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30th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe

Astana, Kazakhstan

3-7 October 2016

European Union comments on

Agenda Item 3 a and b

**FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE
REGION and PRIORITISATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION
AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM
(CX/EURO16/30/3 and CX/EURO 16/30/4)**

*Mixed competence
Member States Vote*

A. Food Safety and Quality Situation in Countries of the Region

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for their paper on Food Safety and Quality Situation in Countries of the EURO region (CX/EURO 16/30/3) and for the information gathered from the survey on critical and emerging food safety and quality issues. The information gathered is useful in feeding into agenda item 3 b on the prioritisation of the needs of the region.

Identifying issues that could be of regulatory significance for action at either the regional or global level is useful in driving forward the Codex agenda and in ensuring Codex remains able to provide workable and timely responses to the food safety and quality challenges ahead. It is important to find the balance between being proactive on this front whilst also respecting the Codex mandate and not straying into areas which can be better addressed by the work of other organisations. In this respect, the EUMS consider the survey to have been both useful at collecting ideas and in helping us to now prioritise those areas where we feel resources should be channelled.

Notwithstanding the overall usefulness of the exercise, the approach did prove to be somewhat cumbersome as the topics that have come forward have been enormously broad in range. Equally, there seems to be a tendency to prioritise the areas for action on the basis of the frequency with which the issue was named. This would seem to overlook qualitative effects such as the cost of inaction, which are additional considerations that would allow us to determine where to focus our efforts. Finally some attempt at standardising, or providing some form of template to conduct such work in the future, in advance of issuing the survey, could have been helpful to avoid overlap or repetition. The EUMS would therefore encourage

the FAO and WHO to thus introduce a qualitative angle to their assessment in order to prioritise critical and emerging issues on both a quantitative and qualitative basis.

CCEURO might also wish to consider the possibility to be informed of, and to feed into, similar work conducted by other regions. This would provide a welcome insight into the work of other regions and help avoid duplication and overlap of effort and resources.

Given that critical and emerging issues will be a standing item on the agendas of regional committees, it would be useful if CCEURO were to consider recommending the CAC to hold a regular discussion on critical and emerging issues in which the entire Codex membership could participate.

B. Prioritisation of the Needs of the Region and Possible Approaches to address them

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) thank the Secretariat for document (CX/EURO 16/30/4) on the Prioritisation of the Needs of the EURO Region and Possible Approaches to address them.

The EUMS welcome the opportunity to discuss what the priorities for CCEURO might be with other members of the region. We also hope to share some examples which are relevant to our experience in the EU.

In addition, the EUMS would like to propose in the area of food fraud – in light of ongoing work being handled by CCFICS – that a collaborative approach could be established between CCEURO and other regions. This would be in line with one of conclusions of CAC38 where it noted interregional co-operation as an opportunity to exchange experience in the context of the revitalisation of regional committees. Members from CCEURO, CCNASWP and CCNEA (where the proposal for food fraud originated) are involved in moving the work forward. It could thus be useful to propose interregional co-operation between CCEURO, CCNASWP and CCNEA to describe the desired outcomes of the work on food fraud/authenticity.