



Plenary sitting

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PROPOSAL FOR A UNION ACT

submitted under Rule 46(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on differences in the declarations, composition and taste of products in central/eastern and western markets of the EU

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Proposal for a Union act on differences in the declarations, composition and taste of products in central/eastern and western markets of the EU

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Article 5 of the Decision of the European Parliament of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament¹,
 - having regard to Rule 46(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, at the 3524th meeting of the Council on Agriculture and Fisheries held in Brussels, on 6 March 2017, regarding the dual quality of foodstuffs, the Commission was asked ‘to consider appropriate action including legislation at EU level’;
- B. whereas studies have confirmed differences in the composition and quality of products sold with identical packaging and under identical brands on central/eastern and western markets in the EU;
- C. whereas many products sold in the central/eastern EU Member States contain lower quality ingredients than identically-branded products sold on western markets of the EU; whereas some studies indicate that up to one half of the products exhibit differences that significantly impact their quality, such as a higher proportion of fats, a lower proportion of meat, a greater number of artificial sweeteners and preservatives, and a lower weight;
- D. whereas these differences have been found in a wide range of products – from food and toiletries to detergents and disinfectants – which are of inferior quality and sometimes cost more than identical products sold in the western segment of the EU market;
- E. whereas companies differentiate products according to markets; whereas it is unacceptable, however, that there are differences in quality of the basic ingredients, which is consequently misleading for consumers;
1. Requests the Commission to submit, by 30 September 2017 on the basis of Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, a proposal for an act revising the EU legislation, in order to put an end to such practices of market fragmentation and protect consumers by eliminating double standards in the quality of products sold in Central/Eastern and Western Europe.

¹ OJ L 262, 7.10.2005, p. 1.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

There is currently no provision in Union law establishing protection for consumers as regards the quality of products sold with identical packaging and under an identical brand within the internal market.

It is often the case that branded products/foods sold in different Member States look the same but differ in terms of their contents, while versions sold in central and eastern Member States are often of inferior quality.

The key issue here is different quality standards as regards the composition of the basic ingredients of a branded product.

Eliminating these double standards in the internal market and requiring companies to sell identical branded products across the EU would require the Union to revise its legislation and introduce tighter regulation.

The Commission should guarantee consumer protection and combat double standards, by launching legislative action against this unfair distortion of the internal market through a Union act revising existing EU legislation in order to put an end to such practices and market fragmentation.