European Community Comments for the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 24th Session, 2-7 July 2001, Geneva, Switzerland - Agenda Item 10 a) Consideration of Codex standards and related texts – draft standards and related texts at Step 8 or equivalent.

**Draft maximum level for patulin in apple juice and apple juice ingredients in other beverages (ALINORM 01/12 – Appendix X)**

At its 32nd session in March 2000, the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) agreed to forward the draft maximum level of 50 µg/kg for patulin in apple juice and apple juice ingredients in other beverages to the Commission for adoption at Step 8. The delegations of France expressed its reservation to this decision.

Patulin is a toxic substance with suspected carcinogenic properties. A provisional maximum tolerable daily intake (PMTDI) for patulin of 0.4 ug/kg bw has been established (JECFA, 1995).

During the discussions in the Codex Committee on Food additives and Contaminants, concern over the forwarded draft maximum level of 50 µg/kg for patulin in apple juice and apple juice ingredients in other beverages level was expressed by some delegations (para. 102, ALINORM 01/12).

Various, recent exposure assessments indicate indeed that, although the average lifetime exposure is below the PMTDI, the exposure of children to patulin through the consumption of apple juice is in the range of, or even exceeds the PMTDI for a considerable period during childhood. Consequently, there is a need to further reduce patulin exposure and to achieve even lower contamination levels, in particular with regard to the protection of children.

Because of this concern, the European Community has initiated a study in the framework of the scientific co-operation between Member States to evaluate the dietary intake of patulin of the general European population and of high risk sub-groups of the population, in particular infants and children. The results of this study are expected to become available in the beginning of 2002.

The European Community is of the opinion that the aspect of high exposure of children to patulin during a considerable period during childhood needs a closer examination and that it would be premature to adopt the level of 50 µg/kg as maximum level for patulin in apple juice.

Moreover, a Code of Practice for the Prevention of Patulin Contamination in Apple Juice and Apple Juice ingredients in other beverages is currently under discussion in CCFAC. The application of this code should lead to lower contamination levels within a short period of time. Indeed, by trimming away all visible damaged fruit and the spoilt portion of the fruit, patulin contamination can be reduced very significantly (up to 90 %).
Therefore the European Community requests the draft maximum level for patulin in apple juice, apple juice ingredients in other beverages to be returned at Step 6 for additional comments and further consideration, in particular with regard to the potential health risks for children, by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants.