

A Way Forward to European Standard on *Halal* Food

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Abstract

One of the fastest growing food industries is halal industry. It is therefore the halal food industry is a very crucial for Muslims around the world as it helps to ensure them that the food consumed is shari'ah compliant. Although the halal food market currently is estimated at USD 632 billion per year, it will reach to USD 2.1 trillion. As the global Muslim population is increasing from 1.8 billion to more than 2 billion, the expectation of the halal food market will be increased. Therefore, demand of Muslims for good quality, clean, safe and genuine halal products is increased accordingly. In order to respond the demands of Muslim people, the halal food requirements must be standardized. Although there are many halal standard bodies in the world as well as in the European Union (EU), there is no consensus on a specific halal standard. Due to disunity, every country has its own certification body which brings to disagreements over slaughtering methods, packaging, animal feed, logistics etc. In order to solve this disunity, with initiative of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) set up a Working Group to analyse the feasibility of a European Standard on halal food. Türkiye and Austria were allocated as twinning partners to create a new Project Committee for halal food standard. This paper aims to investigate the way forward to the creation of a new Halal Standard in the European Committee as one standard for all halal foods in the EU, which is recognised by all Muslims.

Keywords: Halal Standard; European Union; Turkish Standards Institute; Austrian Standards Institute.

JEL codes: O52; O53; O57; F13; F15; L11

Introduction

It has been a neglected duty on the creation of *halal* food standards within the European Union. Fortunately, with the leadership of Turkish Standards Institute (TSE) the neglected duty is moving towards primarily European countries as well as the agenda of the whole world. Standards, indispensable part of life, are as old as history of humanity, thus, are indispensable fact in our social and economic life in order to compete effectively with global traders it is necessity to use mutual standards (Şentürk, 2013, p. 7).

There will be seen a large market opportunities even if only the number of the Muslims living in Europe are taken into consideration. For example, the number of Muslims in Europe has grown from 29.6 million in 1990 to 44.1 million in 2010 and it would be exceeded 58 million by 2030 (Grim and Karim, 2011, p. 121), When the population of Türkiye 76 million in 2013 is included to this number it would reach to over 120 million (TSI).

Even if only these populations are considered, there will be a serious market potential. With the following conclusion it can be illustrated that *halal* food is also directly related to healthy eating, “all healthy food is not *halal* but every *halal* food is healthy.” According to

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this, not only European Union members but also 7 billion of the world population need *halal* food. Without any worry, a food which is compatible with *halal* food regulations can be consumed with closed eyes. Therefore, it has a great potential market if only EU is considered with the demographics of the European Union of 28 member states which are about 503.5 million people as of 2012 (Wikipedia).

Considering the number of Muslims about 25% of the world population, the percentage of *halal* market industry as 17% is not as good as the population comparing *halal* food consumption to all foods; however, it has grown quickly over the past decade, and is now worth an estimated \$632 billion annually on a global scale (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, May 2011, p. 3). Although it is not a satisfactory result, the rate actually shows the sensitivity of Muslims in *halal* food standards compliance with Islamic regulations. Therefore, it's obvious that the creation of *halal* food standards is in need of Muslims around the world which cannot be deferred.

Muslims who are living in the Western countries are more aware of *halal* food than other Muslim countries. In responds to this, a qualitative research made by Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board of England, indicates that consumers understand the meaning of *halal*. Although there is different understanding of the mandatory aspects of *halal*, having been taught different rules and regulations based on their school of thoughts, there is a consensus concerning the key aspects of *halal* meat with the following points: A Muslim slaughterman must slaughter the animal; the animal must be blessed before slaughter with the slaughterman reciting a prayer; the blood from the animal must fully drain out; the animal should be killed with a sharp cut across the throat (AHDB, 2010, p. 16).

The members of the European Union realized that the sensitivity of Muslims especially about the food that they consume is to be *halal* is indispensable for them. This awareness brought them to think carefully to create a unanimously used *Halal* Standards between the member countries in order to sustain their business to do smooth trade between both Muslims who are living within and outside of the EU. The world has faced that there are Muslim people who have increased their sense of awareness and are questioning on what they are consuming. Surely, a food production or market which does not respond to the needs of Muslims would not find buyers.

It's undeniable that Muslims living in the European Union have right to access and to consume *halal* and healthy food too at least as much as the Muslims who are living in Muslim countries. It's pretty sad that the European Union failed to produce *Halal* Food standards for a long time or there is lack of initiate taker who would take the responsibility. Thus, it's quite pleasing that Türkiye's initiative on creation of *Halal* Standards with its twinning partner Austrian Standards Institute (ASI) and the support of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) is highly significant.

Main parameters for *Halal* Food

The wisdom behind the Muslims who are willing to consume *Halal* Food is the consciousness which shapes their live according to the divine commandments. The food that consumed daily must be *shari'ah* compliant. The *halal* food industry which is standardized by *shari'ah* oriented values help them to consume food safely. *Halal* linguistically is an Arabic word which means allowed or lawful. Technically, *halal* food is considered to be lawful unless it is specified or mentioned in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh) (Sakr, 1997, p. 21). Logically, if a thing is prohibited, should there be some diseases behind of it, thus the human experience from the life naturally thought man to abstain from foods which likely cause them death, disease and harm (Chand, 2003, p.xiii). On the other hand, talking on *halal* food needs expert, thus, as Qardawi indicated "Neither rabbis nor priests,

kings or sultans, have the right to prohibit something permanently to Allah's servants; if someone does this, he has certainly exceeded his limits, usurping the sovereignty which, with respect to legislating for the people, belongs to Allah (swt) alone." (Al-Qardawi, 1960, p.18). Therefore, none of the human beings have the right to make prohibited lawful or vice versa. According to the Qur'an whatever is consumed must be *halal* and clean: "And eat of the lawful (*halal*) and good (things) that Allah (swt) has given you, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah (swt), in Whom you believe." (Qur'an 5:88; 2:172) All kind of good things are allowed to be consumed: "They ask you as to what is allowed to them. Say: The good things are allowed to you" (Qur'an 5:4) therefore, consuming with *shari'ah* compliance is unavoidable. In addition to this requirement, the originality of the food is also necessary. If, for example, a food is genetically modified, then consuming of it should also be considered since changing the nature of the food according to the Qur'an is highly serious crime: "and whoever changes (modifying the genetic) the favour of Allah (swt) after it has come to him, then surely Allah (swt) is severe in requiting (evil)." (Qur'an 2:211).

When we think of the religious sensitivities of the Muslim population, setting up the standards of *Halal* Food by the Muslim experts and their initiatives is consciousness responsibility. How much a standard formed by non-Muslims is binding Muslims? Such questions should also not be overlooked. The most important point concerning a Muslim is as to whether the consumed Food is according to God's affirmation or not. In spite of the fact that, to be healthy or clean is a secondary choice, albeit, a *halal* food is already healthy and clean. Islam looks after the health and well being since the Muslims believe that they will be asked about their health, in which it was spent; in the hereafter (Halal Stransections). In this regard no one can have anything to say.

Significance of *Halal* Food Standards

Halal Food at the moment, like many other strategic issues, is a serious matter not to be neglected yet to be given high attention. It's an inescapable reality that if you have no weapons, for instance, to confront with the power of the world or the bandits, in the end you'll be enslaved. This reality is also true for food which is essential for the life of human being. Having thoughts of consuming food that is genetically modified is directly connected to the future of a nation. The great Philosopher Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi says "The morsel is seed, and thoughts are its fruit; the morsel is the sea, and thoughts are its pearls." (Nicholson, 2007, p.61). Simply it can be said that you are what you eat. Therefore, *halal* food is as significant as the water and the air which are indispensable elements for the life a person, even more, since a non-*halal* food may cause the live of Muslims to lose the hereafter forever (Helal Denetim).

Therefore, protection of food is at least as essential as the other necessities of human being. Hence, when it comes to *halal* food, it becomes more serious than the other strategic issues which must be thought twice since it is related to the genetic of a nation.

Those who are devoid of health and *halal* food, they may be enslaved of generation after generation forever not for a short period of time. Nations, whose genetics have been changed, will not ever be incorrigible, i.e., have no future at all. The human brain is feed by food which is the life source of it. Once the brain is shaped by unhealthy and non-*halal* food, it works automatically against the blessings of the Creator. Thus their brains will be colonized and enslaved naturally; even the meaning of freedom will not be remembered. It will make them to forget the objectives of the life. According to the Muslims the objectives of the life is to gain the blessings of Allah (swt) who created the world for as a test field for human beings, "Who created death and life that He may try you-- which of you is best in deeds." (Qur'an 67:2) A nation without objective of the life would be a servant for a powerful man, whereas, every individual is created as free to serve the eternal Creator, "And I have not

created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me.” (Qur’an 51:56) Thus, non-*halal* food and especially the genetically modified food is a way to modern slavery which is carried out quietly and standardization is encouraged by the Eternal source, the Qur’an: “And give full measure when you measure out, and weigh with a true balance; this is fair and better in the end,” (Qur’an 17:35) thus creating *halal* standards is as essential as life.

Case of Malaysia

Malaysia would reflect a good example for establishing a single standard throughout the country. Because of the unity in standard, Malaysia becomes a leader in the *halal* food benchmarking. And it resulted that the Malaysian standard has become the basis for the development of the world’s *halal* food industries (SME Annual Report, 2006-2007). The United Nations has also cited Malaysia as the world’s best example of benchmarking of *halal* food in harmony with the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted the Codex general guidelines for the use of the term *halal* in Geneva in 1997 (Bohari, Cheng, Fuad, 2013, p. 1). In addition to that The World Competitiveness Scoreboard has listed Malaysia in the top ten ranking in *Halal* Food industry and it stands out as a potential leader in this industry compared to other Muslim countries. It is because, Malaysia exerted substantial efforts, strategies and government supports to develop *halal* industry with different plans such as the Second Industrial Master Plan, 1996 – 2005; the National Agriculture Policy, 1998 – 2010; the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), 2006 – 2010; and the Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3), 2006 – 2020 (Bohari, Cheng, Fuad, 2013, p. 2).

In support of this plans, the government has taken initiatives on a *Halal* Master Plan deals with issues of certification, sector development, *halal* integrity, implementation, timeframes and responsibilities. The Master Plan depicts three phases of the roll-out from 2008 to 2020: the first phase: 2008-2010 to develop Malaysia as a global centre for *halal* integrity and prepare the industry for growth; the second phase 2011-2015 to establish Malaysia as one of the preferred locations for *halal*-related business and the third phase 2016-2020 to broaden geographic footprint of home-grown companies (Bahli, 2011, p. 3). Accordingly, *Halal* Research Council of Malaysia (2007) has listed eleven strategic thrusts to further develop and promote Malaysia as a global *halal* hub. These are: 1. enhancing awareness about Malaysia as the centre for *halal* products and services; 2. managing the increasing competition from countries in the region; 3. leveraging upon outward investments to gain access to raw materials and enhance competitiveness; 4. Enhancing R&D in product and process developments and leveraging upon latest technological developments to expand the product range; 5. Developing *halal*-compliant services; 6. Utilising and leveraging upon Malaysian *Halal* Standard to differentiate Malaysia’s *halal* products; 7. Ensuring product quality and food safety; 8. Undertaking systemic development of *halal* parks; 9. Harmonising the *halal* certification process; 10. Enhancing the coordination among agencies involved in the development and promotion of the industry; and 11. Strengthening the institutional capacity of organisations involved in the development and promotion of *halal* products and services (*Halal* Research Council 2007).

The role of Malaysia in Asia Pacific region is highly significant since Muslims in this region makes up 62% of Muslims worldwide and therefore, out of which, almost half of the Muslim population lives in this region (Spring Singapore, 2011).

The effort made by Malaysia on *halal* food, especially bringing the above mentioned Master Plans into practice resulted Malaysia’s certificate is one of the most demanded and trusted certificate around the world (Dagang Asia Net). Moreover, it also resulted Malaysia as the key player in the global Islamic economics and Finance market today since it is not isolated from the economics and finance realities and the high level of government support

made Malaysia as a leading hub for *Shari'ah*-compliant finance on a global arena (Dagang Asia Net).

