector
 Department of Public Health
 3739 Rue D'Argens
 Msida, MSD 05 Malta
 Email: John.attard.kingswell@gov.mt

MOLDOVA

Galina Obreja
 Head of Food Hygiene Division
 National Centre of Preventive Medicine
 67A, Gh. Asachi str.
 MD-2028 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
 Phone: +473 22 73 57 77
 Fax: +473 22 72 97 25
 Email: gobreja@sanepid.md

Nicolae Opopol
 MoH Leading Expert in Hygiene
 Chief Chair Hygiene and Epidemiology
 State Medical and Pharmaceutical University
 67th A^{ve}, Gh. Asachi str.
 Kishinev, 2028, MD Republic of Moldova
 Phone: (+373 22) 73 58 22
 Fax: (+373 22) 73 58 04; +373 22 73 97 25
 Email: nopopol@sanepid.md

NETHERLANDS/PAYS BAS/PAISES BAJOS

Anneke Toorop*
 Food Policy coordinator
 Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
 P.O.Box 20350
 2500 ES The Hague, The Netherlands
 Phone: +3170 340 5658; +31615035267
 Fax: +3170 340 5554
 Email: ag.toorop@minvws.nl

Elfriede Adriaansz
 Codex Contact Point
 Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
 P.O. Box 2040 I
 2500 EK The Hague, The Netherlands
 Phone: + 31 70 3784104
 Fax: + 31 70 3786141
 Email: info@codexalimentarius.nl

Sandra Heumer
 Communication officer
 Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
 Bezuidenhoutseweg 73
 20401 2500 EK Den Haag, The Netherlands
 Phone: + 31-70-3784045
 Email: s.heumer@minlnv.nl

Philip Landon
 Administrator
 General Secretariat of the Council of the European
 Union
 Rue de la Loi 175
 B-1048 Brussels, Belgium
 Phone: 0032-2235 4966
 Fax: 0032-2285 7928
 Email: philip.landon@consilium.eu.int

NORWAY/NORVÈGE/NORUEGA

Sissel Lyberg Beckmann
 Deputy Director General
 Ministry of Health
 Department of Public Health
 P.O.Box 80100 Dep
 Einar Gerhardsens pl. 3
 NO-0030 Oslo, Norway
 Phone: +47 22 24 87 12
 Fax: +47 22 24 86 56
 Email: slv@hd.dep.no

POLAND/POLOGNE/POLONIA

Marzena Wódka*
 Chief of the International Co-operation Department
 Codex Contact Point
 Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection
 Government Service
 30 Wspólna St.
 00-930 Warsaw, Poland
 Phone: +48 22 623 29 02
 Fax: + 48 22 629 51 95
 Email: kodeks@ijhar-s.gov.pl

Albert Jurek
 Expert in Department of Food Safety and
 Veterinary Matters
 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
 30 Wspólna St.
 00-930 Warsaw, Poland
 Phone: +48 22 623 22 66
 Fax: +48 22 623 21 05
 Email: albert.jurek@minrol.gov.pl

Sylwia Ośmak
 Specialist in Department of Food Hygiene
 Nutrition and Consumer Articles
 Chief Sanitary Inspectorate
 38/40 Długa St.
 00-238 Warsaw, Poland
 Phone: +48 22 536 1316
 Fax: +48 22 635 61 94
 Email: s.osmak@gis.gov.pl

SLOVAK REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE REPUBLICA ESLOVACA

Milan Kováč*
 Director of Food Research Institute
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Priemyselná 4 - P.O.Box 25
 824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +421 (2) 55 57 46 22
 Fax: +421 (2) 55 57 14 17
 Email: milan.kovac@vup.sk

Milan Gajdoš
 Senior officer
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Phone: +4212 5978 35 05
 Fax: +4212 5978 35 01

Barbara Hellebrandtová
 National Secretary of SR to FAO
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Dobrovičova 12
 812 66 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +421 52966 292
 Email: maria.medvedova@land.gov.sk

Katarína Kromerová
 Department of Food Safety and Improvement of
 Nutrition
 Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic
 Trnavská 52
 826 45 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: 00421 2 49284 327
 Fax: 00421 2 444 55 643
 Email: kromerova@uvzsr.sk

Milan Pakši
 Permanent Representative of the SR to FAO
 Embassy of the Slovak Republic
 Rome, Italy
 Email: m.paksi@post.sk

Terezia Šinková
 Senior scientist
 Food Research Institute
 Priemyselná 4, P.O.Box 25
 824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
 Phone: 004212-50237150
 Email: codex@vup.sk

Gabriela Virgalová
 Head, Department of Food of Animal Origin
 State Veterinary and Food Authority
 Botanická 17
 842 13 Bratislava 4, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +421 (2) 602 57 426
 Email: virgal@svssr.sk

**OBSERVERS OF SLOVAK REPUBLIC
 OBSERVATEURS DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
 SLOVAQUE
 OBSERVADORES DE LA RÉPÚBLICA
 ESLOVACA**

