



## Recommendation 1142 (1991)<sup>1</sup>

# Labelling of quality food products

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly considers that the consumer is entitled to full information on all aspects of production, processing, quality and origin of foodstuffs, in particular on those aspects which have health implications. It finds that this has not yet been fully achieved in member states, nor within the European Community, and it is particularly concerned that pictures and symbols used can be misleading.

2. It believes that the consumers, producers and distributors of quality agricultural and food products, and the regions in which such products originate, would benefit substantially from European legislation and/or regulations on labelling of quality agricultural and food products certifying the region of origin and from increased research in this field. This would also help preserve an important part of Europe's cultural heritage : its gastronomic diversity.

3. This food diversity may, however, find itself under threat as present methods of production and distribution are leading to more and more uniform food using more and more artificial ingredients. As a result, the public's demand for, and appreciation of, good natural food risk diminishing over time, leading to a deterioration of the food sector taken as a whole.

4. It also believes that a Council of Europe initiative in this field may have positive effects on trade in quality agricultural and food products and may be of importance for pan-European co-operation and economic development.

5. Consequently, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers, in close co-operation with the European Community :

- a. examine the setting up of a European system of quality food labelling which should include :
  1. the determination of European criteria for quality food labelling, including relevant information on production and processing (for example irradiation treatment and the date of packaging, especially for frozen food) ;
  2. the setting up of rules concerning the designation of well-defined regions of origin for different foodstuffs, including guidelines for the definition of the specific relationship between products and the area where they are cultivated (and processed) as well as the special knowledge employed ;
  3. the labelling of food products, including a clear marking of the country of origin, the mere mention of the region or province where the product has been produced being insufficient in Europe-wide marketing ;
  4. the establishment of mechanisms for the control of quality and certified region of origin labelling by involving the producers (self-control) and to severely penalise any abuse ;
  5. the promotion of information and education of the public on questions of diet, health and food quality, and in particular information on the European gastronomic heritage, traditional food and cooking ;

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1. Assembly debate on 31 January 1991 (25th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6347](#), report of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteurs : MM. Seiler and Soares Costa ; and [Doc. 6369](#), opinion of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mr Jessel). Text adopted by the Assembly on 31 January 1991 (25th Sitting).



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6. the setting up of a special labelling system for organically (biologically) produced food indicating the production methods, including the use of inputs such as fungicides, herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers ;
  7. the taking into account of existing international norms for the identification and description of quality foodstuffs and working for their improvement ;
  8. the promotion of quality food products through special labelling resulting from agreements between producer and consumer organisations on improvement of quality ;
  9. the involvement of producers, local and regional authorities, consumers and distributors and their organisations in this work ;
- b.* draw up a European convention regarding the labelling, presentation and advertising of raw and processed quality agricultural and food products from certified regions or countries of origin.