

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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REPORT OF THE 10TH SESSION

OF THE

COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

Vienna, 13-17 June 1977

INTRODUCTION

1. The 10th session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe was held in Vienna by courtesy of the government of Austria. The meeting was opened by Prof. Dr. H. Woidich, Coordinator for Europe, who welcomed the participants and pointed to the need to resolve certain important questions in connection with the Draft European Regional Standard for Natural Mineral Waters. In order to achieve this, Prof. E. Matthey, Chairman of the Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters, agreed to lead discussions concerning the agenda items dealing with natural mineral waters.

2. The meeting was attended by delegates from the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia. Observers were also present from New Zealand, the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC), the Groupement Européen des sources d'Eaux Minérales Naturelles (GESEM), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Representatives of FAO and WHO acted as Joint Secretaries of the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Appendix I to this report.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The Provisional Agenda was adopted with the addition of a new item dealing with the appointment of the Coordinator for Europe.

APPOINTMENT OF RAPPORTEURS

4. The Committee appointed Ms. S. Rochize of France and Mr. D. Stoker of the United Kingdom to act as Rapporteurs.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REVISED DRAFT EUROPEAN REGIONAL STANDARD FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

5. The Committee had before it the above draft standard contained in document CX/MIN 77/2 and comments thereon contained in documents CX/MIN 77/1, Parts I-V. The Committee noted the conclusions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (paras 201-203, ALINORM 76/44, Report of the 11th session) that the redraft of the standard for natural mineral waters required a round of government comments and that, since no meeting of the Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters had been provided for in the

1976/77 biennium, the Coordinating Committee for Europe should rediscuss the revised draft of the above standard.

6. In introducing the revised draft standard the delegate of Switzerland informed the Committee that the redrafted standard represented a compromise between the interested parties, i.e. FAO and WHO and a number of European countries.

7. The delegations of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden informed the Committee that the redrafted standard and the accompanying circular letter had not been received by them until just before the session and that, therefore, no comments could be sent. The Secretariat undertook to look into this matter, as the standard in question had been distributed in October 1976.

Section 1 - SCOPE

8. After thorough discussion the Committee agreed that the standard should exclude mineral waters for which medicinal claims were made. In order to make it absolutely clear that medicinal mineral waters were not included in the standard, the Committee accepted the proposal of the delegation of Switzerland to refer to products covered by the standard as food. The Committee adopted a text prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the various views expressed during the session. In the opinion of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany and several other delegations the Scope section should have included a statement specifically excluding medicinal purposes. The Committee considered that the text prepared by the Secretariat was quite clear in this respect.

Section 2.1 - Definition of Natural Mineral Water

9. As regards Section 2.1.1 the Committee, after detailed consideration, agreed that this section did not adequately describe natural mineral waters. There was a need, for example, to include more specific description of the geological source. The delegations of Belgium, Italy and France were of the opinion that the section should make reference to the recognition as such of natural mineral water by the competent national authority. The Committee agreed that such a reference was not appropriate to an international standard. The Committee accepted the offer of the delegation of Switzerland to prepare a revised version of Section 2.1.1 during the session which would take into account the various written comments received.

10. In discussing the text drawn up by the delegation of Switzerland the Committee noted that if the Swiss text were to be adopted, consequential amendments would be necessary to Section 3.1 on treatment and handling. As regards para (a) of the definition of natural mineral water drawn up by Switzerland, the delegation of France proposed that reference should be made to natural mineral water having effects as a result of the content of certain minerals. The delegation of Italy was of the same opinion and proposed that reference should be made to the natural mineral water having particular favourable properties. These delegations argued that if natural mineral waters were characterized by their content of certain minerals it was logical to expect and to state that such mineral waters would have effects characteristic of the product concerned.

11. The representative of WHO stated that in her opinion such an inclusion in Section (a) of the Section dealing with definition of natural mineral water would not contribute to a better understanding of the nature of the product. Furthermore, reference to effects in the definition could possibly be a way of introducing medical and similar claims in relation to natural mineral waters covered by the standard. The delegations of

the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Sweden and Austria were in agreement with the statement of the representative of WHO.

12. The delegation of the United Kingdom proposed a compromise amendment by making reference to "any possible effects" which such waters might have. They pointed out that not all mineral waters possessed significant effects and that, in any case the effect which natural mineral water might have on the consumer should not be used to characterize and define the product. The Committee discussed at length the proposal of the United Kingdom which found support by several delegations, but which was not acceptable to the representative of WHO and other delegations.

13. The Committee adopted the redrafted definition of a natural mineral water as proposed by the delegation of Switzerland without any change to para (a) but with some editorial amendments. The delegations of Italy and France indicated their strong reservation as regards the decision of the Committee not to make reference to natural mineral waters having particular effects. The delegations of Belgium, France and Italy indicated their reservation as regards the position of the Committee not to include in the definition of natural mineral water a requirement that the recognition as such of a natural mineral water should be based on authorization by the competent national authority.

14. As regards section 2.1.2 of the revised draft standard as contained in document CX/MIN 77/2 the Committee decided to defer decision on whether or not to delete this section until it had discussed the section on labelling. A number of delegations were of the opinion that not only was this section unclear but it was also not required as it could be covered in the section on labelling (see paras 39-43).

