

**European Union Comments**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS**  
**26<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 25 February- 01 March 2018**

**Agenda Item 4:**

**Proposed Draft Revision to the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils**  
**(CODEX STAN 33-1981) (CX/FO 19/26/4)**

*European Union Competence.*  
*European Union Vote.*

**General comments**

The European Union (EU) thanks the chair and co-chairs of the electronic Working Group (eWG) for the very good progress on this subject and welcomes the proposed draft revision to the standard.

The EU is pleased that the comments it provided in the eWG were taken into account in the document.

**Specific comments on the sections 3 and 8 and Appendix I:**

**3. Essential composition and quality factors**

- The EU can accept the adaptation of the definition of "Extra Virgin Olive Oil" and "Virgin Olive Oil" by adding the terms "and organoleptic" to physicochemical characteristics and by adding another decimal place for the expression of the limit for free acidity for the Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
- The EU can agree to remove the Ordinary Virgin Olive Oil from the CODEX STAN 33.
- Regarding the definition of Refined Olive Oil:
  - The EU supports the proposal to let the refined olive oil definition as it is now in CODEX STAN 33.
    - The EU is of the opinion that there should not be any reference to organoleptic characteristics in the definition of this category;
  - The EU could also accept the second definition in brackets:
    - [Refined olive oil: olive oil obtained from virgin olive oils by refining methods [(including methods aiming to the complete or partial removal of chemical compounds responsible for organoleptic descriptors)] which do not lead to alterations in the initial glyceridic structure. It has a free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, of not more than 0.30 grams per 100 grams and its other characteristics correspond to those laid down for this category]

- Regarding the definition of Refined Olive-Pomace Oil, the EU supports the proposal to let the definition Refined Olive-Pomace Oil as it is now in CODEX STAN 33.
  - The EU is of the opinion that there should not be any reference to organoleptic characteristics in the definition of this category;
- The EU supports the proposal to adopt the designation of “olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils” for the blend of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils.
  - The EU is in favour of that proposal as it would bring more clarity on the nature of the product considered. Indeed, the EU believes that the current designation of "olive oil" being used as a generic term for all categories of olive oils, including for the blend of refined olive oil with virgin olive oils, is confusing for consumers and should be clarified.
  - The EU considers that in the case of olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oil, the definition should not refer to "organoleptic characteristics". The EU considers that usually this category when placed on the market is mainly composed of refined oil.
- The EU does not support to adopt the designation of “olive pomace oil composed of refined olive pomace oil and virgin olive oils” for the blend of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils.
  - Contrary to the above for olive oil, the EU is of the opinion that the designation "olive-pomace oil" currently used in CODEX STAN 33-1981 does not entail misinterpretations. A change in the designation of that category would therefore bring unnecessary complexity as regards the labelling of this product.
  - The EU considers that in the case of olive pomace oil, the definition should not refer to "organoleptic characteristics". The EU considers that usually this category when placed on the market is mainly composed of refined olive-pomace oil.
- For the sake of a greater harmonization, the EU can agree to swap the limit of Virgin Olive Oil’s main defect median from 2.5 to 3.5 and add for Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Virgin Olive Oil one decimal place for the expression of the median of the fruity attribute.
  - A maximum intensity of 3.5 for the median of the main defect is the limit already provided for in the IOC standard for virgin olive oil.
- The EU can accept the new limits set for C14:0, C17:0, C17:1, C18:2, C20:1.
- The EU cannot agree to set the palmitic acid range values between 7.0 % and 20.0 %.
  - Accepting this proposal would imply lowering the current lower limit value of 7.5% to 7.0% for most of the standards (only Australia and South Africa are at 7.0%).
  - The Chair indicates that lowering the lower limit of palmitic acid content would not involve a significant additional risk of fraud because other parameters can be used to detect it. However, the European Union would like to know more about the justification of lowering such limit. In particular, the European Union would be interested in knowing the proportion of authentic olive oils containing less than 7.5% of palmitic acid, as well as in receiving more scientific evidences about the level of fraudulent blends that could be disregarded by lowering this limit and its effective detection by other parameters.
- The EU cannot agree to set the lower limit of the oleic acid percentage at 53%.
  - High content of oleic acid is a major factor of identity of olive oil and confers to the product part of its healthy properties.

