Resolution on country of origin labelling for meat in processed food

2014/2875(RSP) - 11/02/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 460 votes to 204, with 33 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, on country of origin labelling for meat in processed food.

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, the Commission published a report in December 2013 regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for meat used as an ingredient.

The Commission's own report stated that **more than 90% of consumer respondents** consider it important that meat origin be labelled on processed food products. It is estimated that 30% to 50%, depending on the Member State concerned, of the total slaughtered meat volume is processed into meat ingredients for foodstuffs, mostly into minced meat, meat preparations and meat products.

Taking into account the recent food scandals, such as the **fraudulent substitution of horsemeat for beef**, Parliament stressed that **stricter rules on traceability** would also enable authorities to investigate food fraud incidents more effectively.

Therefore, they supported **labelling the origin of meat used as an ingredient in foods** whilst highlighting that food labelling should take account of the transparency of the information and its readability for consumers.

Parliament considered that the Commission should: (i) propose clear, consistent, harmonised and enforceable rules when producers decide to implement voluntary origin labelling; (ii) investigate further the practice (which is already fairly widespread) among some European retailers and manufacturers of labelling the origin of meat in processed foods and to report its findings.

The Commission is called upon to :

- take all necessary steps to make the **prevention and combating of food fraud** an integral part of EU policy and to address structural weaknesses within the overall food chain, in particular by increasing and strengthening monitoring;
- adopt an **implementing act** concerning the application of Article 26(3) of the Food Information to Consumers Regulation, which relates to the indication of the country of origin of primary ingredients where this is not the same as that of the food product;
- follow up its 2013 report with **legislative proposals making the indication of the origin of meat in processed foods mandatory** in order to ensure greater transparency throughout the food chain and to better inform European consumers, while taking into account its impact assessments and avoiding excessive costs and administrative burdens given that 90% of companies in the meat processing sector are SMEs.