Section 2.2 - Supplementary Definitions

15. As regards the definition of "naturally effervescent mineral water" the delegation of France was of the opinion that the title should be rephrased to read: "effervescent natural mineral water". The delegation of the United Kingdom was of the opinion that in the English language "carbonated" should be used. The Committee agreed to change the text to "naturally carbonated natural mineral water" (see also para 42).

16. As regards "non-effervescent natural mineral water" the Committee discussed whether a limit should be set for free carbon dioxide or whether it was sufficient to make reference to visible effervescence as proposed by the United Kingdom and WHO. The delegation of Austria suggested a limit of 50 mg/kg for free carbon dioxide. After discussion, the Committee adopted the wording proposed by the delegation of Italy which stipulated that a non-effervescent natural mineral water should not contain free carbon dioxide in excess of the amount necessary to keep the hydrogen-carbonate salts present in the water dissolved. It was considered that the proposal of the United Kingdom could cause difficulties as regards interpretation as to whether or not the mineral water was effervescent and that the limit proposed by the delegation of Austria represented a water which could be considered slightly carbonated.

17. As regards "carbonated natural mineral water" the Committee agreed that the meaning of this section was to permit the addition of a carbon dioxide from whatever source. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany was of the opinion that the section should permit only the addition of gas from another natural mineral water source. The delegation of Belgium supported this view. The delegation of France was of the opinion that natural mineral water to which carbon dioxide had been added was no longer a natural product and should not be regarded as conforming to the standard. For this reason that delegation proposed that Section 2.2.4 should be deleted. The

delegation of Switzerland pointed out that the addition of carbon dioxide to a natural mineral water did not alter the composition of the product, which should still be regarded as natural mineral water to which carbon dioxide had been added.

18. The Committee agreed not to delete the section and decided that the addition of carbon dioxide should be permitted. The delegation of France reserved its position as regards this decision.

19. With respect to the section dealing with decantation, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, supported by delegations of Italy and Yugoslavia, was of the opinion that the process of decantation should be included in a revised definition of permitted treatments of natural mineral water and that the revised definition should be transferred to Section 3.1, dealing with treatment and handling. The Committee agreed to this proposal and adopted the text proposed by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany without amendments.

20. The delegation of Switzerland pointed out that following (a) the adoption of the new definition of natural mineral water which dealt with those aspects covered in Section 3.1.1 of the revised draft standard (CX/MIN 77/2) and (b) the proposal made by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany (see para 19), Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.3 were redundant. There was also a question as to whether Section 3.1.5 dealing with installations was still necessary. The Committee agreed that these sections as well as Section 3.1.5 dealing with installations could be deleted.

21. As regards Section 3.1.4 dealing with the transport of natural mineral waters, the Committee agreed that reference to mobile tankers was insufficiently restrictive and that the transport of mineral water in bulk containers should not be permitted. It was decided that the standard should be amended accordingly. The Committee noted that Section 6 on packaging also referred to the prohibition of transport of natural mineral water in bulk containers and that the new definition of natural mineral water required that the product be bottled close to the point of emergence. The delegation of the United Kingdom was of the opinion that the bulk transport of mineral water should be permitted, and reserved their position.

Section 3.2 - Limits for Certain Components

22. In discussing this section the Committee agreed that the purpose of setting limits for certain components of mineral water was to protect the health of the consumer. The limits were intended to ensure that mineral water offered as a beverage for general consumption would be safe from a health point of view. The Committee also noted that certain components included in this section did not represent a hazard to health but that their limitation served to ensure that the mineral water was of acceptable quality.

23. After some discussion on the inclusion of a limit for sulphate, the Committee agreed that limitation could be made either in terms of a possible laxative effect due to the magnesium and sodium sulphates or in terms of a higher limit which could be considered to be a limitation in terms of acceptability from a point of view of health. Noting that the labelling section would contain a warning to the consumer that a particular mineral water might have laxative properties and noting that sulphate was not a component of particular health concern, the Committee decided that there was no need to include a provision for this component. In order to expedite consideration of this section, especially from a point of view of analytical methods to be specified which would define some of the components such as organic matter, the Committee decided to set up a small ad hoc Working Group to review all information received from governments.

24. Prof. Dr. Woidich, speaking for the Working Group, informed the Committee of the conclusions arrived at by the Working Group after considerable discussion of the matters related to Sections 3.2 and 4.

(a) It had been noted by the Working Group that certain substances could be present in natural mineral water both as a natural constituent and as a contaminant. If the product was analyzed in a bottled state it would in most cases not be possible to determine the origin of the substance in question and, therefore, the Working Group proposed to amend the title of Section 3.2 as follows: "Limits for Certain Substances".

(b) Section 4 - contaminants - would then cover only those substances which were almost exclusively contaminants, with the probable exception of mineral oil and phenolic compounds.

(c) The Working Group had concluded that for those ions in Section 3.2 for which different possibilities existed of expressing analytical results, a clear indication should be given as to what chemical substance the calculation was related. A new column "calculated as" was, therefore, introduced for this purpose with an indication of the chemical compound where appropriate.

(d) The Working Group had proposed that the brackets in the Section 3.2 be deleted; the limit for borate be changed to 30 mg/kg; for organic matter to 3 mg/kg; for fluoride to 2 mg/kg and that the limit of 45 mg/kg for nitrate be agreed.

(e) As regards total alpha-activity, it was explained that only Ra 226-activity was of importance and that the provision should read: Ea 226-activity with a limit of 30 p Ci/l.

