

'ECOmise it': New framework for energy labelling

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Energy labelling is very well established as an instrument for informing consumers about the energy efficiency of appliances. The scale from green to red and the corresponding letters A to G provide information on the energy consumption of washing machines, etc., before they are purchased. In future, this label will not only be attached to other types of equipment, such as televisions, but will also include new classes. There are also new requirements for suppliers and dealers.

'Directive 2010/30/EU on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by energy-related products' (Energy-Labeling Directive), adopted in June 2010, replaces the previous 'Directive 92/75/EEC'. For a long time, the latter provided the legal framework for preparing product group-specific specifications for energy consumption labelling. Energy labelling has become familiar thanks largely to the labels on large household appliances (see inset for a list of product groups affected to date).

Amongst other things, the recast of the Energy-Labeling Directive will assist harmonisation with the Ecodesign Directive which, following an extensive research and approval process, lays down the legally binding minimum requirements for energy-related products. The pairing of minimum requirements and labelling should be further enhanced by the recast of the Energy labelling Directive. The EC can now essentially produce new specifications for suitable labelling for all energy-related products (except for vehicles, as with the Ecodesign Directive).

In practice, however, it is mainly the downstream product group-specific regulations (delegated acts) that are of importance as they precisely define the field of application and any exceptions from it, describe measurement and calculation methods and, above all, establish the assignment to energy-efficiency classes. Whether or not a particular label is considered useful for a product group and how it is designed will in future be discussed in the same context and with the same parties as the minimum requirements

Product Group
Household refrigerating appliances (Commission Regulation (EU) 1060/2010)
Household washing machines (Commission Regulation (EU) 1061/2010)
Household dishwashers (Commission Regulation (EU) 1059/2010)
Televisions (Commission Regulation (EU) 1062/2010)
Household tumble driers (Commission Directive 95/13/EC)
Household combined washer-driers (Commission Directive 96/60/EC)
Household lamps (Commission Directive 98/11/EC)
Household air-conditioners (Commission Directive 2002/31/EC)
Household electric ovens (Commission Directive 2002/40/EC)

Currently effective product group-specific requirements for energy labelling



for the corresponding product groups, in accordance with the Ecodesign Directive. This will ensure that the two instruments are harmonised with each other.

There are already drafts for new regulations on energy labelling in different product groups (see insert). The existing specifications for individual product groups will continue to be valid until they are superseded by new regulations. If energy-labelling regulations are issued for product groups for which labelling is already obligatory, a transition period will be granted during which the old and the new labels will be permitted in parallel.

In addition to expanding the field of application, a significant change is that the new Energy-Labelling Directive now has the option of extending the scale by classes A+, A++ and A+++. Also, compared to the old Energy-Labelling Directive, the number of classes is actually unchanged at seven, but may deviate if necessary. Consequently, a scale may range from 'A' to 'G' but it may also encompass classes 'A+++' to 'D'. A look at the existing regulations shows that the number and designation of the available classes may differ between product groups and even according to the energy efficiency of the appliances. The label for refrigerators in classes 'A+++' to 'C' goes down to class 'D' while the label

for less efficient appliances goes down to 'G'. In the case of televisions, according to the regulation, a standard label from 'A to G' applies to all appliances in those classes, while the scale goes down to 'F' for appliances in class 'A+', to 'E' for appliances with 'A++' and to 'D' for appliances in class 'A+++'. The distribution to the classes of appliances currently on the market will also differ greatly from product group to product group. With the new energy label for televisions, for instance, class 'A' is likely to be reserved for appliances that are actually relatively energy efficient, while for (compression) refrigerators and freezers, appliances with energy efficiency lower than class 'A' are no longer allowed on the EU market.

This presents a rather confused image for the consumer – a compromise resulting from a long and heated debate between the supporters of an 'upwardly open-ended' scale and those in favour of maintaining classes 'A' to 'G' with the occasional adjustment of the classes according to technological progress.

The new Energy-Labelling Directive also contains changes regarding the needs for reporting of energy efficiency as part of product advertising. For example, in advertising for a specific model, reference should be made to the product's energy class in the information on energy consumption or price.

The new Directive must be converted into national law by June 2011. However, the product group-specific requirements, which are crucial for manufacturers, dealers and consumers, become legally effective as Regulations, which across Europe immediately enter into force, without any further acts of law. In addition to the first adopted regulations on TVs, refrigerating appliances, washing machines and dishwashers, the publication of new regulations in the Official Journal of the European Union is still expected in 2011.

- **Boilers and combi boilers**
- **Water heaters**
- **Air conditioners**
- **Household tumble driers**

Draft energy-labelling regulations