



SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Sustainable growth is one of the main objectives of the European Union. Faced with a global scarcity of natural resources, 'doing more with less' has become the main challenge for producers and consumers. To address this challenge during a period of rapid climate change and growing demand for energy and resources, the EU has introduced a whole range of policies and initiatives aimed at sustainable consumption and production. These should improve the overall environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle, stimulate demand for better products and production technologies, and help consumers make informed choices.

LEGAL BASIS

Articles 191 to 193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Action Plan

In July 2008, the Commission proposed a package of actions and proposals on SCP and Sustainable Industrial Policy (SIP) ([COM\(2008\)0397](#)), which aimed to improve the environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle, to increase consumer awareness and demand for sustainable goods and production technologies, to promote innovation in EU industry and to address international aspects. These proposals build on and complement existing EU policies such as the Integrated Product Policy (IPP), which was the first to officially introduce Life Cycle Thinking (LCT) into European policies. The aim of LCT is to identify potential improvements to goods and services which would lower environmental impacts and reduce the use of resources across all stages of the life cycle of a product or service (raw materials/supply chains/product use/end-of-life: the effects of disposal and possibilities for re-use or recycling). The SCP Action Plan led to initiatives in the following areas: extension of the Eco-design Directive, revision of the Ecolabel Regulation, revision of the Eco-management and Audit Regulation, legislation on Green Public Procurement, the Resource Efficiency Roadmap, and the Eco-Innovation Action Plan.

These instruments are an integral part of the EU's renewed Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), the 2009 review of which reinforced the EU's long-standing commitment to meeting the challenges of sustainable development, while recognising the importance of strengthening cooperation with partners outside the EU, for instance through the UN's Marrakech Process.



B. Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe

Following on from the Europe 2020 flagship initiative on resource efficiency, which calls for a strategy to define medium- and long-term objectives for resource efficiency and the means of achieving them, the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe was launched in 2011. It proposes ways to increase resource productivity and decouple economic growth from resource use and its environmental impact (See also the Fact Sheet [2.5.6](#), on Resource efficiency and the Circular Economy).

C. Ecolabelling and energy labelling

Labelling provides crucial information that enables consumers to make informed choices. The European Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme established in 1992 to encourage businesses to market products and services that meet certain environmental criteria. The criteria are set and reviewed by the EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB), which is also responsible for the associated assessment and verification requirements. They are published in the Official Journal of the European Union. Products and services awarded the Ecolabel carry the flower logo, allowing consumers — including public and private purchasers — to identify them easily. The label has so far been awarded to cleaning products, appliances, paper products, clothing, home and garden products, lubricants and services such as tourist accommodation. Ecolabel criteria are not based on one single factor, but on studies which analyse the impact of a product or service on the environment throughout its life cycle. The 2008 revision of the Ecolabel Regulation ((EC) No 66/2010) aimed to promote the use of the voluntary Ecolabel scheme by making the rules less costly and less bureaucratic to apply.

On 30 June 2017, the Commission presented the conclusions of its evaluation ('fitness check') of the Ecolabel Regulation. It found that the regulation is relevant, broadly coherent and delivers EU added value. However it also concluded that the regulation is partly effective (as it enables enhanced environmental performance for products carrying the label, but criteria may not be adequate and uptake remains low for some product types) and partly efficient (as costs for compliance may act as a barrier to participation in some cases). Directive 92/75/EEC introduced an EU-wide energy labelling scheme for household appliances (white goods), under which labels and information in product brochures provide potential consumers with energy consumption rates for all models available. Since its introduction in 1995, the EU Energy Label has become a widely recognised and respected guide for manufacturers and consumers. In June 2010, the Energy Labelling Directive (2010/30/EC) was revised in order to extend its scope to a wider range of products, including energy-using and other energy-related products. On 15 July 2015, the Commission proposed a return to a single 'A to G' labelling scale. New energy labelling requirements for individual product groups have been created under the Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 of 4 July 2017 setting a framework for energy labelling and repealing Directive 2010/30/EU. Concretely, from 2021 onwards, five product groups (fridges, dishwashers, washing machines, TVs and lamps) will be 'rescaled': a product showing an A+++ energy efficiency class for example will become a B class after rescaling, without any change in its energy consumption. The A class will initially be empty to leave room for more energy efficient



models. This will enable consumers to distinguish more clearly between the most energy efficient products.

D. Eco-design

The Eco-design Directive ensures the technical improvement of products. Directive 2005/32/EC establishes a framework for setting eco-design requirements applicable to energy-using products (EuP), amending Directives 92/42/EEC, 96/57/EC and 2000/55/EC on energy efficiency requirements for products such as boilers, computers and televisions. Several implementing measures for the 2005 directive have meanwhile been adopted by the Commission under a comitology procedure. The 2009 revision (Directive 2009/125/EC) of the 2005 directive extended its scope to energy-related products other than energy-using products; these are products that do not consume energy during use but which have an indirect impact on energy consumption, such as water-using devices, windows and insulation material. In 2012, the Commission published a review of Directive 2009/125/EC which concluded that there was no need for an immediate revision of the Eco-design Directive or for its scope to be extended to non-energy related products.

E. Eco-management and Audit (EMAS)

The EMAS is a management tool enabling companies and other organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance. The scheme has been available to companies since 1995, but was originally restricted to those in industrial sectors. Since 2001, however, EMAS has been open to all economic sectors, including public and private services. In 2009, the EMAS Regulation ((EC) No 1221/2009) was revised and modified with the aim of further encouraging organisations to register with EMAS. This revision of the EMAS Regulation has improved the scheme's applicability and credibility and strengthened its visibility and outreach. In 2017, Annexes I, II and III of the EMAS Regulation were amended to include the changes associated with the revision of the ISO 14001:2015 standard. Regulation (EU) 2017/1505 amending these annexes entered into force on 18/09/2017.

