

EUROPEAN UNION COMMENTS ON
CODEX CIRCULAR LETTER CL 2010/22-GP:
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS CONCERNING
THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT CODEX/OIE STANDARDS

The Member States of the European Union (MSEU) continue to support close cooperation with the OIE to avoid gaps, contradictions and duplication in areas where the mandates of Codex and the OIE interface, such as antimicrobial resistance, zoonoses and certification. This cooperation has proven to be quite successful, the most recent example being the development of the *Guidelines for the Control of Salmonella and Campylobacter in Chicken Meat*.

In principle, the MSEU see the value in Codex/OIE joint standards as they would provide a seamless coverage of the entire "farm to fork" continuum. However, there are still important obstacles for the development of such standards stemming from the different procedures applied by Codex and the OIE, in particular concerning the adoption of standards.

The proposed "Procedure for the development of joint standards" described in the discussion paper attached to CL 2010/22-GP would not fully resolve those obstacles. There is a non-negligible risk to create an additional cumbersome procedure for setting "joint bodies" which would cause extra costs, organisational work and delays in the development of standards. This would not be in line with our global aim of achieving efficiency gains in international organisations by strengthening existing rather than creating new bodies and institutions.

The MSEU note that the current pragmatic arrangements laid down in the *Guidelines on Cooperation between Codex Alimentarius and International Intergovernmental Organizations in the Elaboration of Standards and related Texts*¹ provide a well functioning basis for the cooperation with other international organizations, including the OIE.

The MSEU however believe that there could be some merit in considering an experimental trial on a relevant topic. The MSEU propose to make this experiment by developing a joint Codex/OIE standard on the control of specific zoonotic parasites in meat (*Trichinella spiralis* and *Cysticercus bovis*) which is a new work proposed by CCFH and (to be) approved by the 34th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This experiment should be conducted using the lightest procedure possible respecting the established Codex decision making procedures.

In a longer term approach, the MSEU would not object going into a global reflection aiming at harmonising the working procedures applied by the three standard setting organisations (Codex, IPPC, OIE) with a view to facilitate the development of joint standards in full respect of their respective mandates.

¹ Procedural Manual, 19th Edition, p.172