



**SIXTH REVIEW OF THE OPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT
ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

PROPOSAL FOR A THEMATIC SESSION ON SPS-RELATED EMERGING RISKS

SUBMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The following proposal, received on 24 January 2024, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the European Union.

1.1. During the implementation of the work programme outlined in the SPS Declaration endorsed by the 12th Ministerial Conference, the Membership has started to discuss some of the modern challenges and emerging risks in the SPS field.

1.2. It was generally acknowledged that this is a topic which requires further and more detailed discussion in the Committee. Therefore, the European Union suggests having a thematic session on SPS-related emerging risks as a first step of this process.

1.3. The successful identification of risks at their early inception is essential to effectively protect human, animal and plant life and health. Improved identification of emerging risks and exchange of information between parties is a major preventive instrument at the disposal of WTO Members. For example, in the area of food safety, the strategies of FAO¹ and WHO² include the identification of emerging risks.

1.4. The session would deal with the definition and identification of emerging risks, the development and improvement of emerging risk identification methodologies and approaches for characterization, the communication on possible issues and risks, and of course the development of effective measures to address these risks by WTO Members and the relevant international organisations.

1.5. There are already some systems in place which are targeting emerging risks; for example, the emerging risks identification system of the European Food Safety Authority involves representatives of EU member States, European sister agencies, other WTO Members' competent authorities, UN Agencies, international risk assessment agencies and the European Commission. It also relies on stakeholders, involving academia, food industry, consumers associations, distributors, farmers and primary producers, NGOs and advocacy groups. An effective identification of emerging risks requires a wide participatory approach, connecting the various systems existing at local, regional and global levels.

¹ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc4040en/cc4040en.pdf>.

² <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/363475/9789240057685-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.