Halal Standards in the Globe

Countries in which majorities are Muslims or non-Muslims began to create their own standards on *halal* food such as Türkiye, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Philippines, New Zealand, Indonesia, South Africa, Western countries, like UK, Germany etc. The potential *halal* food market in the world is not limited to Muslim countries since many non Muslim countries have become important contributors to the world *halal* trade (Riaz and Chaudry, 2004, p. 39).

It is estimated that there are currently around 122 active *halal* certification bodies around the globe. All the countries are willing to be the global centre for *halal* certification since it is a door for economics and financial activities (Halim, *et al*, 2012, p. 2). Although there are many certification bodies in the globe, there is no uniformity even in a single country like the UK, for example, there are over 20 different *halal* certification bodies in operation, some of them allows the use of electrical stunning while others like the *Halal* Monitoring Committee (HMC) and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) firmly reject such practice, because of individual guidelines and regulations are used in every different bodies (Hassan, 2007, July-August 38-40). Nevertheless, every organization are now trying to go on a united standardization like the OIC which is the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations that is comprises all 57 Islamic countries attempted to harmonize *halal* standards and it would be applied across all 57 countries within the three years (Halal Focus, 2012).

Journey to European Standards on Halal Food

The journey to European Standards on *Halal* Food began via an invitation made by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) secretary, to whom the author was suggested by some friends whom he knows before, to give a talk on “Standards, the International Picture” and “*Halal* Standards Accreditation Mechanism” in November 2012 in Antalya. He had also the opportunity to meet a lot of New TSE executives in the forum. He must have met in common values with the executives after about six months he was contacted for his candidature to be a Chairman for the purpose of establishing a European Union *Halal* Standard. The TSE is to have strong will to suggest the author's name to European Committee for Standardization (CEN) for the Chairmanship. Thus he was invited to election for the Chairmanship to the first meeting which was held 24-25 September 2013 in Istanbul.

The idea of establishing a European Union *Halal* Standard comes from the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) first. Then immediately after that a Working Group (WG) was set up in 25 October 2010 to analyse the feasibility of a European Standard on *halal* food. Accordingly four meetings were held that of the 1st meeting 25th October 2010 in Vienna, Austria; the 2nd meeting 14-15 February 2011 in Antalya, Türkiye; a Workshop made 19-20 May 2011 in Brussels, Belgium; the 3rd meeting 21-22 November 2011 in Brussels, Belgium; and 4th meeting 6 March 2012 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within these meetings by resolution BT (Technical Board) 14/2010, BT/TCMG (Technical Committee Management Group), on behalf of BT, requested CEN/BT Working Group 212 ‘*Halal* Food’ to provide a report to CEN/BT on the feasibility of developing a European Standard on ‘*Halal* food for the requirements on the food chain by September 2011 at the latest with the option to create a CEN Project Committee.

The final report of CEN/BT/WG 212 was submitted for information at the 71st CEN/BT meeting where TSE (Turkish Standards Institute) indicated that if the report were approved they would be willing to take on the secretariat of the future Project Committee. Finally with the submission of the final report, the task of CEN/BT/WG 212 '*Halal Food*' is considered completed and the decision is applicable as from 12 April 2013. Having considered the voting results including fundamental disagreements expressed by France and Germany, considering the discussions at the 73rd CEN/BT meeting and that the following members have expressed their commitment to participate: ASI (Austrian Standards Institute), HZN (Croatian Standards Institute), ISRM (Standardization Institute of the Republic of Macedonia), NBN (Standardization Institute of Belgium), NEN (Dutch Standards Institute), TSE (Turkish Standards Institute) and SNV (Switzerland Standards Institute) which decide to create a new TC (Technical Committee) as CEN/TC 425 'Project Committee – *Halal Food*' in order to prepare a European deliverable on *Halal Food*. The TSE with ASI were allocated as twinning partner for the secretariat of CEN/TC 425 to submit its programme of work for BT approval by 31 October 2013.

According to the decision made by the 73rd CEN/BT meeting, the first meeting of the CEN/TC 425 "Project Committee- *Halal Food*" was held 24-25 September 2013 in Istanbul. 19 delegates participated from different member countries. Accordingly the CEN/CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) Internal Regulations -Part 2, sub-clause 3.2.2, which lays down the rules for nomination, appointment and responsibilities of Chairpersons were taken into consideration and therefore the CEN/TC 425 "Project Committee- *Halal Food*" decided to appoint Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saim Kayadibi as Chairperson of CEN/TC 425 for a period of 6 years starting on 2013-09-23 and the decision, which was based on open election result, was taken by unanimity.

