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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Country of Origin Labelling for foodstuffs <i>- Information from the German and Austrian delegations, supported by the Estonian, Finnish French and Portuguese delegations</i>

Delegations will find in annex an information note from the German and Austrian delegations, supported by the Estonian, Finnish, French and Portuguese delegations on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under “Any Other Business” at the session of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 27 May 2024.

Country of Origin Labelling for foodstuffs

Information from the German and Austrian delegation, supported by the Estonian, Finnish, French and Portuguese delegation

Currently, a variety of EU-wide obligations to indicate the country of origin are already in place for some products, such as fresh, chilled or frozen beef and pre-packaged fresh, chilled or frozen pork, sheep, goat and poultry meat, as well as eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables, honey, olive oil, pre-packaged organic products and, in certain cases, the primary ingredient of a food and where there is a risk of misleading labelling.

These regulations support consumers' trust in the product, ensure greater transparency and equally benefit high quality products of European farmers. They are also a useful solution for enabling consumers to make sustainable purchasing decisions, e.g. by choosing foods with a shorter distance of transport and shorter supply chains. Numerous surveys have shown consumer's persistent interest in the origin of the food they eat. Thus, the expansion of mandatory EU-wide origin labelling is of great importance to consumers and farmers. Recent initiatives of Member States and private organizations have taken up this development and shown that the market reacts well to consistent labelling of origin. This will particularly help to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain and contribute to a fairer income.

Both transparency and sustainability are also issues the European Commission's Farm-to-Fork Strategy addresses. Country of origin labelling therefore supports this objective. However, the existing EU regulations are not yet sufficient for achieving these goals.

That is why we support the European Commission's plan in the Farm to Fork-strategy to expand mandatory origin labelling to include other foodstuffs and harmonise existing regulations. We take the view that intensified measures and a legal framework at European level are urgently necessary, keeping in mind the interests of the economy and its financial burden, especially regarding consumer prices. Therefore, we call on the acting or, respectively, the incoming Commission to swiftly present a legislative proposal for an expansion of mandatory EU-wide country of origin labelling for foodstuffs, which enables consumers to make informed purchasing decisions and ultimately also strengthens the position of European farmers in the food supply chain.