(f) It was noted that beta-activity was always due to contamination and should, therefore, appear in Section 4.

(g) The Working Group had proposed a limit for nitrites of not more than 0.005 mg/kg to be included in Section 3.2. It had been noted that nitrites could be present from geochemical sources or could be an indicator for bacteriological contamination (i.e., presence of nitrate reducing bacteria). The above limit should be further specified by a footnote making reference to bacteriological examination.

(h) Concerning Section 4 - contaminants - the Working Group had left the present text unchanged with the exception of the deletion of nitrites. Reference to specific methods of analysis should continue to be made. However, the Group had suggested that the Committee might wish to consider at a future time the amendment of this section by including specific limits as methods of analysis become more sophisticated.

(i) Furthermore, the Working Group had proposed the deletion of the limit for cyanide in Section 3.2 and to include it as item 4.3 in the section on contaminants.

25. Prof. Woidich suggested that, as already pointed out by the delegation of Belgium, the limits in Section 3.2 should be expressed in mg/l instead of in mg/kg and to indicate to the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling that in the case of mineral water, the term mg/l would be more appropriate. In conclusion, he mentioned that Section 3.2 could be merged with Section 4 if this should be thought necessary.

26. In discussing the above report on the conclusions of the Working Group, the question was raised as to whether a limit for ammonium ions should be included as it was an indicator of faecal contamination and as it was sometimes also a natural constituent of mineral water. The Committee did not set a limit for ammonium ion as it considered that there was no means of determining the origin of the substance in the

bottled product. In this context the Committee noted the opinion of the delegation of Austria that it would be an advantage to have a provision in the standard dealing with the authorization of sources by national authorities, which would require an analysis of the natural mineral water emerging from the source.

27. The Committee discussed the proposal of the Working Group to transfer the provision for nitrite (see (g) above) to Section 3.2 dealing with limits for certain substances. The delegation of France recognized that nitrite could be present either as a constituent or as a contaminant, but indicated that they preferred to see it classified as a contaminant and that, in any case, the limit for nitrite should be set at 0.001 mg/l. The Committee decided that, since nitrite was nearly always present as a contaminant, it should be retained in the section on contaminants, but that the limit should be 0.005 mg/l as suggested by the Working Group.

28. The representative of WHO stated that her Organization could accept all limits established for the substances in Section 3.2 as amended by the Working Group.

29. The delegation of France was of the opinion that the limit for fluoride should be revised to 6 mg/l to accommodate certain natural mineral waters. The Committee could not agree to this proposal.

30. The delegation of France and several delegations considered the limit of 45 mg/l for nitrate too high, because natural mineral waters were used for feeding to infants and in the preparation of infant food. They proposed a reduction of the limit to 25 mg/l. The Committee could not agree to this proposal. However, it was pointed out that infants with gastro-enteritis should be fed with a water of low nitrate content. The Committee decided that the content of nitrate in natural mineral waters could be considered as a labelling question which could be discussed under the section on labelling (see para 49).

Section 4 - Contaminants

31. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on Food Additives had temporarily endorsed this section with the observation that it was desirable to specify the particular contaminants and their maximum levels. However, that Committee had noted that the purpose of the provisions of Section 4 was to ensure the absence of certain contaminants and thus preserve the acceptable quality of natural mineral waters.

32. Some delegations pointed out that the absence of the various contaminants was linked to methods of analysis which were not yet available and that, as the sensitivity of the methods to be established was not known, there might be some difficulties regarding this provision.

33. The Committee adopted the section on contaminants with the changes proposed by the ad hoc Working Group (see para 27 for discussions on nitrite). It was agreed that, pending the establishment of methods of analysis, the provision for contaminants should remain provisional.

Section 5 - Hygiene

34. As regards Sections 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4 the Committee accepted them without changes. In respect of Section 5.2, however, which dealt with microbiological requirements for bottled natural mineral waters, the Committee noted that the European Economic Community had done considerable work on this subject and had agreed on a standard microbiological examination of natural mineral waters. It was noted that Article 5 of the EEC draft directive dealt both with the examination of the natural mineral water

at the source and a standard time after bottling. It further included some provisions for the marketed product.

35. The Committee noted that the microbiological examination of natural mineral waters at the source served to ensure that the product sealed in suitable containers would represent a natural mineral water of acceptable hygienic quality. In this respect it was stated by some delegations that such a test, while indispensable, would not be sufficient to describe microbiological requirements for the bottled product moving in trade.

36. It was pointed out that pathogenic microorganisms did not proliferate but actually declined in bottled natural mineral waters, while other microorganisms might either proliferate or decline, depending on a number of factors. Thus, it was possible to require the absence of pathogenic microorganisms and certain other important indicator microorganisms while it was not feasible or necessary to specify a maximum colony count for non-pathogenic microorganisms. This approach had been, in fact, adopted by the EEC.

37. The Committee adopted the text elaborated by the EEC to replace Section 5.2 of the revised draft standard. The delegation of Austria was of the opinion that a total aerobic colony count should also be included in the standard for the bottled product moving in trade.

Section 6 - Packaging

38. The Committee deleted the last sentence of Section 6 dealing with transport in bulk containers as this was already covered in another part of the standard (see para 21). It adopted the proposal of the delegation of France that natural mineral waters should not be packaged in bottles of a volume greater than 2 litres.

