



Brussels, 1 July 2026

Joint statement from food-chain stakeholders on the possible extension of mandatory country-of-origin labelling

Following the discussions held at the AgriFish Council meetings of 26th January and 26th May on country-of-origin labelling, the undersigned associations - representing food manufacturers, trade and hospitality sector - would like to express their concerns regarding the call for an extension of country-of-origin labelling to further food categories on a mandatory basis.

Our sectors are very mindful of the interest among consumers for the origin / provenance of food and drink products and their ingredients. We are committed to supporting consumers by providing meaningful information through a variety of channels, where there is clear demand and where it is operationally feasible. Our sectors play an essential role in supporting consumers, helping them make informed and empowered choices reflecting market demand and established voluntary practices.

While it is undeniable that European citizens are increasingly interested in knowing where the food they buy comes from, previous studies commissioned by the European Commission have observed heterogeneity across food categories, geographies and population groups in the EU when it comes to actual consumer interest, particularly when consumers' willingness to pay is taken into account¹.

Extending mandatory origin requirements would significantly disrupt integrated European supply chains, particularly for ingredient-processing industries, restaurants, caterers and other foodservice operators, where multi-origin sourcing and flexible procurement are essential. Processors for preparations and products need autonomy over the quality and ingredients they buy – to ensure consistent quality, year-round availability, food safety, and affordability.

¹ Reports from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council:

- regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for meat used as an ingredient ([link](#));
- the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for milk, milk used as an ingredient in dairy products and types of meat other than beef, swine, sheep, goat and poultry meat ([link](#));
- the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that constitute over 50% of a food ([link](#)).

An extension of mandatory origin labelling would inevitably reduce sourcing flexibility throughout the food supply chain. Businesses must be able to adapt sourcing decisions to seasonal availability, quality, price, sustainability requirements, climate-related disruptions and consumer demand, often drawing on suppliers from multiple countries. More extensive origin labelling requirements would constrain this flexibility and incentivise reliance on a limited number of suppliers capable of providing large and consistent volumes. To avoid frequent and costly changes to labels, menus and related information, businesses would likely concentrate sourcing among these suppliers, potentially disadvantaging smaller producers and suppliers from smaller Member States.

In order to adapt to mandatory country-of-origin labelling, companies might put into place less efficient food supply chains (e.g. separate storage facilities, production lines and transport operations to keep ingredients from different origins separated) which will inevitably create more waste and an increased use of energy and other resources. Finally, it might lead to fewer available choices for consumers and food price increases due to the additional costs resulting from such changes. This is particularly concerning in the current context of economic pressure on households, where many consumers are already facing rising living costs.

At a time when competitiveness, resilience, and food security are strategic priorities, where the Single Market Strategy published in May 2025 outlined that labelling and packaging are amongst the “ten terrible barriers” hindering the smooth functioning of the Single Market, and the European Commission is prioritising simplification to achieve 25% of reduction of burden in different sectors, a measure extending mandatory country-of-origin labelling would contradict those efforts.

We thus urge the European Commission and Member States to not pursue further extension of mandatory country-of-origin labelling in order to preserve the seamless functioning of the Single Market and not add additional pressure on food-chain operators. We also stand ready to find solutions that would help to meet consumer expectations while preserving the free flow of food and food ingredients in the Single Market and contributing to pathways that strengthen the resilience, competitiveness and sustainability of the European agri-food sector.