



The EU directive on the Ecodesign of Energy-Using Products: A crucial tool to meet European environmental goals

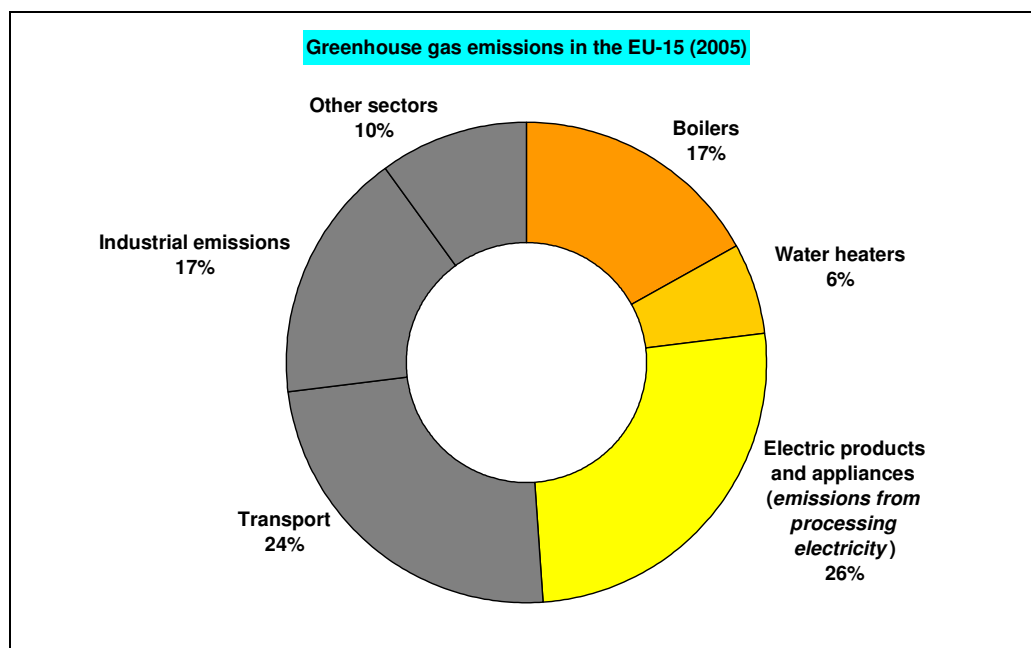
Introduction paper by ECOS , updated June 2009

Energy efficiency policies are among the cornerstones to meet our targets on climate change. Policies aiming to improve the energy performance of products and appliances are particularly crucial because of their cost-effectiveness and because they have been historically proven to work.

The European Commission, in cooperation with Member State governments, is currently taking key decisions on mandatory ecological requirements for a broad number of products such as boilers, lightbulbs, computers, air-conditioners, etc. sold on the market in all 27 Member States.

Provided these measures are ambitious enough, they could substantially improve the energy and environmental performance of products sold in the EU and have a decisive effect to achieve half of the EU 2020 target on CO₂ emission reductions.

These decisions are being taken under the 2005 **Directive on the Ecodesign of Energy-Using Products** (so-called “EuP”) Directive. This Directive – despite being less known than other climate policies – addresses half of all EU CO₂ emissions and is crucial to reverse business-as-usual trends.



Source: Study from VHK for the European Commission (www.ecoboiler.org)

According to independent studies produced as part of the implementation process of this Directive, through an ambitious Ecodesign policy for boilers and water heaters alone, the EU could cost-effectively save € 44 billion on energy bills. Through the same measure, it could also reduce its CO₂ emissions by 200 million tons a year by 2020 (as much as taking half of Western European cars off the road!).

However, the environmental NGOs monitoring this policy at Brussels and national level are concerned about pressure from some Member States and industry groups to weaken the provisions in several ways. If these efforts were successful, the achievement of Europe's climate change goals would be seriously at risk.

Most of the decisions on priority product groups are being taken right now. This is why it is of **utmost importance to put pressure on decision-makers** to make sure we do not miss this outstanding opportunity to cut CO₂ emissions drastically.

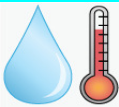






Overview of the decision-making process

This policy is implemented product by product. More than 30 product groups will be covered.

For each measure on a specific product category, here are the different stages:

- 1- The EU Commission launches a **preparatory study**, taking 12 –18 months, including stakeholder meetings.
- 2- The Commission issues a Working Document (WD) suggesting options, based on the study. One month later, the 27 Member States (MS), 14 industry groups, 4 green NGOs and 2 consumer organisations discuss the WD at the **Consultation Forum (CF)**.
- 3- The Commission launches an additional **social and economic impact assessment**, which might be used to change the ambition or timeline of the measure.
- 4- A finalised draft is submitted **for vote to the Regulatory Committee (RC)** composed of MS officials. Amendments can be discussed and a qualified majority is needed for the measure to pass.
- 5- The text is then transmitted to the European Parliament, which can exert a **'right of scrutiny'** (it may reject it and ask the Commission to work on a new version of it). WTO is also notified.
- 6- The measure is published in the EU Official Journal and shall be implemented in all Member States.

Where we stand for some key product groups (bold = still under discussion)

	<p>Heating equipment – Difficult process dominated by delays and country-specific concerns. The stock of our boilers and water heaters is responsible for 25% of all CO₂ emissions, as much as road transport. Appropriate requirements (like banning non-condensing boilers and promoting solar) could reduce energy consumption of household heating by a third. These measures are finally expected to be decided on by the end of 2009.</p>
	<p>Lighting – Measures were passed in 2009 on domestic, office and street lighting. They will phase-out incandescent lightbulbs between 2009– 2012, but leave many halogen alternatives on the market. The potential savings are large (equivalent to the household electricity consumption of Belgium and Portugal for domestic lighting alone), but they could have been twice as high.</p>
	<p>Electronic products – TVs, computers, games consoles, etc... are contributing to a rapidly growing energy use, annihilating the electricity savings made in the past on other appliances. TVs are now covered by an Ecodesign measure discussed in 2008, which does not push manufacturers as far as would be possible. Computers should be discussed in September 2009, DVD players and game consoles in 2010 or 2011.</p>
	<p>Standby losses – A horizontal measure limiting the standby losses of a broad range of products was the first positive outcome of this Ecodesign policy in 2008. The measure is ambitious, but hard-off switches will not be mandatory and products connected to a network (Internet or a service provider) have not been covered yet.</p>
	<p>White goods – Fridges, freezers, washing machines and dishwashers were discussed in the end of 2008, leading to a harsh dispute on the revision of the A-G Energy Labelling. This issue is not settled yet, thus putting at risk the Ecodesign process and fair provision of information to consumers on the most efficient models.</p>
	<p>Air-conditioners – These fast expanding products were discussed in June 2009. The EU is lagging far behind other countries (like Japan) to set stringent Ecodesign measures. The vote by Member States is expected in end of 2009. The potential electricity savings is huge, and the refrigerant leakages are also an important concern.</p>
	<p>Electric motors – Industrial motors surprisingly consume as much electricity as the whole Western European residential sector. The measure passed in 2009 introduced an original scheme to impose an optimised use of motors through variable speed drives. It could save as much as 60 million tons of CO₂ / year by 2020.</p>

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO GET INVOLVED

ECOS, EEB, WWF, Friends of the Earth and INFORSE are monitoring this policy on behalf of Environmental NGOs. Campaign website and blog: www.coolproducts.eu . Resources for experts: www.env-ngo.eup-network.eu. Contact: Edouard Toulouse at ECOS edouard.toulouse@ecostandard.org