Section 7 - Labelling

Section 7.1 - The Name of the Product

39. The Committee discussed a proposal from the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany on the basis of which natural mineral water with a minimum content of 1000 mg/l dissolved solids or 250 mg/l free carbon dioxide would be labelled "natural mineral water" or, when products which contained lesser amounts than stated above, the national authority of the producing country had recognized the product as natural mineral water. This proposal was intended to overcome the difficulties resulting from the different legal systems within the region.

40. Some delegations were of the opinion that Codex standards should not include provisions which were based on a recognition in individual countries. Others maintained that the recognition of a source by a national authority was an essential part of an international standard on natural mineral waters. The Secretariat was of the opinion that the Codex standard should, as far as possible, orientate itself to the product moving in trade and pointed out that, in any case, individual governments would continue to exercise control over the sources to be used for the production of natural mineral waters.

41. The Committee considered a proposal from the delegation of Switzerland which the Secretariat had redrafted taking into account a proposal from the Federal Republic of Germany. After full discussion, the Committee adopted this new text, which included alternative designations for those products which contained less than 1000 mg/l dissolved solids or less than 250 mg/l free carbon dioxide. The delegations of France and the United Kingdom were of the opinion that this division of natural mineral waters

was quite arbitrary. Despite this, the new text was acceptable. The delegation of Austria pointed out that the text as proposed by the delegation of Switzerland was the best compromise which took into account current practices as regards the labelling of the various types of natural mineral waters.

42. The Committee adopted a proposal from the delegation of the United Kingdom to change the word "effervescent" to "carbonated". It was also agreed to allow only the designation "natural mineral water" and to delete the designation "mineral water".

43. As regards section 7.1.7 the Committee agreed to amend this provision by referring to treatments additional to decantation (e.g. filtration, aeration) and also agreed to transfer it to Section 7.6. The delegation of the United Kingdom was of the opinion that the declaration of treatment should not be a mandatory provision and reserved its position.

Section 7.3 - Name and Address

44. The Committee decided to replace this text by that contained in the previous draft which referred to the declaration of the source (see ALINORM 72/19A).

Section 7.4 - Country of Origin

45. The Committee agreed to bring the text into line with that contained in the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods.

Section 7.6 - Additional Labelling Requirements

46. The Committee had a detailed discussion as to whether this section should be optional or mandatory. It was noted that the purpose of the provision was to ensure that (a) consumers would be able to select products of their choice, (b) the terms used to describe certain types of natural mineral waters would be standardized, and that (c) the terms would be linked to requirements regarding composition.

47. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany considered the binding nature of this section to be superfluous perfectionism and possibly misleading, except for the declaration that certain products may be laxative. The delegation of the United Kingdom, also supported by those of Denmark and Norway, was of the opinion that the provisions could be misleading and, as presently drafted, could be regarded as claims and that, therefore, they should be deleted, or redrafted in the form of a warning to the consumers. The delegation of France was of the opinion that it would be best to leave member states to decide whether such a statement should be authorized or whether they should be made mandatory. As a number of delegations were in favour of not making these provisions mandatory, the Committee agreed that Section 7.6, with the exception of the statement under (g) that certain products may be laxative, should be made optional. The delegations of the United Kingdom and Denmark reserved their position on this decision. The representative of WHO pointed out that the statements included in Section 7.6 did not imply the possession of favourable or unfavourable properties but that they would be useful for the information of the consumer.

Section 7.7 - Labelling Prohibition

48. The Committee, in discussing Section 7.7.1, considered whether or not reference to physiological effects should be deleted. Some delegations maintained that the word "physiological" was not appropriate since there were many physiological effects, such as thirst quenching and laxative effect (already subject to mandatory labelling provision) which could be mentioned on the label. The Committee noted the conclusions of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling in this regard and decided to delete the words

"physiological" and "curative" but to qualify the term "medicinal" as follows: "medicinal (curative, preventive, or alleviating)". The delegation of France made a reservation, quoting in their observation in their written comments that "it would be advisable to adopt rather less blunt wording regarding other beneficial effects relating to health" and the properties of mineral waters, in view of the fact that the draft standard [CX/MIN 77/2] does admit that mineral waters may have such properties.

49. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed that water containing more than 25 mg/l nitrate should be labelled as not suitable for the feeding of infants (see also para 30). Considering the limit for nitrate of 45 mg/l recommended in the WHO standard for drinking water as being suitable also for infants, the Committee did not adopt the proposal.

Section 8 - Methods of Analysis and Sampling

50. The Committee had before it document CX/MIN 77/3 and CONF/DOC No. 2 but decided, due to lack of time, to postpone consideration of the question of the analysis of natural mineral waters. The delegation of the United Kingdom asked for, and received an assurance, that this subject should be discussed at the next session as a matter of priority.

Status of the Standard

51. The Committee decided that the Draft European Regional Standard for Natural Mineral Waters, as amended (see Appendix II) should be advanced to Step 8 of the Codex Procedure.

REPORT ON THE ACCEPTANCE BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE RECOMMENDED EUROPEAN REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HONEY (CAC/RS 12-1969)

52. The Chairman introduced document CX/EURO 77/2 which was a report on acceptances by governments of the Recommended European Regional Standard for Honey.

53. The representative from the EEC explained that the Community had given careful consideration to the acceptance of the recommended Codex standards for certain sugars and that the Codex Alimentarius Commission would soon receive a note on the Community's position. This experience would prove useful in giving consideration to the acceptance of the European Standard for Honey which was very similar to the adopted EEC directive. The EEC representative emphasized that the Community would take a positive and optimistic attitude in its deliberations to the acceptance of the honey standard.

