

**European Union comments for the
CCCF11 - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 – 7 April 2017**

Agenda Item 3 Add. 1:

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

WHO GUIDELINES FOR DRINKING-WATER QUALITY AND HEALTH-RELATED LIMITS FOR CERTAIN SUBSTANCES IN THE STANDARD FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS (CODEX STAN 108-1981)

*European Union Competence
European Union Vote*

The EU strongly believes that in considering the health-related limits for certain substances in the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (NMW), the specific characteristics of NMW laid down in Section 2.1 of the Standard have to be respected:

"Definition of natural mineral water

Natural mineral water is clearly distinguishable from ordinary drinking water because:

(a) it is characterized by its content of certain mineral salts and their relative proportions and the presence of trace elements or of other constituents;

(b) it is obtained directly from natural or drilled sources from underground water bearing strata for which all possible precautions should be taken within the protected parameters to avoid any pollution of, or external influence on, the chemical and physical qualities of natural mineral water;

(c) of the constancy of its composition and the stability of its discharge and its temperature, due account being taken of the cycles of minor natural fluctuations;

(d) it is collected under conditions which guarantee the original microbiological purity and chemical composition of essential components;

(e) it is packaged close to the point of emergence of the source with particular hygienic precautions;

(f) it is not subjected to any treatment other than those permitted by this standard."

It is essential to bear in mind the clear distinction between NMW and drinking water. NMW can be clearly distinguished from drinking water by its characteristics that include its mineral content, trace elements and other constituents, and by its "original purity" that is preserved as

a result of protection of the water from all risk of pollution. Therefore, certain parameters and their values that are applicable to drinking water may not be applicable to NMW.

Therefore, drinking water standards cannot serve as a *de facto* model for NMW and the WHO values for drinking water should not be used as a sole basis for setting limits for NMW and therefore the EU cannot accept to take over the revised WHO guideline values in the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters without any further in depth discussion.