

More eco-friendly products for a low carbon future

The European Commission welcomes today's adoption by the European Parliament of its proposal to push ahead the shift towards a low-carbon economy. The legal framework has been enlarged to all energy related products. So far eco-design requirements were restricted to energy-using product, such as boilers, water heaters, computers, televisions or industrial fans. If industry fails to act voluntarily, it will now be possible to set such standards for all energy related products including products which have a significant indirect impact on energy consumption during use, such as water-using devices and windows. Today's vote allows a 1st reading adoption as the Member States have signalled their agreement.

European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy and Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, responsible for energy policies stated jointly: *"Excellent cooperation between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament allowed for a further step towards a 'low carbon' future. We need more ecological innovation to fight climate change but also to overcome the current economic downturn. Today's decision will open up new business opportunities in particular for small and medium sized enterprises and for further cost efficient energy savings."*

The **Ecodesign Directive** so far allowed setting compulsory minimum ecodesign requirements for energy-using products. The directive will be extended to all **energy-related products** including products which do not consume energy during use but have an indirect impact on energy consumption. For example, water-saving taps and shower heads can reduce water consumption and therefore the energy used for hot water, and by consequence save resources and money, without altering the user's perceived well-being. As an example, it is estimated that if the share of replacement windows being double-glazed would increase by 30%, it would allow additional energy savings of 55,000 GWh (27 Mt CO₂, or 2 to 3 nuclear power plants) by 2020.

The key principles of the Directive however remain unchanged. **Minimum Ecodesign requirements** can be complemented by voluntary benchmarks. Ambitious voluntary agreements by industry may be an alternative to regulation. Next to minimum requirements, the revised directive also defines **voluntary benchmarks of environmental performance**, achieved by highly performing products.

Next steps

In 2011, the Commission will present the 2nd Working Plan of the Ecodesign Directive. The 1st Working Plan, published on 21 October 2008, is valid for the period 2009-2011.

In 2012, the Commission will review the effectiveness of the Ecodesign Directive. On this basis, the Commission will assess the appropriateness of further extending the scope of the Directive to non energy related products.

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/environment/sip/sip_a2_ecodesign_en.htm