The two days second meeting of the CEN/TC 425 "Project Committee- *Halal Food*" was held on 03-04 February 2014 at the Austrian Standards Institute in Heinestraße, Vienna, Austria. The 33 delegates from different member countries including Türkiye, Austria, Netherlands, Swiss, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, Croatia, Norway, Belgium, Austria, France, UK, Republic of Macedonia and the Chairman from Malaysia participated and Eurogroup for Animals (observer), some delegates from Austria, Bosnia, and France attended as observer to the meeting. Two secretaries, which is based on the Twinning Arrangement on resolution BT16/2006, Mithat Kaleoğlu from Türkiye and Dr. Karl Grün from Austria as well as Nefise Betül Hıdıroğlu from TSE (Turkish Standards Institute) were also present in the meeting. The 2nd meeting of European committee for Standardization: CEN/TC 425 "Project Committee- *Halal Food*" was successfully completed and it was decided that the third meeting will be held in the middle of the October 2014 as for two days in Bosnia, Herzegovina inshaAllah (Kayadibi and Usta, 2014, p 503-508).

Certification Bodies on *Halal Food* in the European Union

There are many *halal* food certification bodies in the European Union as in any other communities and countries. Certification bodies work as essential as needed for *halal* trade since this is one of the fastest growing industries not only in Muslim countries but also non-Muslim countries. In order to get into the markets especially within the European Union, manufacturers must have their products certified by qualified *halal* certification agencies. Although these agencies are operating within the EU, many of them have different approaches to certification. To name but a few, Department of *Halal* Certification Ireland (DHCI) is part of Al-Mustafa Islamic Cultural Centre Ireland, which provides *halal* certificates, was established in 2004; The *Halal* Food Council of Europe (HFCE) was registered in Brussels, Belgium in the year 2010 as an Islamic organization that is dedicated to research in the fields related to food and nutrition; The *Halal* Food Authority (HFA) was launched in 1994 to

monitor, regulate and facilitate the Muslim *Ummah* to be partial to genuinely manufactured *halal* food in compliance with HFA Halal Standards, Islamic Jurisprudence and relevant EU regulations in vogue. The Muslim Food Board was established in 1992 to formalise the investigation and *halal* certification of food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical products; The *Halal* Authority Board (HAB); The *Halal* Monitoring Committee (HMC) is an independent, non-profit, registered charity complies with the UK Laws for food production, as well as Islamic dietary compliance Laws. It was established in early 2003 consisting of various *ulama* (Muslim Scholars) and figures from diverse backgrounds; The Universal *Halal* Agency (UHA) audits food, drink, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics to ensure compliance with UK & EU Law and Islamic *Shari'ah*; The European *Halal* Development Agency (EHDA) predominantly operates within Europe; European Association of *Halal* Certifiers (AHC-EUROPE) was founded in 24th of September 2009 in Germany by ten members European *halal* certifying organisations to name Belgium, Bosnia, France, Germany (two members), Spain, the Netherlands (two members), Türkiye and the United Kingdom; The Islamic Information and Documentation Centre (IIDZ - Austria) is the only supplier in Austria, who fulfils the strict requirements for *halal*-certification; Ritual Association of Lyon's Great Mosque (France); *Halal* Control is European Inspection - and Certification Body for *Halal* – Food in Germany; The Islamic Centre of Hamburg is one of the *Shia* mosques in Germany established in the late 1950s by a group of Iranian; *Halal* International Authority (HIA) is also an international, independent, Non Governmental Organization (NGO) for *Halal* Certification, Accreditation, Control and Development of global *Halal* market in Italy; *Halal* Quality Control (HQC) is an agency specialized in the overseeing, auditing and certifying of *Halal* food products and productions, was founded in 1980 in The Hague, the Netherlands as Control Office of *Halal* Slaughtering (COHS); Total Quality *Halal* Correct Certification (TQ HCC) is based in the Netherlands; *Halal* Feed and Food Inspection Authority (HFFIA) in The Netherlands; The Muslim Religious Union of Poland (MRU); *Halal* Institute of Spain; Islamguidens Halal Certifying AB, was established in 1997 in Sweden, is the first *Halal* Certification Body that specializes in issuing authorized *halal* certificates; *Halal* Certification Services (HCS) was founded in 1987 in Switzerland.