54. The Chairman then drew attention of the delegates to the differences between the EEC directive and the Codex standard and enquired whether the latter needed to be amended.

55. After some discussion it was agreed that the Committee should consider the amendment of the Codex standard at its next session. In the meantime, the Secretariat would circulate a questionnaire seeking views on how the standard should be amended.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED FOR A STANDARD FOR THE VARIOUS TYPES OF VINEGAR

56. The Committee had before it document ALINORM 76/30-Part I - views of governments on standards for vinegar - which had been considered by the 11th session

of the Commission and the extract of the relevant section of the Commission's Report (ALINORM 76/44, paras 392-398).

57. The Committee had, at its 9th session, agreed in principle that it was desirable to elaborate a standard for vinegar for the European Region (ALINORM 72/19A, para 26). Subsequently, the 10th session of the Commission had discussed a background paper (ALINORM 74/32-Part I) covering aspects of denomination, types, production and legislation of vinegar. No decision had been reached at that time on whether standards should be elaborated at a worldwide or at a regional level. It had been felt that more information was needed (ALINORM 74/44, paras 312-315).

58. At the 11th session, the Commission had considered the above document and had noted that, whereas many delegations expressed themselves in favour of a standard for this product, low priority had been given to the standardization of vinegar. The Commission had concluded that a Committee for vinegars need not be established but that the Coordinating Committee for Europe should be requested to reconsider the feasibility of establishing such standards.

59. In complying with the Commission's request the Committee noted that sufficient information was provided in the two background documents mentioned above to discuss the matter.

60. The Committee considered whether it should commence work on a general standard for the different types of vinegar or on the elaboration of standards for certain types of vinegar. It was pointed out that one standard for fermentation vinegar, i.e. vinegar obtained by acetous fermentation of suitable raw materials would be appropriate. Some delegations were of the opinion that the specific problems related to wine-vinegar would justify the elaboration of an individual standard for that product.

61. The delegation of Belgium outlined the problems which existed in the labelling of composite foods containing non-fermented vinegars.

62. The representative of the EEC stated that many difficulties had been encountered by that body in drafting proposals for an EEC regulation on vinegar which was hoped would be ready for discussion with the Community by the end of the year. The Committee was of the opinion that it would be useful to be kept informed of progress on the draft directive and the representative of the EEC offered his cooperation concerning this matter.

63. The delegation of the U.K. thought that the elaboration of a standard for vinegar should be given a low priority in the context of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The delegation of France indicated that its country would not be interested in the establishment of a standard unless such a standard laid down minimum quality criteria involving the use exclusively of acetous fermentation of alcoholic liquids for the production of vinegar.

64. The Committee concluded that the majority of delegates were in favour of the elaboration of standards for vinegar, but did not consider it practicable to develop a general standard to cover every type of product.

65. The Committee decided to recommend to the Commission that standards should be elaborated both for fermentation vinegar, and especially for wine vinegar, as European Regional Standards. It was thought that in future these standards could become worldwide standards in accordance with the Codex Procedure. The Committee accepted the offer of the delegation of Austria to prepare first drafts for the above

standards, in case the Commission decided that work should commence on standardization for vinegars.

BONELESS MEAT

66. The Committee noted that the Commission, at its 11th session, had discussed the need to undertake work in this field and had agreed that the Coordinating Committee for Europe might consider this matter in order to see if there was still interest in work on boneless meat (see para 205, ALINORM 76/44).

67. The delegation of Austria, supported by the delegation of Switzerland, was of the opinion that such aspects as fat content and ligament content should be considered as it was not possible to sort boneless meat sold in large frozen blocks for further processing. However, it would be easy to sort the various cuts of boneless meat before freezing. As Codex standards had already been established for meat products specifying compositional requirements, it would be necessary to regulate the ingoing raw material.

68. The delegation of New Zealand, supported by several delegations, pointed out that boneless meat was at present adequately covered by seller/buyer specifications and that the establishment of Codex Regional Standards for this product would not facilitate trade. Furthermore, the major proportion of trade in this product involved the food industry or caterers. A very small proportion of boneless meat moving in international trade was sold directly to the consumer.

69. As regards the need to lay down requirements for fat or ligament content, it was pointed out that standards for processed food would take care of these aspects adequately. It was also noted that boneless meat moved in international trade and that, therefore, it was a worldwide issue rather than a regional one. In any event, standardization of boneless meat, if contemplated, should be done by the Codex Committee on Processed Meat Products.

70. The Committee decided that the above remarks should be referred to the Commission for consideration. The Committee also noted that the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Meat drawn up by the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene covered hygienic aspects for fresh meat including boneless meat.

CONSIDERATION OF THE POSSIBLE ELABORATION OF A STANDARD FOR EUROPEAN FRUIT COCKTAIL

71. The Chairman invited comments on the need for a standard for European Fruit Cocktail. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that para 234 of the report of the 11th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission referred to mixtures of fruit and not fruit cocktail. The Secretariat reported that the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, at its last session, had been advised that the Coordinating Committee for Europe would be examining the need for a further standard. The issue seemed to be whether the Recommended International Standard for Fruit Cocktail should be amended to include other fruits or whether there was a need for a European Standard for canned fruit mixtures.

