

Mandatory origin-labelling schemes in Member States

SUMMARY

Eight EU Member States have launched, or are about to launch, national mandatory labelling schemes for certain food products, mainly for milk and milk used in dairy products, but also meat used in processed foods.

The regulatory basis for these national measures is the Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers, which allows Member States to adopt additional national measures concerning the mandatory labelling of foodstuffs, as long as these are justified by reasons specifically defined in the regulation.

The European Parliament has been supporting origin labelling in several resolutions. Consumer organisations have advocated it as well, while many industry stakeholders have highlighted the practical difficulties and costs it would bring. The European Commission has reiterated its position, based on its reports exploring the issue, that voluntary origin labelling is the best option at European level.



In this Briefing

- Issue and regulatory background
- National schemes already in place or in the making
- European Commission position and studies
- European Parliament viewpoint
- Discussion in the Council of the EU
- Stakeholder reactions
- Next steps

Issue and regulatory background

Over the past two and a half years, eight EU Member States have made use of a possibility offered by [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#) on the provision of food information to consumers (the 'FIC Regulation'), to set mandatory requirements in their national legislation for food-business operators to indicate the country of origin of the raw material they use in their dairy or meat products. While these moves have generally been welcomed by consumer and farmer organisations in the countries concerned, some others see them as protective measures intended to promote national products and signalling the beginning of the end for the single market.

Country-of-origin labelling requirements in EU food legislation

Indicating the country of origin is currently obligatory for certain specific foodstuffs, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, fishery products, honey, olive oil and eggs.¹ As a consequence of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) epidemic, an indication of origin (place of birth, rearing and slaughter) has been mandatory for beef and beef products since 1 January 2002.²

An indication of the country of origin has been obligatory for unprocessed meat of swine, sheep, goat and poultry since 1 April 2015.³ The country where the animal was reared and the country of slaughter need to be indicated on the label. There is a derogation for minced meat, which may simply be labelled as 'EU', 'non-EU' or 'reared and slaughtered in EU and non-EU' countries.

A special category are foodstuffs covered by the [quality schemes](#) 'Protected Designation of Origin' (PDO), 'Protected Geographical Indication' (PGI) and 'Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG)', for which specific labelling requirements are in force.⁴ The aim of these schemes is to help protect and promote products that have particular characteristics linked to their geographical origin.

What the FIC Regulation says about country-of-origin labelling

Applicable since December 2014, the FIC Regulation updated and harmonised food-labelling requirements in the Member States, setting, for example, harmonised rules for the presentation of allergen information, a requirement for certain nutritional information to be given on pre-packed foods,⁵ and strengthened rules to prevent misleading practices. The regulation allows Member States to adopt additional national measures concerning the mandatory labelling of foodstuffs, as long as these are justified by reasons specifically defined in the regulation. Of relevance in this respect are Articles 26, 39 and 45.

Article 26, 'Country of origin or place of provenance'

Article 26 of the regulation details provisions concerning the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance. According to its paragraph 2, an indication of the country of origin or place of provenance is **mandatory**

- where **failure to indicate this might mislead the consumer as to the true country of origin or place of provenance** of the food, in particular if the information accompanying the food or the label as a whole would otherwise imply that the food has a different country of origin or place of provenance;
- for fresh, chilled and frozen pork, sheep- and goat meat and poultry (unprocessed meat).

Article 26(3) of the regulation provides that where the origin of a food is given and where it is not the same as that of its primary ingredient, the **origin of the primary ingredient** must also be given or indicated as being different to that of the food. The modalities for the application of these rules were recently laid down in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/775](#), published on 28 May 2018. This legal act will apply as of 1 April 2020.

Articles 26(5) and 26(6) require the Commission to prepare reports on the need and feasibility of extending mandatory country-of-origin labelling (COOL) to other products, including milk, meat

used as an ingredient and single-ingredient products (for the published reports, see chapter on 'European Commission position and studies' below).

