

Imports: indication of the country of origin of certain products

2005/0254(COD) - 29/09/2010

The Committee on International Trade adopted the report by Cristiana MUSCARDINI (EPP, IT) on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the indication of the country of origin of certain products imported from third countries.

It recommended that the European Parliament's position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the codecision procedure) should be to amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Limitation of the scope to apply to end consumer products: Members suggest that the regulation should apply to end consumer products rather than industrial products, as proposed by the Commission. These products are those which are listed in the Annex to the draft Regulation, and imported from third countries, except for products originating in the Territory of the European Union (and not the Community), Turkey, and the EEA.

Possibility to extend the scope of the Regulation to other products, subject to Parliament's approval: as in the initial proposal, the scope of this Regulation can be extended by the Commission to other products, subject to the approval of the European Parliament and the Council. Members call for the establishment of updated comitology rules for the extension of the Regulation's scope in accordance with the procedure set out in Article 6 paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 laying down the comitology rules applicable. The Commission may adopt by means of delegated acts measures to determine cases in which marking on the packaging shall be accepted in lieu of marking on the goods themselves or in cases in which goods cannot or need not be marked for technical reasons. The committee also calls for the committee responsible for assisting the Commission in the eventual extension of the Regulation's scope to be extended to representatives of the relevant industries and associations for reasons of transparency.

Limiting the administrative burden: in order to ensure that this Regulation is effective and only imposes light administrative burdens whilst granting the maximum flexibility for European companies, Members consider that it should be in compliance with existing "made-in" schemes worldwide. Indeed, one recital states that the Member States' customs authorities should perform border checks and controls on the implementation of this regulation via a single harmonised procedure so as to reduce the administrative burden.

"Made in": Members proposes that the marking may also be done in the English language by using the words "made-in" and the English name of the country of origin. in the English language by using the words "made-in" and the English name of the country of origin (to avoid, for example, the use of the Greek or Cyrillic alphabet with whom many are unfamiliar).

Penalties: the Committee calls for the Commission (and not simply Member States) to be able to propose minimum common standards for the penalties applicable to infringements of the provisions of this Regulation so as to prevent differences among them from prompting exporters to use certain points of entry to the European Union in preference to others. Where it appears that goods are not in compliance with the Regulation, Member States may adopt measures to require the owner of the goods or any other person responsible for them to mark these goods in accordance with this Regulation and at their own

expense, as in the Commission's proposal. However, in addition, the committee wants Member States to notify these provisions to the Commission within nine months after the entry into force of this Regulation, to ensure uniform application.

Report on the effects of this Regulation: the committee calls on the Commission to carry out a study on the effects of this Regulation no later than three years after its entry into force.

Annex of products to be marked: lastly, Members added a series of new products to the list of products proposed by the Commission. These include pharmaceutical products, certain tools and other fixture products important for the safety of finished industrial products, craft products, tyres and instruments used in cars and ophthalmological products.

In a recital, Members state that the addition of certain products to the initial list is justified because there have been several cases of health and safety incidents arising from products imported into the EU from third countries. In these circumstances, a clear indication of origin will give EU citizens more information and more control over their choices, thus offering them protection from unknowingly purchasing products of potentially dubious quality.

According to Members, an origin marking scheme would enable consumers to know if the products come from countries with high social and environmental standards.