Resolution on mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods

2016/2583(RSP) - 12/05/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 422 votes to 159 with 68 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety on mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods.

Members recalled that in its resolution of 11 February 2015, Parliament urged the Commission to present 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.

The resolution emphasises that, according to the Eurobarometer survey 2013:

- **84% of EU citizens** consider it necessary to indicate the origin of milk, whether sold as such or used as an ingredient in dairy products; this is one of several factors that may influence consumer behaviour;
- **88% of EU citizens** consider it necessary to indicate the origin of meat other than beef, swine, sheep, goat and poultry meat.

Furthermore, the Commission's report of 17 December 2013 regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for meat used as an ingredient recognises that **more than 90% of consumer** respondents consider it important that meat origin be labelled on processed food products.

Parliament considered that consumers, like many professionals, are **in favour of the mandatory labelling of meat in processed products.**

Accordingly, Parliament asked the Commission to:

- **implement the mandatory indication of country of origin or place of provenance for all kinds of drinking milk, dairy products and meat products**, and to consider extending the mandatory indication of country of origin or place of provenance to other single-ingredient foods or those with one main ingredient, by making legislative proposals in these areas;
- **submit 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 in the wake of the horsemeat scandal and other cases of food fraud. Mandatory labelling requirements should take into account the principle of proportionality and the administrative burden for food business operators and enforcement authorities;
- support labelling schemes relating to **animal welfare** during cultivation, transport and slaughter;
- take the necessary action to **combat fraud in relation to rules on the voluntary labelling** of origin for foodstuffs;
- promote the **development of products** with 'protected designation of origin' (PDO), 'protected geographical indication' (PGI), or 'traditional speciality guaranteed' (TSG) pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 and ensure European promotion campaigns on those products are stepped up.

Members also took the view that the **mandatory labelling of egg products and foods containing eggs** to indicate origin and rearing method could improve transparency and protection, and called on the Commission to submit a market analysis and, if necessary, to draw up appropriate legislative proposals.

They believed that country of origin labelling for drinking milk, lightly processed dairy products (such as cheese and cream) and lightly processed meat products (such as bacon and sausages) would have significantly reduced associated costs, and that this labelling should be explored as a priority.

Lastly, considering that origin labelling as such does not prevent fraud, Parliament advocated that a resolute course should be taken to **step up monitoring**, improve enforcement of existing legislation and impose more stringent penalties.