

**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING
(Forty-fifth Session)
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada 13 – 17 May 2019**

European Union comments on

**Agenda item 2: Matters referred to the Committee by the CAC and other
Codex Subsidiary Bodies (CX/FL 19/45/2)**

Matters for Action: Definition for biofortification

*Mixed Competence
European Union Vote*

CCNFSDU40 agreed to: (i) hold the definition for biofortification at Step 4; and (ii) forward the definition to CCFL and request CCFL:

- To consider if the definition would meet their intended needs; and*
- To clarify the intended use of the definition and where the definition would be best placed.*

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) appreciate the potential benefits of 'biofortified' foods, i.e. the improvement of nutritional characteristics of foods by other means than conventional nutrient addition such as by plant breeding. This is especially the case for regions where micronutrient deficiencies represent a public health issue.

The EUMS would like to recall that the Codex Alimentarius Commission approved the new work on the definition for 'biofortification' and endorsed at the same time the recommendation of the CCEXEC70 to request CCNFSDU to clarify how the definition would be used and where it would be best placed. This recommendation was made to address the concern on how the definition would be used in Codex. The EUMS are of the opinion that a clarification on the placement of the definition and how it would be used was a prerequisite for meaningful discussions on the development of a definition. However, CCNFSDU has not been able to agree on this issue given the lack of clarity on the expected objective of the exercise.

The EUMS are of the view that CCFL should first discuss the scope and the objective of defining the term 'biofortification' and how it would be used before considering the proposed definition from CCNFSDU. It is indeed very challenging to define and find a consensus on a term in the absence of a clear scope and objective. Furthermore, 'biofortification' is a complex issue that would be captured with great difficulties in the context of a definition.

The EUMS note that the term "biofortification" is not used in any of the Codex texts adopted or texts in the step process that are under the remit of CCFL. Consequently, the EUMS have not identified needs for a definition of the term "biofortification" in the context of CCFL.

The EUMS also note that the text of the proposed draft definition has limited value in terms of labelling harmonisation since the text is so broad that it does not allow to understand which products would be considered as 'biofortified', it allows Member governments to use equivalent terms that are not identified in the proposal and that the process covered by the definition have to be determined by competent national/regional authorities.

While the EUMS have not identified a Codex text where the definition of 'biofortification' could be used, the EUMS note that the concept of 'biofortification' is part of the broader concept of fortification.