

Ecodesign regulation: Council adopts position

The Council has adopted its position ('general approach') on the proposed regulation establishing a framework for setting eco-design requirements for sustainable products. The new regulation will replace the existing 2009 directive and enlarge the scope to set environmental sustainability requirements for almost all kind of goods placed on the EU market. It establishes a Digital Product Passport and sets out rules regarding transparency about and prohibition of the destruction of unsold consumer goods.

The Council position improves the framework for the Commission empowerment on the setting of eco-design requirements and reinforces the ambition of this regulation through a direct ban on the destruction of unsold textiles (with an exemption for micro and small enterprises and a transition period for medium sized companies). It excludes motor vehicles from the scope of the directive and gives companies a minimum time to adapt to new requirements coming from the Commission.

If we want really sustainable European products on the market, we need to address the issue from the starting point: their design. The Ecodesign regulation will make sure that products sold in the EU market are fit and ready for the green transition.

Ebba Busch, Swedish Minister for Energy, Business and Industry and Deputy Prime Minister

Eco-requirements and digital passport

The eco-design regulation will be applicable to almost all categories of products. It establishes a harmonised framework for setting requirements for specific product groups to make them both energy- and resource-efficient (as was the case in the existing 2009 directive) but more durable, reliable, reusable, upgradable, repairable, recyclable and easier to maintain. The Commission can propose new requirements through delegated acts when new kinds of products or technologies require it.

The regulation also aims to facilitate the movement of such products in the Single Market. A new "Digital Product Passport" will provide information about products' environmental sustainability. It will help consumers and businesses make informed choices when purchasing products and help public authorities to better perform checks and controls. The proposal also establishes provisions on transparency and prevention of destruction of unsold consumer products and green public procurement.

The Council's position

The Council position clarifies how member state experts, but also other stakeholders such as industry, should be involved when the future eco-design requirements are developed. It also clarifies the criteria and aspects that should be considered before eco-design requirements are developed.

The general approach introduces a direct-ban on the destruction of textiles, footwear and apparel, with a 4-year exemption for medium-sized companies, and a general exemption for small and micro companies. The ban tries to reduce the environmental impact of clothes or accessories that are produced but never used, particularly since the rapid growth of online sales. This amounts to a loss of valuable economic resources as goods are produced, transported, and afterwards destroyed without ever being used for their intended purpose.

The Council position excludes motor vehicles from the groups of goods covered by this directive, since specific laws address the environmental impact of automobiles.

Finally, the general approach of the Council provides a minimum transition period of 18 months after the entry into force of the delegated act setting out eco-design requirements before it starts applying, thus giving economic operators time to adapt to the new requirements. Member states are also given 2 years to adapt and adopt the necessary national measures, including those relating to market surveillance and fines.

Background

The current Ecodesign Directive 2009/125/EC has established energy efficiency requirements covering 31 product groups. According to the Commission's calculations, this saved EUR 120 billion in energy expenditure and led to a 10% lower annual energy consumption by the products under its scope. The new proposal builds on the existing Ecodesign Directive, but extends it to cover most categories of products (only exempting food, feed, medicine and veterinary products and motor vehicles) and will also include requirements such as product durability, reusability, upgradability, and reparability; presence of substances that inhibit circularity; energy and resource efficiency; recycled content, remanufacturing, and recycling; carbon and environmental footprints and information requirements, including a Digital Product Passport.

Next steps

The general approach agreed today formalises the Council's negotiating position. It provides the Council presidency with a mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament, which will start as soon as the Parliament adopts its position.

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