Pharmaceutical and food markets are one of the fastest developing in Poland. The value of the pharmaceutical market in 2017 is estimated at PLN 38.5 bn, which is 5.4% more comparing to 2016. The value of the food supplements market has increased from 4.02 bn in 2016 to 4.35 bn PLN in 2017. With such high level of development and profitability, these markets are particularly demanding in terms of preparing sufficient and precise legal regulations. The overriding aim of the legislator is to protect the health of respectively - patients, in case of medicinal products and consumers of foodstuffs. The pharmaceutical and food law is so extensive, because of the need to regulate their quality at all stages of their production, distribution and marketing, according to the "from farm to fork" principle. Despite numerous acts of EU and national law, both industries in question recognize the need to establish even more stringent standards. This aspiration is expressed in widely implemented codes of good practices.

In the field of food law, codes of good practices, just like regulations of law of general application, cover all stages of production and supply chain in food market. Basically they can be divided into two categories of the acts - covering all sorts of foodstuffs and those that concern only some of its categories, such as food supplements. To exemplify the latter, there should be mentioned the Spanish Code of Good Practices of the Manufacturing and Introduction of Food Supplements (Guía de Buenas Prácticas para Comercialisation Complementos Alimenticios) and the Polish Code of Good Practices of Advertising of Food Supplements, being in force since the second half of 2017. The content of the codes responds to the most up-to-date market needs, what can be supported by rigid data. Suffice it to say that with a steady upward tendency, in 2015 5% of all TV commercials were advertising of food supplements.

Also codes of good practices adopted in the pharmaceutical markets regulate the subsequent stages of production, distribution and advertising. At the EU level they are created within the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations. The codes adopted by the EFPIA are the basis for domestic documents, such as self-regulatory acts developed by the Employers' Association of Innovative Pharmaceutical Companies - INFARMA. Within the association there was created, among others The Disclosure Code, which sets out the rules for providing information on cooperation between signatory companies and medical profession representatives and healthcare organizations. It poses part of a European project aimed at increasing the transparency of such cooperation. Another achievement of the association is the Code of Good Practices for the Pharmaceutical Industry defining standards for the promotion and advertising of medicinal products, the organization of symposia, congresses and other scientific meetings, the administration of research and the collaboration with representatives of medical professions and patients' organizations.

The current legislation, in particular the provisions of the Act on combating unfair commercial practices, transposing the directive 2005/29/EC into Polish law, sanction practices undertaken by entrepreneurs towards consumers concerning untruthful statements about their obedience with self-regulatory or co-regulatory acts. This proves the growing importance of codes of good practices. However, their creation and application is constantly vulnerable to lack of legal certainty, caused inter alia by low level of social awareness on what those are and what their relation to stated law is. Another issue that codes' owners tackle is the nature of the sanctions contained therein, which, while having preventive and repressive functions, at the same time should not discourage market participants from joining codes, as acceding them is fully based on the principle of voluntariness.

In view of the increasing significance of codes of good practices, role of which is appreciated by both - market operators and legislators, whether at national or EU level, undoubtedly there is a need for further analysis of such acts. They pose construction with its origin on the border of private and public law. Research in this field is aimed at defining codes of conduct, placing them in the system of sources of obligations, and working out the best possible directives for their development and application. Such study will ultimately contribute to improvement of the protection of health and life of consumers.