

**Contact: Elisavet Sergiadou: +32 (0)2 789 24 01**

**Date: 21/05/2015**

### **European Commission disappoints on labelling origin of our food**

The European Commission issued two more detailed reports on labelling the country of origin for several food types.

Both reports conclude that benefits of mandatory origin labels would not outweigh costs. Commission has chosen to allow the industry to label voluntarily.

The first was overseen by the Directorate for Agriculture and evaluated those types of fresh meat not yet covered by existing rules (e.g. horsemeat, rabbit, game) as well as milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products. Separately, the Directorate for Health and Food Safety was charged with examining unprocessed foods (e.g. pre-packed green salads or chopped veg), single ingredient foods (e.g. flour, sugar) and ingredients representing over 50% of a food (e.g. wheat in bread, tomatoes in passata).

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"The data<sup>1</sup> shows that 84% of Europeans want to know the origin of their milk, whether sold as such or as part of a dairy product. More than three quarters of consumers want to see information on where the milk was transformed into dairy products and almost as many (68%) want to know where the milking was done.

"Consumer research<sup>2</sup> leaves no doubt that people are mostly interested to know the country, if not the region, from which their food originates. Simply knowing whether a food comes from the "EU" or not is meaningless to most consumers.

"We expect the EU to deliver for consumers by allowing them to make informed choices when it comes to food origin. The Commission's preference to leave the industry to voluntarily label origins is a blow for consumers' right to know where our food comes from. Such an approach is a little too close to asking turkeys to vote for Christmas. BEUC is in favour of mandatory labelling.

"We will study the Commission's reports in detail, but one can be forgiven for wondering as to the point of the exercises. The European Commission has not yet responded to the call for mandatory origin labelling on processed meat which was launched by the European Parliament two months ago. Such silence does not augur well for the other foods targeted in these two reports."

ENDS

<sup>1</sup> [Special Eurobarometer](#) on "Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP", December 2013

<sup>2</sup> BEUC 2013 [survey](#) "Where does my food come from?"