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## EuP directive: a test case for climate policy



By Ralf Lottes, ECOS

Climate change threatens the lives of millions. High energy prices impact economies and household bills. Against this background, the EU faces key decisions on the implementation of the 2005 framework directive on the eco-design of energy using products (EuP). This will set mandatory ecological requirements for many electric appliances and heating equipment sold in the internal market.

Heating appliances such as boilers and water heaters are responsible for more than half of Europe's primary energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in households. Through good efficiency requirements for these widely used products, the EU could cost-effectively reduce its overall greenhouse gas emissions by a striking 5 per cent – most of its Kyoto protocol target. Twice this amount could be achieved if the stock of these products was set at the best available technology level.

Unfortunately the level of ambition has so far been low. In a debate being held without public and media scrutiny, many member state representatives appear reluctant to back some of the European commission's most helpful proposals. In some cases, the standards that are being discussed are hardly an improvement on the status quo.

This is unacceptable. Consumers are eager to "do their bit", and to save energy and money on bills. A recent Eurobarometer survey revealed most EU citizens consider climate change a serious problem and wish the EU would do more to fight it. Member states need to stand up to this challenge.

Efficient systems based on gas condensing boilers, heat pumps and solar panels should prevail. And in setting eco-design requirements on boilers and water heaters it is also important to take into account air quality issues, which seriously affect the health of millions of European citizens.

Energy labels for these products, comparable to the well-known fridge "A-G" energy label, are also being discussed. Such a label will boost awareness, enable governments to set fiscal incentives and taxes based on eco-performance, and drive manufacturers to innovate through greener products.

But labels must allow comparison between all heating technologies, regardless of the fuel source. Only a single labelling scheme will allow consumers to find the most efficient and green system across fuels and technologies.

The label must be simple and clear. The successful and clear A-G system should continue. The EU should not introduce misleading A+, A++ and A+++ categories. These would lead consumers to believe an A-rated boiler is a very efficient product, which would not be the case. The label should also distinguish between climate zones as a way to promote renewable-based equipment.

For ECOS, a European non-profit organisation representing environmental NGOs in the EuP process, the EuP directive needs to be taken seriously. It is a genuine test case for EU climate policy. Member states must stop watering down requirements and live up to the challenge of climate change.

[www.ecostandard.org](http://www.ecostandard.org)