F. Green Public Procurement (GPP)

GPP is a voluntary policy supporting public authorities in the purchase of products, services and works with a reduced environmental impact. The concept of GPP has been widely recognised in recent years as a useful tool for driving the market for greener products and services and reducing the environmental impacts of public authorities' activities. National Action Plans (NAPs) are the means by which Member States implement GPP. Two public procurement directives adopted in 2004 (Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC) were the first to contain specific references to the possibility of incorporating environmental considerations into the contract award process, for instance through the inclusion of environmental requirements in technical specifications, the use of ecolabels or the application of award criteria based on environmental characteristics. The three directives adopted in February 2014 as part of the reform of public procurement under the Single Market Act — Directives 2014/24/EU (the Classic Directive), 2014/25/EU (the Utilities Directive) and 2014/23/EU (the Concessions Directive) — will simplify the relevant procedures by improving the conditions for business to innovate and encouraging wider use of green public



procurement, thus supporting the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy.

In 2008, the Commission published a communication entitled 'Public procurement for a better environment' ([COM\(2008\)0400](#)), which set out a number of measures to be taken to support the implementation of GPP by Member States and individual contracting authorities. As a result, EU GPP criteria have been developed as part of the voluntary approach to GPP. To date, 21 sets of GPP criteria have been published for selected sectors such as transport, office IT equipment, cleaning products and services, construction, thermal insulation, and gardening products and services.

G. Eco-innovation Action Plan (EcoAP)

The EcoAP launched by the Commission in December 2011 is the successor to the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) ([COM\(2004\)0038](#)), and builds on the experience of the latter. The ETAP was aimed at boosting the development and use of environmental technologies and improving European competitiveness in this area.

The EcoAP is mainly linked to the Innovation Union flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy. It is intended to expand the focus of innovation policies towards green technologies and eco-innovation, and to highlight the role of environmental policy as a factor for economic growth. It also targets specific eco-innovation barriers and opportunities — especially those not covered by more general innovation policies.

The EcoAP is a broad policy framework that can be financed from different sources. From 2014 to 2020, the main source of support will be Horizon 2020. Other sources include European Structural and Investment Funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, the LIFE programme for the environment and climate action, COSME and the common agricultural policy. A significant proportion of the financing available to eco-innovative businesses will come from new financial instruments developed by the Commission to offer them debt and equity facilities.

In recent years, many of the EcoAP goals have come together in the concept of the circular economy — an economy that learns from nature in that it wastes nothing. Eco-innovation is key to delivering many aspects of the circular economy: industrial symbiosis or ecologies, cradle-to-cradle design and new, innovative business models, etc. (See also the Fact Sheet [2.5.6](#), on Resource efficiency and the Circular Economy).

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Parliament has expressed its support for the SCP Action Plan and its components on many occasions. During the 2009 revision of the Eco-design Directive, Parliament successfully strengthened the concept of life-cycle analysis, and in particular the notion of resource and material efficiency. Parliament also succeeded in inserting detailed provisions on small and medium-sized enterprises and on consumer information. The extension of the scope of the directive to include energy-related products has also been strongly supported by Parliament.

Parliament has played a significant role in the successive introduction of provisions allowing greener procurement in public procurement directives. In the last revision of the public procurement directives adopted in 2014, Parliament supported, inter alia,



the introduction of the new 'most economically advantageous tender' (MEAT) criterion in the award procedure. This will enable public authorities to put more emphasis on quality, environmental considerations, social aspects and innovation, while still taking into account the price and life-cycle cost of what is procured.

On 24 January 2006, Parliament signed an EMAS Statement, pledging itself to ensure that its activities are consistent with current best practices in environmental management. In 2007, it obtained ISO 14001:2004 certification and received EMAS registration. Parliament also applies green public procurement.

The EcoAP was welcomed by Parliament in its resolution of 17 October 2013. Parliament emphasised the potential synergy effects of eco-innovation for sustainable job creation, environmental protection and the reduction of economic dependency. Furthermore, the resolution emphasised the cross-cutting policy character of eco-innovation and the need to mainstream eco-innovation in all policy areas. In this context, Parliament welcomed the eco-innovation funding possibilities under Horizon 2020, COSME, LIFE and the common agricultural policy, and emphasised the role of emerging EU financial instruments as vehicles for the Innovation Union and Resource-Efficient Europe flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy.

During the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework for 2014 to 2020, Parliament called for an increase in the EU's long-term budget for the period in the light of the ambitious targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy for sustainable growth and jobs. During the negotiations on specific programmes, Parliament managed to have eco-innovation added to the investment priorities eligible for financing from the European Regional Development Fund.

Parliament also adopted a legislative resolution on 13 June 2017 on simplifying energy labelling for home appliances to a scale from A to G, enabling customers to choose products that reduce energy consumption and their energy bills.

In its resolution of 4 July 2017 on a longer lifetime for products: benefits for consumers and companies, Parliament called on the Commission to improve product durability information by considering launching a voluntary European label covering, in particular, the product's durability, eco-design features, upgradeability in line with technical progress and reparability.

In June 2017, Parliament published a study on GPP, which examines the current use and opportunities of GPP in the EU, in the context and as a follow-up to the Commission's EU action plan for the circular economy. The study identified environmental benefits for citizens, as well as gains for employment and the overall economy at European level. This is because in European countries the public sector accounts for more than 25% of total employment. Every year, more than 250 000 public authorities in the EU spend around 14% of GDP on the purchase of services, works and supplies. Through their procurement policies, public authorities can significantly contribute to the circular economy by procuring more environmentally friendly products and energy, improving functional use and reuse, and encouraging high value recycling.

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