



Study of the functioning of the voluntary food labelling schemes for consumers in the EU

**Consumer Markets Expert Group
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Planning for the study

- One-year study launched in the end of November 2012
- Data collection tools:
 - Web-sweep of schemes
 - Consumer opinion survey + behavioural experiment
 - Survey of scheme operators
 - Stakeholder consultation:
 - EU-level consumer body, producer or retailer associations, EUFIC
 - National level consumer authorities, consumer watchdogs, farmer associations, food producer associations, retailer associations, certification bodies
 - Virtual online shopping and web listening
 - Desk research

Part 1: overview of the functioning of voluntary food labelling schemes

- **Inventory and categorisation** of labelling schemes (e.g. certified and self-declared, policy areas, countries, type of body that operates the scheme, public support)
- Extent to which voluntary certification schemes and self-declaration schemes are:
 - **present** on food products
 - **compliant with rules** on unfair commercial practices
 - **in line with the Commission guidelines** from 2010
 - a source of **transparent and reliable** information
- Are there **differences in performance** between public and private schemes? Between certification and self-declared schemes? Which are **best practices**? What areas could be improved?

Part 2: consumer understanding and behaviour towards schemes

- Extent to which consumers **know and understand** particular types of labelling schemes
- Is there a **need to improve** consumer understanding?
- Are consumers **able to distinguish** between different types of schemes, e.g. certification and self-declared ones?
- Extent to which consumers **trust** different types of schemes
- **Impact of schemes** on consumer perception of a product, behaviour and purchasing decisions (including the willingness to pay a bonus price)
- Can voluntary labelling schemes pose a **challenge to the empowerment** of consumers?

Issues to decide – contributions welcome

- **Definition** of a voluntary food labelling scheme – for example, should the study cover product names and pictures or should the coverage be limited to schemes that have a trademark or a logo?
- Are there **particular types** of schemes that we should focus on?
- **How to recognise misleading** claims/schemes?

Planned deliverables

- Updated and extended inventory of voluntary food labelling schemes
- Analysis of performance of food labelling schemes against the rules on the unfair commercial practices and the EC best practice guidelines for voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (2010)
- Analysis of consumer understanding of messages as well as perceptions and experiences regarding schemes
- Analysis of consumer behaviour – impact of different messages conveyed by schemes on the willingness to pay and purchasing decisions

Contributions welcome

- Inventories or studies/reports to share
- Contact persons for the stakeholder survey of the national consumer authorities
- Possible issues to be covered by the consumer survey
- Suggestions for organisations or bodies to be contacted

Thank you for your attention

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