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Press Release

Commission recognises that Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling is not the way forward for vegetable oils and fats

A Commission report issued today confirms that introducing a mandatory origin labelling on single ingredient products would lead to segmentation of the internal market, potential trade disruptions, price increases for consumers, nationalization of foods and would entail serious economic and social impacts for the sector.

The report further admits that compared to current operations for the sourcing of raw materials, this would have drastic changes and trigger inefficiencies throughout the production process, the labelling and marketing practices.

"The report gives a fair overview of the consequences such a mandatory labelling would have." said Kevin Brassington, the President of FEDIOL. "For sectors like ours which are operating large volumes of commodities in a continuous process and require flexibility for their sourcing, a mandatory labelling is simply not possible to implement without a complete change of existing practices."

The report confirms that whilst consumers may wish to know the origin of food products, parameters such as price, quality or taste are more important. It further acknowledges that consumers wrongly associate the origin of a product and its quality and safety.

"Knowing where the oilseeds come from or where the refining has taken place will not offer meaningful information to consumers about the quality of a product." added Kevin Brassington. "What matters for the quality is the technology and know-how implemented in the specific refinery."

FEDIOL therefore trusts that the only way forward, as recommended in the report, is through voluntary origin labelling approaches.

end

For further information, please contact Nathalie Lecocq, Director General, at FEDIOL: +32 771 53 30

Background

- FEDIOL, the EU vegetable oil and proteinmeal industry association, represents the interests of the European seed and bean crushers, meal producers, vegetable oils producers, refiners and bottlers. FEDIOL's members are 12 national associations and associated company members in 5 other EU countries. With about 150 facilities in Europe, the sector provides 20,000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 36 million tonnes of basic products a year, both of EU origin and imported from third country markets. The sector processes notably rapeseed, sunflower seed, soybeans and linseed into oils and meals for food, feed, technical and energy uses essentially on the European market.
- Regulation 1169/2011, article 26§ 3 states that: "Where the country of origin or the place of provenance of a food is given and where it is not the same as that of its primary ingredient: (a) the country of origin or place of provenance of the primary ingredient in question shall also be given; or (b) the country of origin or place of provenance of the primary ingredient shall be indicated as being different to that of the food. The application of this paragraph shall be subject to the adoption of the implementing acts referred to in paragraph 8."
- Regulation 1169/2011, article 26§ 5 states that : "By 13 December 2014, the Commission shall submit reports to the European Parliament and the Council regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for the following foods: (a) types of meat other than beef and those referred to in point (b) of paragraph 2; (b) milk; (c) milk used as an ingredient in dairy products; (d) unprocessed foods; (e) single ingredient products; (f) ingredients that represent more than 50 % of a food.