72. The delegation of Denmark considered that it would be necessary for the Codex Committee on General Principles to advise on whether a deviation from the Recommended Standard in respect of a single fruit was tantamount to non-acceptance.

73. It was agreed that no action should be taken on the amendment of the standard for Fruit Cocktail or the establishment of a European Standard or standards for canned mixed fruits until further acceptances of the Recommended Standard for Fruit Cocktail

had been received. These would then show whether the replies from the European countries were such as to demonstrate what further action should be taken.

SIZE GRADING OF CANNED GREEN PEAS

74. The Committee considered whether it would be possible to formulate proposals for the size grading of canned green peas. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany pointed out that the Industry of the EEC had drawn up a voluntary standard for size grading. The delegation of the U.K. stressed that the Committee had insufficient data on which to base a standard for size grading and reserved its position.

75. It was agreed that the Committee should report to the next session of the Commission that there seemed to be a possibility of drawing up a standard for size grading of canned green peas. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany undertook to provide information on size grading.

ELABORATION OF STANDARDS FOR SALT

76. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on Food Additives had considered the question of salt and had decided that a revised specification be drawn up for food grade salt used as an ingredient of food. The specification would deal with additives and contaminants and would provide a definition of food grade salt. The question of standardization of the various forms of salt as food was still open. The Secretariat informed the Committee that salt was a significant item in world trade and an important commodity for certain developing countries.

77. The Committee agreed to await the development of the work in the Codex Committee on Food Additives concerning specifications for food grade salt before considering the need to elaborate a standard or standards for salt.

HUNGARIAN QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING FOOD CONTROL SERVICES AND INSPECTION SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

78. The delegation of Hungary reported on replies received to the questionnaire concerning food control services and inspection systems in Europe, issued by Hungary. Very few replies had been received and the Hungarian delegation asked for advice as to how to proceed in the future.

79. The WHO representative reported that a study of food control administration by the WHO European Regional Office was planned to start in 1977. It was hoped that results of the survey would be published during 1978. Cooperation with the Hungarian delegation would be welcome to avoid duplication of work.

80. The Committee noted this information with interest and accepted the offer of the Hungarian delegation to collaborate with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and to make available the information already collected by Hungary. It was hoped that results of the survey would be ready for the next meeting of the Committee. Hungary, furthermore, accepted the task of drawing up a simplified questionnaire on food control organizations in cooperation with WHO in order to facilitate replies from governments.

INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF FOOD STANDARDIZATION

81. The Committee noted the reports of the European Economic Community (ALINORM 76/34-Part v), the Council of Europe (Partial Agreement) (ALINORM 76/34-Part II), and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (ALINORM 76/34-Part I).

82. The delegation of Czechoslovakia, speaking on behalf of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), expressed the regret of the Secretariat of CMEA that it had not been possible for that Organization to be represented at the session. He informed the Committee that CMEA considered the work of this Committee to be a significant contribution to work on food legislation in the European and worldwide context. CMEA informed the Committee of a 5-year standardization programme of food traded within CMEA countries. Existing Codex recommended standards covering such foods would be taken over as far as possible in this programme. Other foods not moving within CMEA countries would be dealt with by individual CMEA countries in relation to the Codex Acceptance Procedures.

83. The Committee agreed with the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee that, apart from the establishment of regional standards, another important aspect of the work of this Committee should be to discuss and solve problems in connection with the acceptance of Codex standards. For example, the Committee could ensure that standards intended for acceptance on a worldwide basis should at least be accepted by the European Region.

84. The Committee also agreed that it had an important role to play in providing a forum where the various economic groupings in Europe could meet to discuss problems of mutual interest and to act as a link between such groupings.

INFORMATION ON THE WORK OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

85. The Secretariat gave a verbal report to the Committee. It informed the Committee that the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme was increasing its activities in the various regions, especially in respect to developing countries. As an auxiliary activity to food standardization, the Programme included such work as would strengthen food control facilities in developing countries. The regional committees were also considering a model food law in an attempt to ensure a common approach to food legislation and control. Although there had been a cut in the number of services, the Secretariat pointed out that all efforts were being made to ensure that work would continue at a not too diminished pace.

86. The Committee noted that only one session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe had been scheduled for May 1979.

APPOINTMENT OF COORDINATORY FOR EUROPE

87. The Committee, by unanimous decision, decided to recommend to the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Prof. Dr. H. Woidich be re-appointed as Coordinator for Europe for a further full term of office.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

88. The Chairman of the Committee, Prof. H. Woidich expressed his thanks, on behalf of the Committee, to Prof. E. Matthey for conducting the session during the discussion of the standard for natural mineral waters and to the Rapporteurs, Ms. S. Rochize of France and Mr. D. Stoker of the United Kingdom.

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
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 Les chefs de délégations figurent en tête et les suppléants, conseillers et consultants sont énumérés par ordre alphabétique.
 Figuran en primer lugar los Jefes de la delegaciones; los Suplentes, Asesores y Consultores aparecen por orden alfabético.

