

PRESS RELEASE

Country of origin labelling (COOL) - EU Primary Food Processors share Commission's views that the status quo is the only realistic option

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The EU Primary Food Processors¹ welcome the Commission report² issued today which clearly stipulates that introducing a mandatory origin labelling would increase the complexity of the food supply chain, by requiring the adaptation of sourcing practices, traceability systems, production process of the final products, packaging & labelling process as well as marketing practices. According to the report, mandatory labelling would lead to a segmentation of the internal market, possible nationalisation of food supply chains and trade disruptions, whilst making the final products more costly to the consumers.

"EU Primary Food Processors all work on the basis of a continuous process which requires a continuous supply of agricultural raw materials coming from different origins, which vary according to availability. Introducing a mandatory labelling would require a full adaptation of existing practices and will not enhance food safety which is already a prerequisite for all our products" said Gary Sharkey, PFP President.

The report also confirms that consumer interest in origin labelling ranks behind price, quality, taste and best before date. The Commission lastly recognizes that the *"additional burden and rigidity of the sourcing practices would penalise EU food business operators on the international market"*.

"Mandatory origin labelling for PFP products would be of little informative value or meaningless, and may even prove to be misleading by wrongly suggesting that these products possess special characteristics when all similar products have the same characteristics", added the PFP President, calling for an economically viable solution on this issue.

The EU Primary Food Processors support the Commission's views that keeping the status quo, i.e. current EU voluntary origin labelling rules, is the only realistic option.

For more information please visit www.pfp-eu.org
Correspondence for media inquiries: info@pfp-eu.org

¹ The EU Primary Food Processors represent the interest of the EU cocoa, flour, starch, sugar, vegetable oils and fats, and vegetable protein industries. Our sectors deliver single-ingredient products to consumers and supply food ingredients to second-processing industries.

² Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food (COM(2015) 204 final)