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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

of the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry

{SWD(2021) 218 final}

The evaluation analysed the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the mandatory origin labelling rules for meats of swine, sheep, goat and poultry, as set out in Regulation (EU) 1337/2013 (the 'Regulation'). The evaluation covered the EU-28 and the period from the date of application of the Regulation on 1 April 2015.

The evaluation was mainly based on the corresponding external support study[1], supplemented by an analysis of the opinion of relevant stakeholders, collected through various consultation activities. The Commission deemed the sources of evidence to be accurate and relatively robust for the purposes of the evaluation. It should be noted however, that certain data limitations led to less granular results and an uneven level of detail for the respective evaluation criteria. The main findings of the evaluation are summarised in the points below.

- The evaluation concluded that the objectives of the Regulation have been met and remained relevant despite a changing context, in particular the increasing consumer demand for more extensive information on food labels.
- The evaluation also confirmed the coherence of the Regulation with other EU and national legislation.
- Consumers consider origin labelling to be important information in their meat-purchase decisions, and accept the rules set out in the Regulation. Nevertheless, their understanding of Regulation terms and definitions used on labels is low, casting doubt on the clarity and final utility of the information provided to consumers.
- The information on origin/provenance is sufficient to ensure correct meat labelling and can generally be verified (checked) by the competent authorities of Member States. Although no systemic issues were identified, differences in the robustness of checks and monitoring have been apparent between Member States. Monitoring costs related to the Regulation have been small, as these costs have mostly been integrated by operators in wider changes to monitoring required in the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625.
- The mandatory origin-labelling rules have been enforced effectively and efficiently, without unnecessary burdens on the meat supply chain and national administrations. This has been facilitated by derogations for minced meat, trimmings and imported meat. The effect of the rules on market and trade dynamics has been marginal, with the cost of adaptation absorbed in the supply chain and not passed on to consumers.

The evaluation identified room for:

- improvement in consumer understanding of the EU labelling rules for the concerned meats, notably how these rules are applied in practice, and the overall relationship between food safety and quality;
- further analysis of coherence, and potential harmonisation of the derogations under the Regulation with derogations applicable to other meats and foods;
- further exchanges and collection of good practices on monitoring and checks in origin labelling for the concerned meats;
- continuous monitoring of the impact of the origin-labelling rules on the EU single market and on the environment.

The experience gained from the implementation and assessment of the Regulation contributes to the European Commission's report to the European Parliament and the Council evaluating mandatory origin labelling for the concerned meats. It will also be relevant for a broader assessment of food labelling and information to consumers under the 'farm-to-fork' strategy.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cmef/products-and-markets/mandatory-indication-country-origin-labelling-certain-meats_en