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P8_TA(2016)0222

Traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail

European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2016 on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail (2016/2532(RSP))

(2018/C 076/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004 ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy, amending Regulations (EC) No 847/96, (EC) No 2371/2002, (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 768/2005, (EC) No 2115/2005, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007, (EC) No 676/2007, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1300/2008, (EC) No 1342/2008 and repealing Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1627/94 and (EC) No 1966/2006 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2014 on the food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Fisheries,
- having regard to the question to the Commission on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail (O-000052/2016 — B8-0365/2016),
- having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU is the world's largest seafood market, which is supplied by both the EU fisheries sector and imports from third countries;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0011.

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- B. whereas consumers have a right to information expressed in understandable terms, including coastal and geographical information on the capture zones, and should be able to fully rely on the whole chain that provides fishery products in the EU market; whereas the EU and the Member States have a duty to protect EU citizens from fraudulent acts; whereas all imported products must comply with EU rules and standards;
- C. whereas the Commission is preparing a detailed and exhaustive inventory of voluntary claims associated with fishery and aquaculture products which are marketed in the EU; whereas the Commission's findings could lead to the setting-up of an external structure certifying voluntary claims for fishery and aquaculture products on the EU market;
- D. whereas the Commission's 2015 EU control plan ⁽¹⁾ assessing the prevalence on the market of white fish mislabelled with regard to its declared species found that the declared species was confirmed in 94 % of the samples taken; whereas, however, for certain species non-compliance levels were very high, and the rate of 6 % is considered relatively low compared with other more limited studies in Member States;
- E. whereas Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 required the Commission to submit to Parliament and the Council by 1 January 2015 a feasibility report on options for an eco-label scheme for fishery and aquaculture products;
- F. whereas the common organisation of the markets (CMO) should guarantee fair competition and income for producers of fishery products sold or bought in the EU;
1. Expresses its serious concern and discontent at the results of various studies showing significant levels of mislabelling on fish products sold on the EU market, including in the restaurants of the EU institutions; reaffirms that the intentional and fraudulent mislabelling of fish species is a breach of EU regulations, including the Common Fisheries Policy, and may constitute a criminal offence under national law;
 2. Calls on the Member States to strengthen national controls, including on non-processed fish for restaurants and the catering sector, in an effort to tackle fraud and identify the stage in the supply chain where fish is mislabelled; is concerned by the substitution of high-quality species with lower-quality counterparts; calls on the Commission and the Member States to study what measures could be put in place to improve the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products; supports the creation of a working group to harmonise the implementation of traceability in all Member States and the setting-up of an external structure enabling the certification of voluntary claims for fishery and aquaculture products on the EU market;
 3. Supports a strong traceability system, from landing to consumption, which would give confidence to consumers and, in turn, decrease commercial dependency on imported fishery and aquaculture products, thereby strengthening the EU market; calls on the Commission to exploit the potential of DNA barcoding, which could assist in the identification of species by DNA sequencing, in order to enhance traceability;
 4. Welcomes the new framework of the CMO and urges the Commission, in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013, to submit a feasibility report on options for an eco-label scheme for fishery and aquaculture products; highlights the need to establish minimum standards for ecolabelling; considers that the key elements of the labelling system must ensure transparency, independence and credibility of the certification process; asks for an in-depth analysis of the benefits of setting up an EU-wide labelling system;
 5. Calls on the Commission to monitor on a regular basis the extent to which the required information appears on labels; stresses that labelling must provide understandable, verifiable and accurate information; encourages the Member States, in the context of voluntary labelling, to state all available information that enables the consumer to make an informed choice; urges the Commission and the Member States to strengthen awareness-raising campaigns on labelling requirements for fishery and aquaculture products;

⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/official_controls/food_fraud/fish_substitution/index_en.htm?subweb=343&lang=en

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6. Stresses that a sound European label policy in the fisheries sector would be a key factor in boosting the economic development of coastal communities, in recognising the best practices of fishermen and in underlining the quality of the products they supply to consumers;
 7. Calls on the Commission, in the interest of guaranteeing consumers' right to accurate, reliable and comprehensible information, to adopt measures to remedy the confusion caused by the current labelling requirements based on Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) areas and sub-areas, which is particularly serious in the case of catches in some sub-areas of area 27, where inter alia Galicia and the Gulf of Cádiz are labelled as 'Portuguese Waters', Wales as 'Irish Sea' and Brittany as 'Bay of Biscay';
 8. Draws attention to the need to include information on the origin of fishery products in a transparent and clear manner;
 9. Highlights the need to ensure that any future Union-wide ecolabel and third-party seafood ecolabelling and certification schemes are consistent with the FAO's Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries;
 10. Considers that an EU-wide ecolabel for fisheries and aquaculture products, whose criteria should be further discussed at EU level, could contribute to strengthening traceability and the provision of transparent information to consumers; believes that the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) may fund such a label;
 11. Notes that some commercial fish denominations in force in the Member States vary among them owing to national practices that could lead to a degree of confusion; welcomes the work undertaken by the Commission to launch a pilot project, as adopted by Parliament, aimed at introducing a public database which will provide information on commercial denominations in all the EU official languages;
 12. Encourages the Commission to publicise more effectively its work in protecting marine resources and combating illegal fishing;
 13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission.
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