

European Union comments
CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS
3rd Session
Chennai, India, 6 -10 February 2017
Agenda Item 7:
Proposed Draft Standard for Oregano
(CX/SCH 17/3/7)

Mixed Competence.

Member States Vote.

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to submit the following comments:

Title

The EUMS support the title “Proposal draft Codex Standard for Oregano (*Origanum spp.* L.)”, without mentioning the genus *Lippia*.

In the EU's view, botanical species which do not belong to the genus *Origanum* cannot be grouped all together under the commercial name of "oregano". It is important that there is a **botanical and chemical similarity** between the species that are included in the scope of the standard.

This appears to be misleading and it is particularly relevant when the two species do not belong either to the same genus (*Oreiganum*) or to the same family (*Lamiaceae*). While different species belonging to the genus *Oreiganum* could be considered similar (and hybridize naturally), this is not the case for plants belonging to the genus *Lippia*.

In the proposed draft standard for oregano the botanical and chemical similarity of the species considered as "oregano" are derived from three distinct parameters that are examined: (i) the botanical classification (genus *Origanum* L.1 fpara IT (iii the organoleptic properties fin particular odour and flavor, as formulated by the presence and ratio of mainly carvacrol and thymol in the volatile oil content) fpara 3.2.li and fiii) the volatile oil concentration in the product containing various levels of carvacrol and thymol fpara 3.2.4 Table IT.

Scope

The EUMS support the original scope of the proposed draft:

“This standard applies to dried leaves/flowers of species or hybrids of the genus *Origanum* L. from the Lamiaceae family (except **the species** *Origanum majorana* L.) offered for industrial food production and for direct consumption including for catering purposes or for repackaging if required.”

Chapter 2.1, point(a)

The EUMS consider that the original wording of the draft standard should be retained "Dried oregano is the product: (a) obtained from the leaves and the flowering tops **of plants of the genus *Origanum* L. from the Lamiaceae family (except the species *Origanum majorana* L.)**". This seems to better reflect the products currently most widely traded.

Chapter 2.1, point(b)

The EUMS could support the new proposal currently into square brackets without a reference to *Lippia* spp.

[Dried oregano is the product obtained from the leaves and the flowering tops of *Origanum* L. spp and *Lippia* spp from the *Lamiaceae* family, except marjoram (*Origanum majorana* L.), prepared in an appropriate manner, having undergone operations such as cleaning, drying, rubbing, milling and sifting].

Chapter 2.3 Varietal types

The EUMS would propose the following text:

"Any wild grown species and hybrid or cultivated variety (cultivar) of **the genus** *Origanum* L. suitable for processing, except **the species** *Origanum majorana*

The EUMS would like to express their preference to the following values regarding the volatile oil content of oregano that are in brackets in the current draft.

3.2.4. Chemical Characteristics

PARAMETERS	Requirements for [Whole or] Crushed/Rubbed styles			Requirements for Ground /Powdered styles		
	Extra	Class/ Grade I	Class/ Grade II	Extra	Class/ Grade I	Class/ Grade II
Volatile oil ml/100 g (dry basis) minimum	2,5	{1.5}, [2.00]	{1}, {1.2}, [1.75]	{1.5}, [1.75]	{1}, 1.1, [1.50],	[0.8], ±, {<1.1}

Those values are substantiated by several scientific publications.

1. Lucas B et al (2015), Essential oil diversity of European *Origanum vulgare* L. (Lamiaceae), *Phytochemistry*, 119, 32-40 (a free version of the same work is available <http://www.ecpQr.cQiar.ora/fileadmin/templates/ecpqr.org/upload/PROJECT REPORT S/Origanum vulgare Final report.pdf>)
2. Torres et al 2012, Field Evaluation of Twelve Clones of Oregano Grown in the Main Production Areas of Argentina: Identification of Quantitative Trait with the Highest Discriminant Value, *ISRN Agronomy* <https://www.hindawi.com/iournals/isrn/2012/349565/>
3. Fleisher and Sneer (1982), Oregano spices and *Origanum* chemotypes *J Sci Food Agrie*, 33, 441-446.
4. Kokkini et al. (1997), Autumn essential oils of Greek oregano, *Phytochemistry*, 44, 883-886