

## EC calls for voluntary origin labelling for food

The EU executive defended the position promoting the voluntary origin labelling for unprocessed food products, products that comprise a single ingredient and the ingredients that represent more than 50 per cent of a food product.

It argues that it seeks to avoid the increase in sales price and in costs for companies and administrations that would involve the mandatory character for the requirement.

According to the EC, "the mandatory origin labelling at the level of the European Union (EU) and, even more, at country level, is a very difficult task to implement in many areas of food products and represents a significant increase in cost production, which ultimately would be passed on to consumers."

Therefore, it believes that "the voluntary origin labelling would be the alternative that would disrupt the market the least and would keep product costs at current levels."

For Brussels, "the price, taste, expiration date/preferential use or aspects of convenience and/or presentation" influence more on consumer purchase decision than the origin.

Besides, it warned that the mandatory origin labelling at national and European level could "have an impact on international food supply and interfere with existing trade agreements with third countries", informed the agency Europa Press.

"Additional labelling standards can reduce competitiveness of EU food business operators in the international market while the food business operators in third countries are concerned about potential additional production costs and the loss of exports" to the EU market derived from consumer preference for food from Europe, the EU executive stated in a report on food labelling.

Furthermore, "an additional fee would be implied for the competent authorities of the Member States, especially in the current economic environment, if they had to face the possible imposition of new control tasks of the mentioned additional requirements".

Therefore, the Commission concludes that "the voluntary origin labelling, along with mandatory origin labelling schemes for certain existing food or food categories seems the most appropriate option".

The position of the EU executive is supported by the [National Association of Manufacturers of Canned Fish and Shellfish](#) (ANFACO-CECOPECA), who insists that the origin is a customs concept and should not be confused with what is the production area or the farming area, newspaper *La Voz de Galicia* informed.

In addition, ANFACO Secretary General Juan Manuel Vieites ensured the industry strictly complies with the rules on labelling and marking.

On the contrary, the president of the [Mussel Regulating Council of Galicia](#), Francisco Alcalde, considered "the excuses given by Brussels for not requiring origin labelling of products are outrageous".

"This is not just a problem for mussels, but for the whole seafood product sector at a time when more foreign product than ever is about to enter," he warned.

The Regulatory Board ensures that it will insist to try to find a solution on behalf of seafood and Galician mussel in particular, *Diario de Arousa* reported.

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