

7 May 2019

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

European Union Comments on

Agenda item 8:

Discussion Paper on allergen labelling

*Mixed Competence
European Union Vote*

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to thank Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the preparation of the discussion paper and its attached Draft Project Document.

The EUMS consider that the General Standard for Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985, hereafter "Standard") provide already an important tool to ensure consumers access to clear and accurate information on the presence of allergens in foods. Nevertheless, the EUMS are of the opinion that further improvements and clarifications are needed and support new work at Codex level in this area.

1. Review provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the GSLPF

The EUMS support work to be undertaken to review the existing provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the GSLPF as proposed in the Project Document.

In particular, the EUMS consider that clarifications of the term "hypersensitivity" are needed for the sake of clarity and for purpose of any future amendment of the list of allergens enumerated in point 4.2.1.4 of the Standard.

The EUMS also consider that the presentation and legibility of the food information related to allergens needs to be reinforced and harmonised to avoid it is misunderstood or missed by the consumer and to facilitate international trade.

2. Develop guidance on the use of precautionary allergen or advisory labelling

With regard to the development of guidance on the use of precautionary allergen labelling, the EUMS would like to support such development. The EUMS indeed consider that this is an important issue which has to be addressed at Codex level. The EUMS which however to highlight that it would be important to ensure that such guidance is fully consistent with the ongoing work carried out by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) on the code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators. It is to note that the

document of CCFH includes definitions and other references which are of highest relevance in the context of possible future work on guidance as proposed in the Project Document.

3. Request scientific advice relating to the list of foods and ingredients in section 4.2.1.4 from FAO/WHO

The EUMS are in favour of requesting scientific advice from FAO/WHO on the listed aspects of the Project document on allergen labelling. The EUMS consider that the request to FAO/WHO should also include the re-assessment of the foods and ingredients currently listed, in addition to the request whether there are new foods and ingredients that should be added to the list. Furthermore, the EUMS are of the opinion that this exercise must also include the clarification of the scope of certain listed foods and ingredients such as tree nuts.

As regards possible exemptions of certain foods and ingredients from the list due to their manufacturing process, the EUMS would be happy to share the scientific opinions adopted by the European Food Safety Authority on certain allergens which led the European Union to exempt the following:

- a) wheat based glucose syrups including dextrose;
- b) wheat based maltodextrins;
- c) glucose syrups based on barley;
- d) cereals used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin
- e) fish gelatine used as carrier for vitamin or carotenoid preparations;
- f) fish gelatine or isinglass used as fining agent in beer and wine;
- g) fish gelatine or isinglass used as fining agent in beer and wine;
- h) fully refined soybean oil and fat;
- i) natural mixed tocopherols (E306), natural D-alpha tocopherol, natural D-alpha tocopherol acetate, and natural D-alpha tocopherol succinate from soybean sources;
- j) vegetable oils derived phytosterols and phytosterol esters from soybean sources;
- k) plant stanol ester produced from vegetable oil sterols from soybean sources;
- l) whey used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin;
- m) lactitol;
- n) nuts used for making alcoholic distillates including ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin.

In conclusion, the EUMS support new work at Codex level on allergen labelling. Nevertheless, the EUMS consider that work on the development of guidance on the use of precautionary allergen labelling and on the update of the list of foods and ingredients causing hypersensitivity (section 4.2.1.4) should be treated as priorities compared to the review of the provisions relevant to allergen labelling in the GSLPF.