Article 39, 'National measures on additional mandatory particulars'

Article 39 allows Member States to adopt additional mandatory labelling for specific types or categories of foods, but the measures must be justified on grounds of **at least one of** the following reasons:

- a) protection of public health;
- b) protection of consumers;
- c) prevention of fraud;
- d) protection of industrial and commercial property rights, indications of provenance, registered designations of origin and prevention of unfair competition.

Article 39(2) further stipulates that Member States may only introduce a mandatory indication of the country of origin 'where there is a **proven link between certain qualities of the food and its origin**'. The article also specifies that when notifying such measures to the Commission, Member States have to '**provide evidence that the majority of consumers** attach significant value to the provision of that information'.

Article 45, 'Notification procedure'

Article 45 lays out the notification procedure to be used. A Member State that deems it necessary to adopt new legislation on food information must notify this in advance to the Commission and the other Member States, giving the reasons justifying the measures envisaged. The Commission then consults the Standing Committee, composed of Member-State experts.⁶ The Member State may take the envisaged measures three months after the notification, if the Commission has not given a negative opinion. Should the Commission give such an opinion, a more complete examination procedure is initiated (Article 45(4)).

In contrast to notifications done under the so-called [TRIS procedure](#), where Member States are required to inform each other and the Commission about intended technical regulations that could create barriers to the internal market, notifications under the FIC Regulation procedure are not public. Therefore it is not possible to know what reasons the notifying Member State has used, or what evidence it has provided to justify the measures. Under the TRIS procedure, any Member State can issue a detailed opinion, obliging the Member State that initiated the measure to postpone its adoption for six months. In case of a notification under the FIC Regulation, only the Commission can raise an objection.

National schemes already in place or in the making

Most of the schemes launched by the Member States are announced as being on a two-year trial basis. Imported products are excluded, according to a mutual-recognition clause stating that products lawfully produced or marketed in another EU Member State are not subject to the provisions. In most cases, the Member States are committed to submitting a report to the Commission at the end of the trial, explaining the impacts on consumers and on the internal market. The first national reports are expected by the end of 2018.

Table 1: National COOL schemes under the FIC Regulation

| Member State | Products concerned | Notification discussed in the Standing Committee | Period of application |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| Greece | 1) Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products; rabbit meat 2) Royal jelly | 1) 10 October 2016 2) 6 December 2017 | Until 30 months after publication (published 18 October 2017) |
| Spain | Milk and milk in dairy products | 5 October 2017 TRIS notification on 5 September 2017 | Two years after entry into force, not yet adopted |
| France | Milk as well as milk and meat used as an ingredient | 12 April 2016 | 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2018 |
| Italy | 1) Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products 2) Durum wheat used in durum wheat flour pasta 3) Rice 4) Tinned tomatoes, tomato concentrate and sauces whose ingredients are at least 50 % tomato 5) Production site of food products | 1) 13 September 2016 2) and 3) notified in May 2017 and discussed on 12-13 June 2017 ; notifications withdrawn in July 2017; nevertheless, legal acts adopted by the Italian authorities 4) Not notified 5) Notified under the TRIS procedure in March 2017, but withdrawn; notified under the FIC Regulation in August 2017, but also withdrawn; notified again under Article 114 TFEU in October 2017 | 1) 18 April 2017 until 31 March 2019 2) and 3) from 13 February 2018 until 31 March 2020 4) From 27 February 2018 until 31 March 2020 5) From 5 April 2018 |
| Lithuania | Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products | 13 September 2016 | |
| Portugal | Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products | 13 September 2016 | From 1 July 2017 |
| Romania | Milk and dairy products | 7 March 2017 | From 1 January 2018, not limited in time |
| Finland | 1) Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products; meat used as an ingredient in food 2) Fresh, chilled and frozen meat and fish used as an ingredient in non-pre-packed food delivered by mass caterers | 10 October 2016 2) 6 December 2017 ; after a negative opinion from the Commission, a revised notification was planned to be sent at the end of June 2018 | 1 June 2017 until 31 May 2019 |

France

France was the first EU country to launch its national scheme. It notified the draft to the Commission in February 2016 and published the relevant [decree](#) in August 2016. The two-year trial started on 1 January 2017. The mandatory labelling of origin applies only to food produced in France and concerns milk, milk used as an ingredient in certain dairy products, and meat used as an ingredient in processed foods.

