

CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES
(32nd Session)
Virtual meeting, 8 - 17 February 2021

European Union Comments on

Agenda item 3

Information on activities of FAO and WHO relevant to the work of CCGP

CX/GP 21/32/3

Mixed Competence
Member States Vote

COVID-19:

- The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) highly appreciate efforts of FAO and WHO to aid Members in managing the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While the pandemic is not a food safety issue, it has impact on food production and trade and it is therefore important to ensure resilience in these sectors.

UNFSS:

- EUMS welcome and commend the objectives of the UN Food System Summit.
- This Summit, called by the UN Secretary General the ‘people summit’, must serve as a turning point in the journey towards sustainable, safe and nutritious, fair and environmentally friendly food systems and must give a strong response to urgent global health and environmental challenges. Common principles will be necessary for reaching all these objectives.
- FAO and WHO, as well as their Members, play a key role in the successful outcome of the Summit. The engagement in the International and National dialogues is also an essential tool for involving all actors in the required actions and activities.
- Joint efforts and synergies are necessary to ensure that food systems deliver healthy and safe diets and improve people’s health and wellbeing (as part of a One Health approach).
- In the EU, at the heart of the EU Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, adopted in May 2020, aims to safeguard food security and to ensure access to healthy diets sourced from a healthy planet. The Strategy will enable the transition to sustainable food systems in the EU and promote and support global efforts towards more sustainable food systems.
- In line with the Farm to Fork Strategy objectives, the EU is fully committed to seek ambitious policy outcomes of the Summit in cooperation with all partners and strong commitments from stakeholders to take concrete actions on health and sustainability.

- We also welcome CCEXEC80's decision to mandate the Sub-Committee on the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan to consider how Codex can contribute to and achieve recognition for its key food standards work in the global and UN initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Food Systems Summit.

FAO Governing body:

- EUMS welcome the conclusions of the 165th Council of FAO and in particular the endorsement of the new FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025, which further promotes the One Health approach to tackle AMR.
- We also note with satisfaction FAO's continued support to Members in developing sustainable food systems and FAO's commitment on sustainable funding for the food safety advice programme and the Codex Secretariat.

FAO's study - International harmonization of pesticide maximum residue limits in rice:

- EUMS would like to thank FAO for sharing the results of the study 'Understanding international harmonization of pesticide maximum residue limits with Codex standards' and presenting the very helpful summary in the document on item 3.1. The study provides very interesting information that is highly relevant in the context of monitoring the use of Codex standards and the implementation of our Strategic Goal 3 of our Strategic Plan (an important issue which will also be addressed under agenda item 7 of this session).
- Among the many findings of this study we noted with particular interest that the analysis revealed that the majority of Codex pesticides MRLs in rice are not adopted at national level. The level of harmonization with Codex pesticides MRLs in rice varies greatly across countries and regions. With regard to the reasons for this the document states that some of the major differences in MRLs and residue definitions are due to, for example, the consideration of different data for the various countries/region and to inconsistency among the commodity descriptions in different countries.
- EUMS consider this study most relevant and noted the section 'The Way forward' with particular interest. In this regard we would like to invite Members to consider the suggested steps that could be taken by countries towards improving harmonization with Codex standards. For example, the paper suggests that Codex MRLs could be taken into consideration in the absence of national MRLs. Furthermore, the study indicates that, for the optimal functioning of the Codex MRL standard-setting process, it would be important that countries actively notify whenever they have reservations and are not in the position to adopt a newly established Codex MRL.

World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution on food safety:

- EUMS welcome the adoption of the World Health Assembly Resolution on Strengthening Food Safety. We look forward to supporting the implementation of the Resolution, including the development of the WHO global strategy for food safety and the increased WHO support to the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
 - We further recall that the Resolution identifies the need to ensure predictable and sustainable financing of scientific advice to Codex, with a financing mechanism coming from the WHO core budget and not from individual members.
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