EU Ecolabel

2008/0152(COD) - 30/06/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a report on the review of implementation of Regulation (EC) No 122/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) and Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the EU Ecolabel.

EMAS (established in 1995) and the EU Ecolabel (created in 1992) are integrated parts of the product policy framework regarding sustainable consumption and production. In 2013, the Commission committed to undertaking **a fitness check** (evaluation study and stakeholder consultation) of the EU Ecolabel and EMAS examining the two schemes in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and their EU value added.

1) Evaluation of the two systems: the fitness check confirms **the useful role** of the schemes as voluntary instruments for businesses that facilitate transition to a circular economy and provide information on environmental performance of products and organisations to consumers and in business-to-business transactions.

However, it identifies clear limitations of the two instruments given their voluntary nature and the limited level of uptake for a number of product groups and the low awareness of the two schemes.

The limited use of the instruments reduces their overall efficacy:

the uptake of EMAS and the EU Ecolabel is not sufficient to achieve significant changes in overall consumption and production patterns;

for EMAS additional barriers are a: lack of integration into public policy in the form of incentives and relief from other regulatory requirements and the existence of a globally recognized and less demanding environmental management system (ISO 14001).

A full quantitative cost/benefit assessment has not been possible. However, 79% of the EU Ecolabel stakeholders found that the EU Ecolabel was a valuable tool and 95% wanted to keep it either as it is or with changes. At the same time, more than 70% of all EMAS organisations surveyed found that they had improved or significantly improved performance on energy efficiency, use of materials, water consumption and waste production.

Since the schemes have not achieved major uptake across **Europe it is difficult to demonstrate full EU added value**.

2) Improving the effectiveness of the systems: the Commission considers it necessary to adopt a more focused approach to maximize impacts on the ground. **With respect to the EU Ecolabel Regulation scheme**, the Commission will take a more strategic approach, which will include:

the definition of product groups, including streamlined criteria for selecting and discontinuing products and a more targeted approach that involves the bundling of closely related product groups where appropriate (e.g. various paper-related products with high potential such as newsprint and tissue paper);

the discontinuation of the following product groups: flushing toilets and urinals, sanitary tapware and imaging equipment, as those product groups have very limited uptake;

setting specific operational objectives, targets and adequate monitoring activities;.

a communication strategy, towards both producers and consumers, identifying target audiences;

examining options to reduce administrative and verification costs;

best practices to increase the role of the EU Ecolabel in public procurement as well as a benchmark for environmental excellence;

preparatory studies on product groups jointly for green public procurement, ecodesign, energy labelling and Ecolabel tools;

improving consistency between the EU Ecolabel and existing national/regional labels.