The applicable thresholds are set in an [implementing decree](#) of 28 September 2016. For milk, the dairy product has to contain at least 50 % of milk; for meat, the threshold is an 8 % meat content in a food. The labelling requirements apply only to pre-packed foods to be presented as such to the final consumers and to mass caterers. Products with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and organic products are exempted.

For meat, the country of birth, country of fattening and country of slaughter have to be indicated. If all three are the same, then the indication may be given as 'origin: (name of country)'. For milk and milk used in dairy products, the label must indicate the country of collection and country of processing. If the milk is collected and processed in the same country, the 'origin: (name of country)' indication may be used. If processing has been carried out in several EU Member States, 'EU' may be used to indicate the origin; if the countries are non-EU countries, then the origin may be labelled as 'outside EU'. This information must appear in the list of ingredients, either immediately after the name of the relevant ingredient, or at the bottom of the list.

Packaging had to comply with the new rules no later than 1 April 2017. There was some concern among the operators as to whether they would be able to change their packaging within the short deadline, as orders are usually placed months in advance.

Before the trial ends on 31 December 2018, the ministers in charge of agriculture and consumption are to submit a report to the Commission, containing information about consumers' level of interest and willingness to pay, and about the impact the measure has had on the internal market.

Italy

Italy notified the Commission of its draft decree on the indication of the origin of milk and dairy products in July 2016. A [ministerial decree](#) of December 2016 provides that the label on the packaging has to display where the milking was carried out and where the milk was processed.

In May 2017, Italy also notified the Commission of its decree to require country-of-origin labels on [pasta and rice](#). The notifications were withdrawn in July 2017; nonetheless, the Italian authorities adopted the relevant legal acts. Accordingly, pasta packaging must show where the wheat was grown and milled; for rice, the countries of cultivation, processing and packaging have to be indicated.

On 27 February 2018, Italy introduced a decree on mandatory COOL concerning tinned [tomatoes](#), tomato concentrate and sauces containing at least 50 % of tomatoes in their ingredients. The label has to name the country of cultivation and the country in which the tomatoes were processed.

In addition to the above measures, in March 2017 Italy notified the Commission, under the [TRIS procedure](#), of a draft decree making it mandatory for food companies to indicate the name and address of the production site on food packaging. The [Commission](#) issued a detailed opinion on the draft measure, considering its provisions incompatible with EU law. The Italian authorities subsequently withdrew the notification; in August 2017 they notified the Commission of a similar measure under the FIC Regulation, but ultimately withdrew that one as well. On 3 October 2017, the Italian authorities notified the Commission of a similar measure under Article 114 of the [Treaty](#) on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

There has also been debate in Italy over plans to introduce a 'Made in Italy' logo to mark up Italian food products. The controversial point is, however, what exactly should [qualify as being 'Italian'](#).

Spain

An initial notification under the FIC Regulation was [discussed](#) in the Standing Committee in October 2017. The Spanish authorities explained that the draft notified measure was based on consumers' interest and on the link between milk quality and country of origin. Indicating the 'country of milking' and the 'country of processing' would be required. In a first assessment of the draft, the Commission observed that Article 5 of the notified draft contains additional voluntary information with which food-business operators can supplement the mandatory indication (territorial or regional origin). For this reason, the Commission invited the Spanish authorities to notify the draft through the TRIS procedure. A [TRIS notification](#) was given in September 2017.

In March 2017, the Spanish Food and Agriculture Ministry published a [draft decree](#) on the labelling of milk and milk products, and launched a public consultation on it. In May 2018, the Spanish National Competition Authority gave its [opinion](#), which did not favour the measure. According to a 27 May 2018 [article](#) in the newspaper El País, the Ministry of Agriculture is nevertheless planning to go ahead with the proposal.

Finland

From June 2017 to May 2019, the indication of country of origin is mandatory for milk as well as milk and meat used as an ingredient of pre-packed foods intended for the final consumers or mass caterers.