Katarína Chudíková
 Head of Section of Hygiene of Living and Working
 Condition
 Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic
 Trnavská 52
 826 45 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: 00421 2 49284 395
 Fax: 00421 2 444 55 643
 Email: chudikova@uvzsr.sk

Andrea Jurčáková
 Director, Food Safety Department
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Foodstuff section
 Dobrovičova 12
 812 66 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +4212 59266 542
 Email: jurcako@land.gov.sk

Eva Kolesárová
 Director for Relations Department
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Dobrovičova 12
 812 66 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: +421 52966 561
 Email: eva.kolesarova@land.gov.sk

Mária Medved'ová
 Officer
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Dobrovičova 12, Slovak Republic
 812 66 Bratislava
 Phone: +421 52966 296
 Fax:
 Email: maria.medvedova@land.gov.sk

Peter Šimko
 Food Research Institute
 Priemyselná 4, P.O.Box 25
 824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
 Phone: 004212-50237 165
 Email: codes@vup.sk

Katarína Trúchla
 Department of Food Safety and Improvement of
 Nutrition
 Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic
 Trnavská 52
 826 45 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
 Phone: 00421 2 49284 327
 Fax: 00421 2 444 55 643
 Email: truchla@uvzsr.sk

SPAIN/ESPAGNE/ESPAÑA

Felipe Mittelbrunn García*
 Consejero Técnico de la
 Secretaría de la Comisión
 Interministerial para la Ordenación Alimentaria
 Secretaría General Agencia Española de Seguridad
 Alimentaria
 Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo
 C/Alcalá 56
 28071 Madrid, Spain
 Phone: +34. 91. 338.02.89
 Fax: +34. 91. 338.08.83
 Email: fmittelbrunn@msc.es

D^a Elisa Revilla García
 Jefe de Área de Coordinación Sectorial de la
 Subdirección General de Planificación Alimentaria.
 Dirección General de Industria Agroalimentaria y
 Alimentación
 Ministerio de Agricultura Pesca y Alimentación
 Paseo Infanta Isabel 1
 28071 Madrid, Spain
 Phone: +34 91 347 45 96
 Fax: +34 91 347 57 28
 Email: erevilla@mapya.es

SWEDEN/SUÈDE/SUECIA

Kerstin Jansson
 Deputy Director
 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer
 Affairs - Food Division
 SE-103 33 Stockholm, Sweden
 Phone: +46 8 405 11 68
 Email: kerstin.jansson@agriculture.ministry.se

Eva Rolfsdotter Lönberg
Codex Coordinator
National Food Administration
Box 622
S-751 26 Uppsala, Sweden
Phone: +46 18 17 55 00
Email: codex@slv.se

Stuart Slorach
Deputy Director-General
National Food Administration
Box 622
SE-751 26 Uppsala, Sweden
Phone: +46 18 17 55 94
Email: stsl@slv.se

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE/SUIZA

Awilo Ochieng Pernet*
Codex Alimentarius
International Food Safety Issues
Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
Schwarzenburgstrasse 165
CH-3003 Berne, Switzerland
Phone: +41 31 322 00 41
Fax: +41 31 322 95 74
Email: awilo.ochieng@bag.admin.ch

Urs Klemm
Vice-director
Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
Schwarzenburgstrasse 165
CH – 3003 Berne, Switzerland
Phone: + 41 31 322 95 03
Fax: +41 31 322 95 74
Email: Urs.klemm@bag.admin.ch

TURKEY/TURQUIE/TURQUÍA

Ilhami Sahin*
Head of Food Control Services Department
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
General Directorate of Protection and Control
Akay Cad. No: 3 Bakanlıklar -
Ankara, Turkey
Phone: 0090 312 3153413/22
Fax: 0090 312 3446872; 0090 312 4176318
Email: ilhamis@kkgm.gov.tr

Muzaffer Nurseren Ünver Budak
Division Manager
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
General Directorate of Protection and Control
Akay Cad. No: 3 Bakanlıklar -
Ankara, Turkey
Phone: 0090 312 3153412
Fax: 0090 312 3446872; 0090 312 4176318
Email: Nurb@kkgm.gov.tr

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI REINO UNIDO

Michael Wight*
Head of Branch
European Union and International Strategy
Food Standards Agency
Aviation House - 125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6NH United Kingdom
Phone: +44/0 20 7276 8183
Fax: +44/0 20 7276 8004
Email: michael.wight@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Tutu Aluko
Executive Officer
European Union and International Strategy Branch
Food Standards Agency
Aviation House - 125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6NH United Kingdom
Phone: +44/0 20 7276 8164
Fax: +44/0 20 7276 8004
Email: tutu.aluko@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

OBSERVER COUNTRIES PAYS OBSERVATEURS PAISES OBSERVADORES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BOSNIE HERZEGOVINE BOSNIA Y HERZEGOVINA

Marela Sabo
Engineer of Agronomy
Public Health Institute FBiH
Titova 9
71 000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Phone: +387 61 182 035
Email: dir@bih.net.ba

