

Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (21st Session)

Brisbane, Australia, 13-17 October 2014

European Union comments on Discussion paper on principles and guidelines for elaboration and management of questionnaires directed at exporting countries

(Agenda item 4, CX/FICS 14/21/3)

*Mixed Competence
European Union Vote*

The European Union and Member States (EUMS) would like to thank Costa Rica for preparing the discussion paper and the draft project document on questionnaires.

The EUMS continue to support work on this item but would like to ensure that the scope will cover exchange of information between importing and exporting countries' authorities in relation to initiation or maintenance of food trade in broader terms, including a range of tools for such exchange. To this end, the EUMS suggest the following amendments to the project document.

Proposal for new work to develop principles and guidelines for exchange of information in relation to initiation or maintenance of ~~the simplification and harmonization of the~~ questionnaires used in the food trade

1. Purpose

The objective of the proposed new work is to provide guidance to the competent authorities of importing and exporting countries through principles and guidelines on the **exchange and reusability of information, including the use of questionnaires, where necessary,** ~~development and use of questionnaires~~ that facilitate the assessment of the NFCS of an exporting country.

4. The main aspects to be covered

This new work proposes the establishment of principles and guidelines for the exchange of information, including the use of questionnaires, in order to provide guidance to the competent authorities of importing countries on the type of information required to assess the NFCS or parts thereof of the exporting country, which are consistent with the Codex documents related to international food trade. **The guidelines would describe alternative tools to obtain this information, including but not limited to questionnaires.**

5. An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

The elaboration of the principles and guidelines would provide a framework to assist competent authorities in obtaining relevant information to assess NFCS, benefiting both importing and exporting

countries, and therefore, promoting mutual confidence in these systems, reducing or eliminating complex existing procedures, and optimizing **as well as harmonising the tools used for the collection of the information** ~~time spent on the preparation, completion and review of the questionnaires~~, always with the view to determine that products and production systems provide the appropriate level of protection in order to safeguard the health of consumers and to ensure fair practices in food trade.