A second Finnish notification, concerning meat and fish used as an ingredient in food delivered by mass caterers, was notified in November 2017. After the Commission gave a negative opinion, the notification was [reviewed](#) so as to take better account of the Commission's demand for a proven link between the quality of the product and its origin. The revised notification was planned to be sent at the end of June 2018. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, a significant amount of imported meat is used in restaurants and catering, without customers being aware of this. The new decree would make it obligatory to clearly mark the origin of meat and fish used in restaurants, without customers having to ask about it.

Lithuania

Lithuania already notified a measure via the [TRIS system](#) in August 2015. The grounds it provided were that the Lithuanian dairy farming sector is dominated by herds of up to 10 milk cows, fed mostly with grass feed obtained from natural pastures, without the use of imported protein feed additives. As a result, raw cow milk has distinctive taste and other properties that are different from those of milk produced on intensively farmed dairy farms. A [new notification](#), under the FIC Regulation, was done in July 2016.

European Commission position and studies

Report on mandatory COOL for meat used as an ingredient

According to Article 26(6) of the FIC Regulation, the Commission had to submit a report on a possible mandatory COOL for **meat used as an ingredient** in pre-packed foods. The Commission published its [report](#), based on an external study, in December 2013. The report was accompanied by a [Commission staff working document](#) on consumers' attitudes, the feasibility of possible scenarios, and impacts.

The Commission report states that 30-50 % of the total slaughtered meat volume is processed into meat ingredients for foodstuffs (mostly into minced meat/meat preparations/meat products). In total, an estimated 70 % of the EU processed meat-production volume is made up of pig meat, followed by poultry meat (18 %) and beef (10 %). The majority (90%) of companies operating in the meat-processing sector are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The report notes that the overwhelming majority of EU consumers (83 %) eat meat at least two or three times a week. According to the Commission report, consumer interest in origin labelling for meat ingredients appears to be considerably strong; however, the majority are unwilling to pay more for this information. Even at a price increase of less than 10 %, consumers' willingness to pay falls by 60-80 %. The report findings confirm a paradox in consumer attitudes: consumers 'would be interested in receiving the information – at the highest level of detail possible – if this information was to be offered without any price increase'. According to a consumer survey cited in the Commission report, more than 90 % of respondents found it important that the origin of meat is labelled in meat-based products.⁷

The report further highlights that mandatory origin labelling would pose operational challenges to food-business operators, forcing them to radically alter their sourcing practices. The report points out that food-business operators currently procure meat from multiple sources and change their suppliers three or more times a year to secure ingredients at an affordable price. In the pig-meat industry, operators usually switch between suppliers from among the EU Member States, while beef and poultry ingredients often come from multiple sources both inside and outside the EU. Were they required to label the country of origin, operators would have to constantly adapt their labels and packaging, segregate their batches in storage according to origin, and create traceability systems. Operating costs for food businesses would rise by 15-50 %. According to Commission estimates, 90 % of the increased costs would be passed on to consumers.

The Commission points out that rather than help in preventing fraud such as the one involving [horse meat](#), mandatory COOL requirements could in fact increase incentives to commit fraud. The additional burden on the national authorities responsible for exercising official control to verify that the information given is correct, would require additional funding. Moreover, the existing traceability systems in the EU are not designed to pass on origin information along the food chain, but to ensure food safety.⁸

In the likely event that processors would increasingly shift towards using EU suppliers, trade impacts would concern especially third countries that export significant quantities of meat ingredients to the EU: Thailand and Brazil for poultry, and Brazil and Argentina for beef. The measures taken by the EU should have to be in line with its World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations. The report also warns that the costs of the COOL measures could harm the competitiveness of EU food producers on international markets. In conclusion, the Commission regards voluntary labelling as the best option.

Report on mandatory COOL for milk and minor types of meat

This [report](#), published in May 2015,⁹ notes that voluntary labelling schemes are already quite widely used in the milk and meat sectors, and usually refer to a Member State or to a region. The report highlights that the more complex and sophisticated the processing chain is, the more burdensome origin labelling becomes. In addition, farmers are heavily dependent on local processors, given the perishable nature of their product and the continuous flow of production. Dairy processors usually buy raw milk from multiple sources, and dairies located in border regions commonly process milk from several origins together in the same plant. Nearly 65 % of the milk collected is processed into consumer products, mostly cheese and fresh dairy products. Intra-EU trade is said to be fairly significant, with volumes fluctuating slightly depending on supply and market conditions.