IVORY COAST / COTE D'IVOIRE

Gabriel Kohou
Délégué à l'OMC/WTO
Mission Permanent Côte d'Ivoire
149 H route de Fernay
Grand Saconnex 1218, Genève, Suisse
Phone: + 41 22 717 02 50
Fax: + 41 22 717 02 60
Email: kaoka50@yahoo.fr

UZBEKISTAN

Olga Mirshina
Head of Sanitary Division of the Republican Center
of State Sanitary Surveillance of the Ministry of
Health of Uzbekistan
Ministry of Health
46, Druzhba Narodov Street
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Phone: +998 712 766742
Fax: +998 712 784754
Email: oli@rol.uz

Mahamatsoli Torabekov
 Head Doctor of Namangan Regional Center of
 State Sanitary Surveillance of the Ministry of
 Health of Uzbekistan
 Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan
 26, Shakhriobod Street,
 Namangan, Uzbekistan
 Phone: +998 692 263295
 Fax: +998 692 262611

TURKMENISTAN

Muratgeldi Amanov
 Chief of the State Monitoring, Examination and
 Food Certification Department
 State Sanitary Epidemiological Service of the
 Ministry of Health and Medical Industry
 pr. Magtymguly 90
 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
 Phone: +993 12 395953
 Email: ymt@online.tm

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES

BIO (Biotechnology Industry Organisation)

Janet Collins
 Biotechnology Industry Organisation
 Global Regulatory Director
 Monsanto Co.
 1300 I Street NW
 Suite 450 E
 Washington, D.C. 20005, USA
 Phone: 202-383-2861
 Fax: 202-783-1924
 Email: janet.e.collins@monsanto.com

EUROPEAN FEED MANUFACTURERS FEDERATION

Alexander Döring
 Secretary General
 European Feed Manufacturers Federation
 Rue de la Loi 223, Bte 3
 B – 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium
 Phone: +32 (0) 2 285 00 50
 Fax: +32 (0) 2 230 57 22
 Email: adoring@fefac.org

IFAH (International Federation for Animal Health)

Olivier Espaisse European Corporate Affairs
 Manager
 International Federation for Animal Health
 52 Shoofstraat
 B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgique
 Phone: 00 32 2 548 8606
 Fax: 00 32 2 512 51 50
 Email: espaisse.olivier@lilly.com

Witold Klawe
 CEE Corporate Affairs Manager
 International Federation for Animal Health
 UO Eli Lilly Swisse
 Ul Stawki 2
 21 Pietro
 00193 Warszawa, Poland
 Phone: +48 22 635 0048
 Fax: +48 22 635 3688
 Email: klawe_witold@lilly.com

CODEX SECRETARIAT

Kazuaki Miyagishima
 Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission
 Joint FAO/WHO Food Standard Programme
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 001 00 Roma, Italy
 Phone: +39 06 57054390
 Fax: +39 06 57054593
 Email: kazuaki.miyagishima@fao.org

Selma H. Doyran
 Senior Food standards Officer
 Joint FAO/WHO Food Standard Programme
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 00100 Roma, Italy
 Phone: +39 06 57055826
 Fax: +39 06 57054593
 Email: selma.doyran@fao.org

FAO

Leo Hagedoorn
 Senior Food Safety Officer
 FAO
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 00100 Rome, Italy
 Phone: 00 39 66 570 55 348
 Fax: 00 39 06 570 54393
 Email: leo.hagedoorn@fao.org

Mary Kenny
 Nutrition Officer
 Food Quality and Standards Service, FAO
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
 00100 Rome, Italy
 Phone: +39 06-570-53653
 Fax: +39 06-570-54593
 Email: mary.kenny@fao.org

WHO

Wim van Eck
 Senior Adviser Food Safety and Nutrition
 WHO
 20 Avenue Appia
 CH-1211 Geneva 27
 Switzerland
 Phone: +41 22 791 35 82
 Fax: +41 22 791 4807
 Email: vaneckw@who.int

Maria Cristina Tirado
WHO Food Safety Regional Adviser
WHO
Via Crispi 10
Roma, Italy
Phone: 00 39 06 48 77 525
Fax: 00 39 06 48 77 599
Email: cti@who.it

**SLOVAK SECRETARIAT
SECRETARIAT SLOVAQUE
SECRETARÍA ESLOVACA**

Anna Bartalská
Food Research Institute
Priemyselná 4
P.O. Box 25
824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
Phone: 004212-50237 149
Email: bartalska@vup.sk

Katarína Janeková
Food Research Institute
Priemyselná 4
P.O. Box 25
824 75 Bratislava 26, Slovak Republic
Phone: 004212-50237 139
Email: janekova@vup.sk

Jana Petříková
Food Research Institute
Štefániková 45
900 01 Modra
Phone: 00421 33 647 3564
Fax: 00421 33 647 3562
Email: jana.petrikova@stonline.sk

*Head of delegation