Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (22nd Session) Melbourne, Australia, 6-12 February 2016

European Union Comments on

Agenda Item 6:

PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN FOOD SAFETY EMERGENCY SITUATIONS (CAC/GL 19-1995)
(Codex document CX/FICS 16/22/5)

Mixed Competence
European Union Vote

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to submit the following comments:

(i) General comments

1.   The EUMS consider that the scope of the paper should be limited to the exchange of information in food emergency situations and not extended to cover the management of such emergencies.

> Management of food safety emergencies falls outside the scope of the original document CAC/GL 19-1995.
> While we believe there is merit in attempting to establish guidelines that encompass and go beyond the exchange of information, management of such emergencies requires taking a multipronged approach, largely depending on the level of protection chosen by the importing country.

2.   The EUMS believe a reference to INFOSAN to be relevant in the actual context. However, currently, Annex 2 does not seem to cover the wealth of information that should be exchanged in case of emergency, such as a reference to affected or potentially affected groups and to the actions taken by the exporting and/or importing country. We do not have a preference for either Annex I or II, as long as a reference to INFOSAN is included together with all the necessary information that needs to be exchanged.

> In case of emergency situations, the information exchanged should be as complete and comprehensive as possible.

(ii) Specific comments

Section 5 – Stakeholders and their respective role

The EUMS would suggest the following modification to Section 5

Paragraph 5.1 Competent Authorities, should read:

13. The information to consumers should concern, in particular, health effects on the most sensitive groups (children, elderly people and people with reduced immune system), and how the affected food/foods can be identified and handled in order to reduce further spreading of risk (e.g. information to travellers about food in luggage).
(The remaining part of the text should be numbered accordingly.)

Paragraph 5.3. Food Business Operators

The EUMS propose the following modification to paragraph 15:

"15. In relation to food receipt, a food business operator must be able to provide information about what food it has on the premises and where it came from **and to whom it has been supplied**."

> This section specifies that a recipient shall be able to document from where it got the food item and if some of it is still in stock. The EUMS believe that it is relevant for the effective tracing of a food item that the food business operator is able to specify to whom the food item has been supplied.

Paragraph 5.4 Consumers, should read:

16. Consumers can enhance both their personal health and public health in general by adhering to, remaining informed of and following food safety-related instructions that have a role in managing those aspects of food safety emergencies which are under their control. They should be provided with information on how to achieve this. Multiple methods of providing such information to consumers should be **devised** ~~prepared~~ by the authorities **and by the relevant business operators**. ~~The information should concern health effects on the most sensitive groups (children, elderly people and people with reduced immune system) and how the affected food/foods can be identified and handled in order to reduce further spreading of risk (e.g. information to travellers about food in luggage).~~

> While ideally consumers should be aware of what they consume and how, it is essential to give consumers adequate information in the event of food safety emergencies, as provided for by the relevant national legislation. Responsibilities for providing information to consumers lay with the competent authorities and the food business operators.