Revised community eco-label award scheme (regul. 880/92/EEC)

1996/0312(COD) - 13/05/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Danilo POGGIOLINI (PPE, I), the European Parliament amended the proposal for a revised Community eco-label award scheme. It proposed extending the eco-label scheme to services but considered that the Regulation should not apply to medical devices. Parliament proposed modifying the logo by inserting in it a maximum of three succinct information elements explaining to consumers the grounds for awarding the eco-label: e.g. low air pollution, energy efficiency, reduced toxicity. In order to promote the use of products bearing eco-labels, public administrations, both at Community and at national level, should set an example in their own procurement policies. Parliament opposed the setting-up of a private and independent European Eco-label Organisation to set eco-label criteria on behalf of the Commission. In order to avoid the expense and delays which this would entail, Parliament considered that the Commission ought instead to set up its own Technical Committee for the Eco-Label, composed of representatives of the competent national bodies, assisted by the Consultation Forum, whose members would come from environmental protection associations and associations representing consumers and industry. Parliament accepted the Commission's proposal that applicants for eco-labels be required to pay the cost of processing their applications, as well as an annual fee, but it proposed a three-band system (ECU 500 for an annual volume of sales up to ECU 500 000, ECU 2000 for an annual volume of sales up to ECU 2 000 000, and ECU 5000 for an annual volume of sales exceeding ECU 2 000 000). However, Parliament decided to reduce the annual fee by half in the case of SMEs and manufacturers in developing countries. In order to avoid sowing confusion among consumers and to prevent concealed protectionism, the Commission had proposed that existing national eco-labels should be replaced by the European eco- label within five years. In adopting an amendment by the Green Group, Parliament called for national eco-labels to be abolished only if an independent study showed that the environmental criteria applicable to the Community eco-label were at least as strict as the best national scheme. Parliament also extended the legal basis of the proposal, inserting Article 100a of the EC Treaty (internal market) in addition to Article 130s(1), to ensure that codecision by Parliament and the Council was applicable, and amended the relevant budget headings.