

CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD

15th Session

Agenda Items 8 and 13

Request for comments on MLs for methyl mercury in certain fish species and associated sampling plans and additional related matters
(Codex Circular Letter CL 2022/17-CF)

European Union Competence **European Union Vote**

The European Union (EU) welcomes and appreciates the work done on the discussion paper on methylmercury in fish by the electronic Working Group led by New Zealand and Canada.

The EU would like to make following comments:

a) Proposed maximum levels (MLs) for orange roughy and pink cusk-eel

The EU could support an ML of 0.8 mg/kg methylmercury of orange roughy and an ML of 1.0 mg/kg, for pink-cusk eel. The EU can agree to advance these MLs for final adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

b) Feasibility of ML for Patagonian toothfish

As in the previous data calls not sufficient data were made available for toothfish, the EU supports a further data collection in 2-3 years' time for methylmercury in Antarctic and Patagonian toothfish. In case no member countries can commit to generate the required data, the EU can also support a discontinuation of the discussion on an ML for methylmercury in toothfish.

c) Sampling plans

The EU agrees to progress the further development of the sampling plan and agrees to request via a circular letter or a call for data information on national and regional sampling plans for mercury or other contaminants in fish. The EU agrees to develop sampling plans for different weight/ size classes of fish. The EU doesn't agree to link the sampling plans to the value of the fish, as this fluctuates and doesn't ensure a consistent approach over time. As typically, the larger size fishes have the highest value, size-based sampling methods are appropriate to limit economic losses in high value fish.

d) Risk-management measures for methylmercury in fish

The EU welcomes a guidance on risk-management measures and therefore agrees to postpone assessing the feasibility of such paper for one year, in order to collect further information via a circular letter.

If insufficient information on risk management measures would become available, the EU can agree that information, which relates to sorting and reconditioning, is taken into consideration in the sampling plan.