

Energy efficiency: requirements for ballasts for fluorescent lighting

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The committee adopted the report (codecision procedure, first reading) by Claude TURMES (Greens /EFA, L) approving the Commission proposal on energy efficiency requirements for ballasts for fluorescent lighting subject to a number of amendments aimed at clarifying the text and tightening up procedures by specifying certain time limits. The committee also adopted an amendment concerning the third set of maximum allowable power consumption values as defined in Annex IB of the proposal, introducing a provision whereby the Commission may on request, having obtained appropriate technical advice, permit specific EU-wide exemptions for certain uses of the most energy-efficient magnetic ballasts (as per limits for 'B1' ballasts in Annex IC) on the basis that electronic ballasts could not perform the function in question efficiently, from a purely technical standpoint. The committee felt that exceptions on strictly technical grounds may be required, for example, for ballasts for use in extremely cold conditions (i. e. outdoors) and that an application could therefore be made to the Commission to use the most efficient CELMA 'B1' magnetic ballasts for these purposes. The amendment also specified, however, that the Commission should, after a certain period of time, review the necessity for the above-mentioned exemption when making its assessment (as provided for in the proposal) of the results obtained as compared with those expected. Depending on the state of electronic ballast technology at the time of the assessment, the Commission could seek to remove the exemption clause. Another amendment introduced a new provision under which the Commission would assess the share of EU production of ballasts exported outside the EU and assess the possibility of applying to it the flexible mechanism defined within the Kyoto Protocol. The committee felt that the unilateral total phase-out of the European production of traditional ballast to be exported might simply mean that the traditional European product would be replaced by products from countries which allowed such productions, which would be counter-productive for European industry.