

Proposal for a
DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
establishing a framework for the setting of eco-design requirements for energy related products

Position of the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic)

The recast of the existing Ecodesign Framework Directive (2005/32/EC) is part of the current EU Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production. It aims to set compulsory minimum standards for energy related products aimed to ensure the free movement of products and to improve their environmental performance.

The Commission has proposed in COM (2008) 399 extending the scope of the Ecodesign Framework Directive to include 'energy related' products, which is currently being discussed in the EU Council and EU Parliament.

In the implementation process the Commission will be assisted by a Regulatory Committee composed of representatives of Member States as well as a Consultation Forum. Cefic insists that not only the transparency of this process is ensured but that, above all, product requirements are based on objective and sound scientific criteria.

Critical issues:

- Scope: proposal to extend to all products: not only energy-using but also energy-related products
- Provisions on hazardous substances

Key messages

- Cefic supports the focus of the Ecodesign Directive on products that directly impact energy consumption during use and calls for a clear definition of 'energy-related' products (but no further extension of the scope).
- A decision whether or not to add energy-related products should be taken following in-depth cost-benefit analysis and impact assessment, with full attention to all principles of better regulation and sustainable development in its environmental, economic and social dimensions.
- Provisions should be based on sound science: Member States should not be allowed to prescribe technical or substance-related product requirements that do not pose a scientifically proven risk for consumers and/or the environment. This may lead to different national specifications and regulations.
- Cefic strongly opposes generating duplicative legislation for improving environmental performance based only on intrinsic properties of chemicals ignoring adequate risk management measures. The new EU chemicals regulation REACH requires such measures to be taken to ensure their safe use and the Ecodesign Directive should not set additional requirements for hazardous substances or mixtures.
- The Ecodesign of products should under no circumstances lead to distortions in the global market and put European products at a competitive disadvantage.
- Transparency is crucial in the implementation process of the Ecodesign Directive and, above all, product requirements need to be based on objective and sound scientific criteria.
- All relevant stakeholders (authorities, consumers, manufacturers, traders and environmental organisations) should be timely involved in the process.