The types of meat considered in the report¹⁰ are said to have short supply chains, often within the same Member State, with the exception of horse meat, which can have longer supply chains and more operators involved. Consumption of these types of meat accounts only for 3 % of total EU meat consumption.

The report notes that the main aim of the EU traceability system for food products is to ensure food safety, and it is not necessarily fitted to pass on origin information along the food chain. In addition,

the identification systems for live animals are different for different species: there is a very strict system for cows, but no 'personal' identification system for chicken.

The report reiterates that according to consumer surveys, origin is an important purchase factor, but only after price, taste, and best-before/use-by dates. Furthermore, there are significant differences between consumers in Member States and, according to a Eurobarometer survey, only around half of consumers declared they would be willing to pay 1-2 % more for having origin information on the products.

While labelling the place of processing would be much simpler, the report notes, indicating the place of milking would be challenging for processors sourcing from several origins. Further technical work would be needed to determine limits above which the origin would have to be indicated. Labelling milk used as an ingredient would be very difficult and expensive in practice, in particular for highly processed dairy products with multiple manufacturing stages. Additional costs could vary from negligible up to 8 % of the cost of production at processor level, but could reach up to 45 % in particularly disadvantageous circumstances.

The report concludes that mandatory origin labelling does not appear to be an appropriate way forward at EU level, in the light of limited consumer willingness to pay for such information, the administrative burden and, more generally, the impacts that this may have on EU competitiveness and trade. The Commission concludes therefore that voluntary origin labelling is the best approach to follow at EU level.

Report on mandatory COOL for unprocessed food, single-ingredient food and ingredients that represent more than 50 % of a food

The Commission published its [report](#) in May 2015, concluding that consumers link origin information to various product aspects, such as quality, safety and environmental concerns, while also declaring that they would buy national products to support the economy of their country, with important differences amongst Member States. Here again, the Commission concludes that voluntary origin labelling combined with the already existing mandatory origin-labelling regimes appears as the suitable option.

European Parliament viewpoint

When the FIC Regulation was being [negotiated](#) between the Parliament and the Council, country-of-origin labelling was one of the most controversial issues. During the document's first reading, the Members of the Parliament supported mandatory origin labelling for meat and poultry – also when used as an ingredient in processed foods – as well as dairy products.¹¹

However, as a result of compromises, the final text of the regulation states that the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance will be mandatory for unprocessed meat of swine, sheep, goat, and poultry, subject to the adoption of an implementing act. In addition, the regulation commits the Commission to submit reports concerning the possibility to extend mandatory origin labelling to other foodstuffs.

The 2013 horse meat scandal [sparked new life](#) into the origin-labelling debate, with many arguing that increased transparency would help in preventing fraud.

In a Parliament [resolution](#) of January 2014, it was suggested that labelling the country of origin may help to ensure better traceability along the food-supply chain, thus restoring consumer confidence. The Commission was urged to present legislative proposals making the indication of the origin of meat in processed foods mandatory.

In February 2014, the Parliament [objected](#) to the Commission implementing regulation laying down the rules for the indication of the country of origin for meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry, on the grounds that the regulation only requires labels to state the countries of **rearing and slaughter**,

not the place of birth. The Members stated that in order to provide consumers with accurate information on the origin, the indication of the place of birth, rearing and slaughter should appear, thereby allowing consumers to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the animal welfare standards and environmental impact relating to a meat product. Furthermore, the Members asked the Commission to remove any derogation in the implementing regulation for **minced meat**. However, as the Parliament cannot veto implementing acts, the regulation entered into force and has been applicable since 1 April 2015.