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DRAFT EUROPEAN REGIONAL STANDARD FOR NATURAL MINERAL WATERS
(Advanced to Step 8)

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to all bottled natural mineral waters offered for sale as food. It does not apply to natural mineral waters sold or used for other purposes.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Definition of Natural Mineral Water

Natural mineral water is a water clearly distinguishable from ordinary drinking water because:

- (a) it is characterized by its content of certain mineral salts and their relative proportions and the presence of trace elements or of other constituents;
- (b) it is obtained directly from natural or drilled sources from underground water bearing strata;
- (c) of the constancy of its composition and the stability of its discharge and its temperature, due account being taken of the cycles of natural fluctuations;
- (d) it is collected under conditions which guarantee the original bacteriological purity;
- (e) it is bottled close to the point of emergence of the source with particular hygienic precautions;
- (f) it is not subjected to any treatment other than those permitted by this standard;
- (g) it is in conformity with all the provisions laid down in this standard.

2.2 Supplementary Definitions

2.2.1 Naturally carbonated natural mineral water

A "naturally carbonated natural mineral water" is a natural mineral water which, after possible treatment in accordance with sub-section 3.1.1 and replacement of gas and after packaging, has the same content of gas from the source as at emergence of the natural mineral water taking into account the usual technical tolerance.

2.2.2 Non-carbonated natural mineral water

A "non-carbonated natural mineral water" is a natural mineral water which, by nature and after possible treatment in accordance with sub-section 3.1.1 and after packaging, does not contain free carbon dioxide in excess of the amount necessary to keep the hydrogen carbonate salts present in the water dissolved.

2.2.3 Decarbonated natural mineral water and natural mineral water fortified with carbon dioxide from the source

A "decarbonated natural mineral water" or a "natural mineral water fortified with carbon dioxide from the source" is a natural mineral water which, after possible treatment in accordance with sub-section 3.1.1 and after packaging, does not have the same carbon dioxide content as at emergence.

2.2.4 Carbonated natural mineral water

A "carbonated natural mineral water" is a natural mineral water which, after possible treatment in accordance with sub-section 3.1.1 and after packaging, has been made effervescent by the addition of carbon dioxide from another origin.

3. COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Treatment and Handling

3.1.1 Treatments permitted include separation from unstable constituents by decantation and/or filtration, if necessary, accelerated by previous aeration.

3.1.2 The treatments provided for in sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 and 3.3.1 above may only be carried out on condition that the mineral content of the water is not modified in its essential constituents, which give the water its properties.

3.1.3 The transport of natural mineral waters in bulk containers for packaging or for any other process before packaging is prohibited.

3.2 Limits for certain substances

Natural mineral water in its bottled state shall contain not more than the following amounts of the substances indicated hereunder:

		<u>Calculated as</u>
Copper	1 mg/l	
Manganese	2 mg/l	
Zinc	5 mg/l	
Borate	30 mg/l	H ₃ BO ₃
Organic matter	3 mg/l (KMnO ₄ digestion)	O ₂
Arsenic	0.05 mg/l	
Barium	1.0 mg/l	
Cadmium	0.01 mg/l	
Chromium (VI)	0.05 mg/l	
Lead	0.05 mg/l	
Mercury	0.001 mg/l	
Selenium	0.01 mg/l	
Fluoride	2 mg/l	F ⁻
Nitrate	45 mg/l	NO ₃ ⁻
Sulphide	0.05 mg/l	H ₂ S
Ra 226-activity	30 p ci/l	

4. CONTAMINANTS

4.1 The presence of the following contaminants shall not be detectable when tested in accordance with the methods prescribed in Section 8:

Phenolic compounds
Surface active agents
Pesticides and PCBs
Mineral oil
Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons

4.2 Total beta-activity (except K⁴⁰ and H³): not more than 1 p Ci/l

4.3 Cyanide : not more than 0.01 mg/l (calculated as CW-)

4.4 Nitrites : not more than 0.005 mg/l (calculated as NO₂⁻)

5. HYGIENE¹

¹ All provisions, except Section 5.2, have been endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

5.1 It is recommended that the products covered by this standard should be prepared in conformity with the applicable sections of the General Principles of Food Hygiene (Ref. No. CAC/RCP 1-1969).

5.2 Microbiological requirements

5.2.1 The total revivable microorganism content of a natural mineral water at the source shall conform to its normal microbe content and give evidence of an effective protection of the source against all contamination. This revivable microorganism content shall be determined under the conditions laid down in Annex I, Section 3. After bottling, this microorganism content shall not exceed 100 per ml at 20 to 22 C in 72 hours on agar or an agar-gelatine mixture and 20 per ml at 37 C in 24 hours on agar. This microorganism content shall be measured within the 12 hours following bottling, the water being maintained at 4°C during this. 12-hour period. At the source, these values should not normally exceed 20 per ml at 20 to 22°C in 72 hours and 5 per ml at 37 C in 24 hours respectively, on the understanding that these values are to be considered as guide numbers and not as maximum permitted concentrations.

5.2.2 At source, and during its marketing, a natural mineral water shall be free from:

- (a) parasites and pathogenic microorganisms;
- (b) escherichia coli and other coliforms and faecal streptococci in any 250 ml sample examined;
- (c) sporulated sulphite-reducing anaerobes in any 50 ml sample examined;
- (d) pseudomonas aruginosa in any 250 ml sample examined.

5.2.3 Without prejudice to sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, the total revivable microorganism content of a natural mineral water at the marketing stage may only be that resulting from the normal increase in the bacteria content which it had at source.

