EC/United States agreement: energy efficient labelling programmes for office equipment, Energy Star

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AIM: To conclude an agreement with the United States on the coordination of energy-efficient product labelling by means of the Energy Star label. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 2001/469/EC concerning the conclusion on behalf of the European Community of the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the European Community on the coordination of energy-efficient labelling programmes for office equipment. CONTENT: The purpose of the Agreement, which has a term of five years, is to establish coordination of programmes for the labelling of energy-efficient products between the United States and the Community. The aim of these programmes is to maximise energy savings and environmental benefits by stimulating the supply of energy-efficient products and the demand for such products and particularly by encouraging industry to manufacture and sell energy-efficient products. The labelling programme will use a single standard, namely the Energy Star standard, which is the property of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the United States. Under the terms of the Agreement, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of the products in question will be registered on a voluntary basis as participants in the programme and will then be authorised to use the Energy Star logo to identify their products if these comply with the required specifications described in Annex C to the Agreement (monitor screens, for example, should be able to switch to standby mode with reduced energy consumption). The products covered by the Agreement are essentially the items of office equipment listed in the annex (monitors, computers with their operating systems, fax machines, scanners, photocopiers and printers). Management entities will be responsible for administering the Energy Star labelling programme for the relevant products (the Commission on the Community side and the EPA on the U.S. side). Besides the registration of participants in the labelling programme and the constant updating of participant lists, the Agreement also includes the following provisions: 1. It gives the parties the option of amending product specifications by agreement and in accordance with a precisely defined procedure, with a view to adapting them to the latest technological developments. 2. It provides for the implementation by each party of measures to educate consumers and to make them aware of the Energy Star label and the environmental benefits of products bearing the label. 3. It provides for coordination of the measures taken by each side through the creation of a Technical Commission, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Agreement. The Technical Commission will comprise members of each management entity, and its main task will be to ensure compliance with the technical specifications described in the Agreement and to combat imitations of the Energy Star logo. ENTRY INTO FORCE: The Agreement will enter into force when all the requisite procedures have been completed by both the European Community and the United States.