

**Question for written answer E-001099/2021  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Jordi Cañas** (Renew)

**Subject:** Proliferation of voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs and the consequences thereof

The use of voluntary private certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs in the EU<sup>1</sup> has risen in recent years. While these may bring advantages in terms of responsibility throughout the food supply chain and market penetration, they also pose risks and threats to the functioning of the EU's single market, given the wide variety of schemes in existence and the differences in their criteria, checks and standards for implementation and accreditation in the Member States, and the confusing information this conveys to consumers.

Given the proliferation of these schemes, they must be made more trustworthy therefore, ensuring they cannot mislead or deceive consumers to their detriment and the detriment, especially, of regulated quality systems such as protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications, which could create unfair competition.

Bearing in mind that this affects directly consumers' rights and the goals of the farm to fork strategy<sup>2</sup>:

1. Has the Commission already produced a detailed study on the impact existing certification schemes have on the single market and their possible distorting effects, and if not, will it do so?
2. Will the Commission consider whether a legal framework and harmonised control mechanisms should be set up for these schemes?

---

<sup>1</sup> Commission Communication on 'EU best practice guidelines for voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs' (2010/C 341/04).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Communication on 'A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system' (COM(2020)381 final).