5.3 The source or the point of emergence shall be protected against risks of pollution.

5.4 The installations intended for the production of natural mineral waters shall be such as to exclude any possibility of contamination. For this purpose and in particular:

- (a) the installations for collection, the pipes and the reservoirs shall be made from materials suited to the water and in such a way as to prevent the introduction of foreign substances into the water;
- (b) the equipment and its use for production, especially installations for washing and packaging, shall meet hygienic requirements;
- (c) if, during production it is found that the water is polluted, the producer shall stop all operations until the cause of pollution is eliminated;
- (d) the observance of the above provisions shall be subject to periodic checks in accordance with the requirements of the country of origin.

6. PACKAGING

Natural mineral water shall be packed in hermetically sealed retail containers of 2 l maximum capacity which are suitable for preventing the possible adulteration or contamination of the water.

7. LABELLING ¹

¹ Pending endorsement by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

In addition to Sections 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the Recommended General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (Ref. CAC/RS 1-1969), the following provisions shall apply:

7.1 The Name of the Product

7.1.1 The name of the product shall be "natural mineral water". However, products containing less than 1000 mg/l total dissolved solids (salts) and less than 250 mg/l free carbon dioxide may be designated:

- (a) "natural mineral water" accompanied by an appropriate descriptive term in close proximity to the name of the product, which will distinguish the product from those containing more than 1000 mg/l total dissolved solids or more than 250 mg/l free carbon dioxide; or
- (b) "spring water" or any other appropriate name, which will convey the true nature of the product.

7.1.2 The designation "naturally carbonated natural mineral water" may be used only if the content of carbon dioxide from the source is the same as at emergence in accordance with Section 2.2.1.

7.1.3 The designation "non-carbonated natural mineral water" may be used only if by nature the natural mineral water does not contain free carbon dioxide in accordance with Section 2.2.2.

7.1.4 The designation "decarbonated natural mineral water" shall be used if the content of carbon dioxide in the natural mineral water is less than that at emergence in accordance with Section 2.2.3.

7.1.5 The designation "natural mineral water fortified with carbon dioxide from the source" shall be used if the content of carbon dioxide is more than that at emergence in accordance with Section 2.2.3.

7.1.6 The designation "carbonated natural mineral water" shall be used if there has been an addition of carbon dioxide from another origin in accordance with Section 2.2.4.

7.2 Net Contents

The net contents shall be declared by volume in either the metric system (S.I. units) or avoirdupois or both systems of measurement, as required by the country in which the product is sold.

7.3 Name and Address

The location of the source and the name of the source and the name and address of the exploiter shall be declared.

7.4 Country of Origin

The country of origin shall be declared if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer.

7.5 Lot Identification

Each container shall be embossed or otherwise permanently marked, in code or in clear, to identify the producing factory and the lot.

7.6 Additional Labelling Requirements

7.6.1 The following term shall appear on the label as part of or in close proximity to the name of the product or in an otherwise prominent position:

"may be laxative" - where the product contains more than 600 mg/l sulphate other than calcium sulphate.

7.6.2 If a natural mineral water has been submitted to a treatment in accordance with sub-section 3.1.1, the treatment shall be declared on the label.

7.7 Labelling Prohibitions

7.7.1 No claims concerning medicinal (preventative, alleviative or curative) or other beneficial effects relating to the health of the consumer shall be made in respect of the properties of the product covered by the standard.

7.7.2 The name of a locality, hamlet or specified place may not form part of the trade name unless it refers to a natural mineral water collected at the place designated by that trade name.

7.7.3 The use of any statement or of any pictorial device which may create confusion in the mind of the public or in any way mislead the public about the nature, origin, composition and properties of natural mineral waters put on sale is prohibited.

7.8 Optional Labelling

7.8.1 The following terms, descriptive of the particular properties of the product, may appear on the label as part of or in close proximity to the name of the product or in an otherwise prominent position, provided that conditions specified are adhered to:

- (a) "Alkaline" - where the product contains more than 600 mg/l HCO_3 ;
- (b) "Acidulous" - where the product contains more than 250 mg/l free carbon dioxide;
- (c) "Saline" – where the product contains more than 1000 mg/l NaCl;
- (d) "contains fluorine" - where the product contains more than 1 mg/l F;
- (e) "contains iron" - where the product contains more than 5 mg/l Fe;
- (f) "contains iodine" - where the product contains more than 1 mg/l I;
- (g) "may be diuretic" - where the product contains more than 1000 mg/l total dissolved solids or 600 mg/l HCO_3 .

7.8.2 The following are also examples of optional labelling:

- (a) trade name ;
- (b) the date of the authorization to commence collection and production;
- (c) the results of analysis of the water either as it emerges at the source, including a statement of any treatment, or of the results of analysis of the water in the container.

8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

The methods of analysis referred to hereunder are international referee methods of analysis.

To be completed.

ANNEX I

CRITERIA FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL ANALYSES AT SOURCE

These analyses must include:

1. Proof of absence of pathogenic microorganisms.
2. The quantitative assessment of revivable microorganisms indicative of faecal contamination:
 - (a) colorimetry: negative result in at least 250 ml at 37°C and 44,5°C;
 - (b) absence of faecal streptococci in at least 250 ml;
 - (c) absence of sporulated sulphite-reducing anaerobes in 50 ml.
3. The assessment of the total number of revivable microorganisms per ml of water:
 - (a) in gelose:
 - (i) at 20°C - 22°C in 72 or 96 hours;
 - (ii) at 37°C in 24 hours;
 - (b) possibly in gelatine at 18°C - 20°C in 15 days.