Environment: integrated product policy, life-cycle and sustainable development

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The Commission presents a staff working document accompanying its report on the state of implementation of integrated product policy (IPP). To recall, IPP seeks to minimise the environmentally negative impacts of products by looking at all phases of a product's life-cycle and taking action where those impacts can be reduced best and most cost–effectively. This report examines the following topics:

- IPP approach
- EU IPP strategy
- establishing the framework conditions for continuous environmental improvement
- developing a focus on particular products
- co-ordination and integration

In the last 6 years, the IPP approach has been successfully integrated in the activities of regulators and relevant stakeholders. These principles are also the pillars of the 2008 SCP/SIP Action Plan. Life-cycle thinking is widely applied in EC environmental legislation (i.e. Ecodesign Directive) and commonly used in national policies and measures by Member States. Industries make use of the principle as well, not only to comply with the legislation in force, but also to understand better the impact of the products they produce on human health and the environment.

The report states that by promoting the continuous improvement of the environmental performance of products and organisations, IPP has fulfilled its promise and contributed to promoting the perception that the environment is an opportunity and no longer an obstacle. The SCP/SIP Action Plan is carrying forward the process initiated with the IPP Communication (COM (2003)0302) with the aim of further unlocking market potentials for more sustainable products and promoting smarter consumption.