Besides these centres and authorities there are also other bodies or individuals they would trust to provide *Halal* certification, such as: Local Imams, respected Muslim clerics, the Food Standards Agency, the Muslim Council of Britain, and the Council of Mosques (AHDB, 2010, p. 18).

As it is seen in the above-mentioned all organizations whose services seek to give services to the customers and almost all of them are working independently in which there is no unity among them. Although they were working for *halal* food industry as such certification, consultation etc. due to the lack of unity may cause different problems. Thus, a standard for *halal* food is necessary for all of them to be used in the whole member countries of the EU.

Certification is not confined to the food, but it also deals with service, energy, transportation, and other areas such as cosmetics (Şimşek, 2013, p. 23). Thus, the need for certification is a matter of human life. From this perspective, certification and standardization naturally are connected to human being. The requirements made to regulate food safety and quality standards ruling market have been considerably tightened especially in Europe for two reasons: “firstly, the harmonization of national regulatory frameworks under the guidance of the World Trade Organization (WTO) aiming at facilitating the internationalization of trade; and secondly, numerous food hazard incidences and food scandals that forced legislators in industrialized countries to revise their national or, in the case of the European Union, their supranational food laws.” (Meulen, 2011, p. 203).

On the contrary, if the EU laws contradict to the Islamic laws which certify *halal* food, it would be rejected since it matters to religious issues. For example, European *halal* food certifiers considered enforcement of EC 1099/2009 on 1 January 2014, which includes requirements for higher stunning voltages, is actually could result in the death of animal prior to slaughter that is something which is not permissible under *halal* food rules. The *Halal* Food Authority (HFA) said that if the new EU regulations on stunning voltages are imposed, the *halal* certification will be stopped giving on stunned poultry since it will not permissible to consume it any more (Meat info).

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN)

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is a non-profit organisation, it was founded in 1961, thirty national members work together to develop European Standards (ENs) in various sectors to build a European internal market for goods and services and to position Europe in the global economy. The CEN is officially recognised as a European standards body by the European Union and the other European standard body is the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) (Wikipedia) are two distinct private international non-profit organizations based in Brussels. These are business catalysts in Europe, removing trade barriers for European stakeholders. The mission of the Committees is to fulfil the needs of their stakeholders: amongst others business, industry and commerce, service providers, public authorities and regulators, academia and research centres, European trade associations and interest groups representing environmentalists, consumers, trade unions as well as small and medium enterprises, and other public and private institutions. Through their services CEN and CENELEC provide a platform for the development of European Standards and other specifications. More than 50.000 technical experts from industry, associations, public administrations, academia and societal organizations are involved in the CEN network that reaches over 600 million people. 33 National Standards Bodies make up the CEN membership and they represent CEN in their country. In addition, 17 National Standards bodies from Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Northern Africa and the Middle-East participate in the work of CEN as Affiliates. Moreover CEN has also 3 Partner Standardization Bodies. CEN's National Members are the National Standardization Bodies (NSBs) of the 28 European Union countries, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Türkiye plus three countries of the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). Every country has one member in the Committee.

In line with the Communication from the European Commission 'EUROPE 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (COM(2010) 2020), the CEN and CENELEC communities have outlined where they want to be in 2020 in their so-called 'Ambitions 2020'. CEN and CENELEC have set six objectives to be reached by 2020, namely global influence, regional relevance, wider recognition, network of excellence, innovation and growth and a sustainable standardization system (ECS).