In February 2015, the Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) supporting mandatory country-of-origin labelling for **meat in processed foods**. The Parliament considered that although labelling the country of origin does not in itself prevent fraud, a rigorous traceability system contributes to detecting possible infringements and taking action against them. According to the Parliament, labelling the origin of meat used as an ingredient would help ensure better traceability along the food supply chain, more stable relationships between meat suppliers and processors, and increased diligence when food-business operators choose their suppliers and products.

In May 2016, the Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) supporting the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods. The Parliament emphasised that, according to a Eurobarometer survey, 84 % of EU citizens considered it necessary to indicate the origin of milk, whether sold as such or used as an ingredient in dairy products. Parliament called on the Commission to implement the mandatory indication of country of origin for all kinds of **drinking milk, dairy products and meat products**, and to consider extending the mandatory indication to other single-ingredient foods or those with one main ingredient.

Discussion in the Council of the EU

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council [discussed](#) the consequences of mandatory food-origin labelling on the internal market in its July 2017 meeting. The Belgian delegation submitted an [information note](#) to the meeting, using the flow of trade from Belgium to France as an example. According to the note, many fixed-term contracts in the retail sector were abandoned or not renewed as soon as the national measures were first announced. In particular, fresh milk-producing dairy companies felt an impact immediately, with a decline of 17 % for Belgian milk exports to France in the spring of 2016 and a further decline when the measure started being applied in January 2017.

In the ensuing [debate](#), some ministers warned against mandatory origin labelling, saying it would not only be costly and burdensome but also detrimental to the internal market and free movement of goods. Several supported the Belgian request to have an impact assessment on the national rules. Others laid emphasis on transparency, the right of the consumer to be correctly informed and the growing societal demand to know the origin of food, in support of the idea of an EU-wide mandatory labelling of origin.

Stakeholder reactions

The European Dairy Association (EDA) has been [opposing](#) mandatory origin labelling, reiterating that it would not be feasible for dairy products, because a carton of milk contains milk from several cows from various farms, potentially in different geographical areas, and is processed in bulk batches. Raw milk and dairy ingredients can be used in the originating Member State or further transformed into another dairy ingredient and then transported to another country. The information to be provided would be very complex and not always feasible. The EDA also reminds that the requirements for milk safety and quality are the same all over Europe.

Eucolait, the European Association of Dairy Trade, in [opposing](#) the Spanish draft decree in October 2017, underlined that such measures would be particularly burdensome for dairies located in border regions, where milk from more than one Member State is often processed in the same facility. According to Eucolait, even though products from other Member States are excluded from the draft decree by virtue of the mutual-recognition clause, they will *de facto* be discriminated against, as the

main purpose of the measure is to incite consumers to purchase domestic products. Therefore, Eucolait says, these kinds of measures violate the principle of the free movement of goods.

FoodDrinkEurope, representing the European food and drink manufacturing sector, has opposed mandatory COOL over the years. In June 2016, it released a [statement](#) highlighting the practical difficulties this would create for food businesses in having to separate the batches they use. In December 2017, it launched a [complaint](#) to the Commission, warning that the national decrees are in potential contravention of the free movement of goods, and that they have already had a negative impact on trade in the single market.

Consumer organisations argue that consumers increasingly [want to know](#) where their food comes from. The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and two French consumer organisations¹² [supported](#) the French draft decree on country-of-origin labelling. They also expressed doubt about the potential costs that origin labelling would trigger, citing their own study,¹³ which finds potential price increases to be negligible. A [survey](#) conducted by a French consumer organisation half-way through the French COOL trial scheme found that almost 90 % of milk carried origin information. There was a 25 % increase in products labelling the specific country of origin in foods containing meat, compared to a previous study made in 2016; nevertheless, 39 % of meat products only mentioned 'EU' or 'non-EU' to indicate the origin of their meat. Willingness to label the origin seems, according to the survey, to depend more on the company or retailer's policy than on the product's category.

The United States, Canada and Mexico [raised concerns](#) about Italy's pasta-labelling decree at the WTO in March 2017, saying that the measure could discriminate against their wheat exports to Italy. Canada won a long-standing dispute over the United States COOL requirements for beef and pork in a [WTO dispute settlement](#) in December 2015.