- Therefore, the European Union considers necessary to be very cautious on considering changes on oleic content limits. The European Union would like to receive more information on volumes of authentic olive oils produced with a problem in relation to the current lower limit in oleic acid of the CODEX STAN 33-1981. If it concerns small proportion of the production in some countries, alternative ways should be considered to solve the problem of such authentic olive oils by allowing its marketing in the domestic markets were they are produced.
- The EU can agree with lowering the waxes' limit of edible virgin oils to 150 mg/kg, taking into account only the waxes with 42, 44, and 46 carbon atoms.
- The EU can accept to fix the stigmastadienes' limit to 0.05 mg/kg.
- The EU can accept to change the refined olive oil limit of K270 from 1.10 to 1.25.
  - This is consistent with the current limits established in the IOC trade standard. The former limit of 1.10 was trade restrictive and the current limit of 1.25 was defined on the basis of scientific evidences.
- The EU can accept to change the olive oil limit of K270 from 0.90 to 1.15.
  - This is consistent with the current limits established in the IOC trade standard. The former limit was trade restrictive and the current limit of 1.15 was defined on the basis of scientific evidences.
- The formulas for the calculation of  $\Delta K$  are not correct, the squared ( $\wedge^2$ ) should be deleted; It should read as follow:
  - $\Delta K270 = K270 - (K266 + K274) / 2$
  - $\Delta K268 = K268 - (K264 + K272) / 2$
- The EU agrees to include in the standard fatty acid ethyl esters (EE) content as an Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) quality parameter with a limit of 35 mg/kg. However, the information that the parameter has to be applied only to extra virgin olive oil is missing and should be added to the standard.
  - The proposed limit of 35 mg/kg is based on the results of previously conducted studies. A lower limit could lead to problems with certain quality EVOO where the presence of EE can be related to variety, period of harvest or seasonal reasons.
- The EU can agree to change the title "Minimum value for total sterols" into "Value for total sterols". For the sake of preciseness, the EU invites however to consider another wording "Total sterol content".

However, the limits in the table are not correct. The table for the total sterols content should read as follows:

Virgin olive oils	$\geq 1,000$ mg/kg
[Olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils]	
Refined olive oil	$\geq 1,600$ mg/kg
[Olive-pomace oil composed of refined olive pomace oil and virgin olive oils]	
Refined olive-pomace oil	$\geq 1,800$ mg/kg

- The EU can agree to delete the term "maximum" from the titles related to the content of Erythrodiol and Uvaol and stigmastadienes.

- **8. Methods of analysis and sampling**

- The EU agrees with the updates regarding this section.

- **Appendix I**

- The EU does not support the moving of the organoleptic characteristics of **refined olive oil, olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils, refined olive-pomace oil and olive pomace oil** from the Appendix to the main body of the Standard, as it would then be considered as essential quality factors of the standard, which is not the case for those categories.

In addition, moving the organoleptic characteristics from the Appendix to the main body of the Standard would require extra research to define attributes, to calibrate an organoleptic method for those categories (to be used for classification and control purposes) and to establish relevant limits.

- The EU supports the removal from the Appendix of the reference to organoleptic characteristics for refined olive oil and refined olive-pomace oil, and then, the term “acceptable”.

If the term "acceptable" should be maintained in the Appendix, the EU can agree to define the term "acceptable" as "with no rancidity symptoms".

- In respect of «Olive oil composed of refined olive oil and virgin olive oils» and «Olive-pomace oil», the EU does not support to define the term "Good" as “Fruity with no rancidity symptoms.” Referring in the definition of Good to "no rancidity symptoms" is not appropriate to olive oil and olive-pomace oil because those categories can be obtained by blending refined olive oil and refined olive-pomace oil with virgin olive oils and therefore, might have slight defects, including rancidity.

- The EU agrees to remove appearance criteria and would support to remove the colour criteria as well.

- The EU is of the opinion that the subjective indications related to colour and appearance of olive oil categories other than virgin olive oils, as expressed in the standard, are impossible to assess from a control point of view and is therefore in favour to removing those indications from the Appendix of the Standard