31. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to issue recommendations regarding refrigeration temperatures, based on evidence that non-optimal and improper temperature leads to food becoming prematurely inedible and causes unnecessary waste; underlines the fact that harmonised levels of temperature throughout the supply chain would improve product conservation and reduce food waste for products transported and sold cross-border;

32. Recalls the results of the survey conducted by the Commission (Consumer Empowerment in the EU – SEC(2011)0469), according to which 18 % of European citizens do not understand the 'best before' label; asks the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to clarify the meaning of the date labels ('best before', 'expiry date' and 'use by') in order to reduce consumers' uncertainty regarding food edibility and to disseminate accurate information to the public, notably the understanding that the minimum durability 'best before' date is related to quality, while the 'use by' date is related to safety, in order to help consumers make informed choices; urges the Commission to publish a user-friendly manual on the use of food close to expiry dates, while ensuring food safety in donation and animal feed, and building on best practices by stakeholders in the food supply chain, in order, for instance, to match supply and demand more quickly and effectively;

33. Calls on the Member States to encourage and support initiatives geared to stimulating sustainable small- and medium-scale production that is linked to local and regional markets and consumption; acknowledges that local markets are environmentally sustainable and contribute to the stability of the primary sector; asks that the common agricultural policy earmark, in the future, the necessary funding to promote stability in the primary sector, for example by means of direct sales, local markets and all measures to promote low or zero food miles;

34. Calls on the Member States to ensure that small local producers and local producer groups can take part in public procurement procedures for the implementation of specific programmes promoting, in particular, the consumption of fruit and dairy products in schools;

35. Urges the Council and the Commission to designate 2014 the European Year against Food Waste, as a key information and awareness-raising initiative for European citizens and to focus national governments' attention on this important topic, with a view to allocating sufficient funds to tackle the challenges of the near future;

36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

Combating algal blooms

P7_TA(2012)0015

Declaration of the European Parliament of 19 January 2012 on combating algal blooms

(2013/C 227 E/06)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which stipulates that Union policy on the environment shall contribute to preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment, as well as protecting human health,

— having regard to Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy,

— having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas algal blooms, which are linked to eutrophication in coastal waters and estuaries, occur along all of Europe's coasts (along the Channel, the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic and the Mediterranean);

B. whereas these blooms cause serious damage to the good ecological status of the waters concerned, to public health and to the economic dynamism of the areas involved;

C. whereas a European solution needs to be sought in order to address phenomena like this, which transcend national borders;

1. Calls on the Commission to draw up, under Directive 2000/60/EC, a European action plan on combating algal blooms that is based on the exchange of best practice and cooperation with those affected by these phenomena;

2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories ([1]), to the Council and the Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

([1]) The list of signatories is published in Annex 1 to the Minutes of 19 January 2012 (P7_PV(2012)01-19(ANN1)).

The establishment of the Pact of Islands as an official European initiative

P7_TA(2012)0016

Declaration of the European Parliament of 19 January 2012 on the establishment of the Pact of Islands as an official European initiative

(2013/C 227 E/07)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas islands are highly dependent on imported fossil fuels, facing higher fuel costs, but are also an opportunity for research, demonstration and development of renewable energies and energy efficiency actions,

B. whereas islands are vulnerable to climate change because of their high levels of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems,

C. whereas renewables are in abundance and their development can have a significant impact on alleviating islands' permanent structural handicaps, providing socio-economic benefits to their inhabitants,

1. Congratulates the communities and peripheral regions that have signed the Pact with the aim of going beyond the objective of the EU 2020 Strategy, reducing CO_2 emissions in their respective territories by at least 20 %;

2. Calls on the Commission to continue providing its support to European island communities with a view to achieving the sustainability objectives of the EU;