Twinning Partners TSE and ASI in *Halal* Food

It can be remembered that TSE and ASI were allocated as twinning partner for the secretariat of CEN/TC 425 based on the decision made at the 73rd CEN/BT meeting and it will be applicable as of 12 April 2013. Thereof, it is worth to highlight briefly these twinning partners. The Turkish Standards Institution (TSE), is a public founding institute conducted according to the special rules of law, was established in 1954 within the Turkish Union of Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Commodity Exchanges. TSE officially became an independent organization in 1960 under the Law 132. It is a full member of International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in which TSE has been a member since 1955 and 1956 respectively. It is an affiliate member of

European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC). TSE is also a member of World Packaging Organization (WPO) and is a signatory to the Code of Good Practice contained in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and acts as the National Enquiry Point in connection with standards under the said Agreement. TSE also actively follows the quality efforts in Europe. As a member of the European Organization for Quality (EOQ) since 1976, TSE now holds the position of EOQ Vice-President (Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology). It is conducted several tasks and services such as Quality and System Certification, Product and Service Site Certification, Personnel Certification, Laboratories, Calibration, Standard Preparation, Legal Adviser, Research Planning and Coordination, Consumer Services, International Relations, Data Processing and Information, Public Relations, International Representatives and Corporations (TSE). TSE issues *Halal* certificates and that of issued 205 *halal* food and beverage certificates. It's indicated that these certificates take the general standards developed by SMIIC as a reference. TSE will be soon begin accepting applications from companies, around 400 are producing *halal* foods and beverages based in Germany in which more than five million Muslims are living and most of them are Turkish origin (World Bulletin, 07 October 2013).

The Austrian Standards Institute (ASI), is a standards organization and the ISO member body for Austria, was founded in the First Republic of Austria on 23 September 1920, with 13 committees developing technical standards primarily for mechanical and electrical engineering and later on it became founding ISO member in 1946 (Wikipedia). It is a non-profit service organization (association), and its subsidiary Austrian Standards plus GmbH, established in 2008. The services that Austrian Standards provides for the economy, administration, science, state and society are manifold. They are a prerequisite of economic growth, competitiveness, innovation and prosperity. Main key tasks of it are to provide a modern, neutral and independent infrastructure for the development of standards in Austria and for the efficient and convincing participation of Austrian experts in European and international standardization; to ensure accessing to recognized knowledge as laid down in national, European and international standards as well as foreign standards and regulations; to disseminate comprehensive information on changes and innovations in standards and regulations; to offer information and training related to standards and their environment in the economy, law and technology; to certify the conformity of products, services and qualifications with standards. ASI works hand to hand with diverse networks including the European standardization organizations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI as well as the international standardization bodies ISO, IEC and ITU (ASI).

These two twinning partners are committed to create a standard for all the EU member countries in *Halal* Food. Therefore, according to the commitment the second meeting of "Project Committee- *Halal* Food" was held at the Austrian Standards Institute in Heinestraße, Vienna, Austria with participation of 33 delegates from different member countries.

Conclusion

There is no non-standard asset in the world of that is every single part of the life is filled with standards, thereof, life in general is unthinkable without standards. Almighty Creator (swt) has created everything on a standard. The wisdom behind the success of the Western world is of creating their own standards and applying them rigorously in every activity. They have been working for two centuries through standards that they have produced. We can say that in order to sustain this success, standards are unavoidable reality. In other words, especially human beings who are living in a global world must have

substantial standards to communicate mutually and successfully each other as well as in order to compete effectively with global players it is necessary to use mutual standards.

Although *halal* food is a concern of Muslims since it comes to the matter of health and hygiene it would be a concern to the whole of humanity. Thus *halal* food should be done in framework which would have certain parameters, regulations and standards to deal efficiently. As it is indicated throughout the paper, it is not enough to have certain standards for each individual country. All countries should have a common standard to be used, if not, at least a community or a group of countries or followers of a certain religion must have a common standard to collaborate among them efficiently.

Unfortunately, the European Union has been late in adopting certain common one *halal* standard for the member countries. However, this gap will be filled by the decision of the 73rd CEN/BT meeting which decides to create a new TC (Technical Committee) as CEN/TC 425 'Project Committee – *Halal* Food' in order to prepare a European deliverable on *Halal* Food. And therefore, the TSE with ASI were allocated as twinning partner for the secretariat of CEN/TC 425 for creating a common standard for the EU. On this occasion, it is a good development the dedication and collaboration of the two twinning partners (TSE and ASI) to bring out *halal* standard both for the European Union and the Muslims living in the Community. It's hoped that it will be also an efficient serious contribution to the world *halal* food trade.

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