Next steps

Referring to its above-mentioned reports, the Commission has on several occasions reiterated its position that voluntary origin labelling, combined with the mandatory requirements set in the FIC Regulation, is the best approach to follow at EU level. In a [hearing](#) organised by the Parliament's committees on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) in June 2018, the Commission representative said that the Member States that have notified their national schemes, have also committed to submitting a report to the Commission upon the expiry of their trials, explaining the impacts on consumers, the internal market and trade in general. The Commission will examine these reports and then see what the implications are for further policy developments at EU level. The Commission also noted that there will not be any automatic extension of the national schemes: if the Member States want to continue their experiments, they will have to send an additional notification to the Commission.

FURTHER READING

Carbonnelle N. et al., [Country of Origin Labelling Rules for Prepacked Foods and Ingredients – An International Perspective](#), *European Food and Feed Law Review*, Vol. 11, Issue 6 (2016), pp. 472- 485.

Carreño I. & Dolle T., [A Myriad of EU Member States' Measures on Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling \(COOL\) of Food Compromise the EU Internal Market](#), *European Journal of Risk Regulation*, Vol. 8, Issue 4 (2017), pp. 779-786.

Carreño I. et al. [Country of Origin Labelling on the Rise in EU Member States – An Analysis under EU law and the EU's International Trade Obligations](#), *European Journal of Risk Regulation*, Vol. 8, Iss. 2 (2017), pp. 414-423.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For fruit and vegetables, this requirement is set in [Regulation \(EU\) No 1308/2013](#) on a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products (Article 76); for fishery products in [Regulation \(EU\) No 1379/2013](#); for honey in [Directive 2014/63/EU](#); for olive oil in [Regulation No 29/2012/EU](#), and for eggs in [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 589/2008](#) and in [Commission Directive 2002/4/EC](#).
- ² [Regulation \(EC\) No 1760/2000](#) establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products.
- ³ [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 1337/2013](#) laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry.
- ⁴ [Regulation \(EU\) No 1151/2012](#) on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.
- ⁵ The obligation to provide nutrition-related information became applicable on 13 December 2016.
- ⁶ Standing Committee on [Plants, Animals, Food and Feed \(PAFF\)](#). Exchanges of views on the different national notifications have been held in the committee's general food law section.
- ⁷ There were, nonetheless, significant differences between Member States: while 65-85 % of respondents in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy considered it 'very important', this was the case for only around 50 % of respondents in Germany, Spain and Lithuania.
- ⁸ Requirements set in [Regulation \(EC\) No 178/2002](#) (the 'General Food Law Regulation') and [Regulation \(EU\) No 931/2011](#) on the traceability requirements for food of animal origin oblige food business operators to be able to identify the business to which their products have been supplied, and to trace down the supplier of their raw material 'one step back - one step forward' along the food chain, so as to be able to track the source in case of a food-safety issue. Information on the country of origin is not currently required at EU level. According to the Commission report, there is no significant interest in this information to be passed in 'business-to-business' relations, so the origin information tends to stop at the early stages, in the 'unprocessed phase' of the supply chain (that is, in slaughterhouses and cutting plants).
- ⁹ An [external study](#) was commissioned during the preparation of the report, to analyse the impact of different labelling scenarios.
- ¹⁰ Horse, rabbit, reindeer and deer, farmed and wild game as well as birds other than chicken, turkey, ducks, geese and guinea fowls.
- ¹¹ Parliament [considered](#) that the country or place of provenance should be given for meat, poultry, dairy products, single-ingredient products and meat, poultry and fish when used as an ingredient in processed foods. For meat and poultry, the country or place of provenance should be given as a single place for animals only where the animals have been born, reared and slaughtered in the same country or place. In other cases, information on each of the different places of birth, rearing and slaughter should be given. Where there are reasons that would make it impractical to label the country of origin, the following label could be used instead: 'of unspecified origin'.
- ¹² UFC-Que Choisir and CLCV.
- ¹³ A December 2013 study by BEUC's French member UFC Que Choisir found that labelling the origin of beef in processed foods would entail negligible price increases (e.g. +1.51 eurocent for a pack of frozen lasagne).

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