

DETE Public consultation on ecodesign for sustainable products – feedback from Glen Dimplex (13.09.22)

Glen Dimplex welcomes the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and its intention to further the objectives of the EU Green Deal. We would like to make the following comments:

A ‘one size fits all’ solution is not possible.

- A product group specific approach should be adopted considering the specific functions of certain technologies. Energy related products (such as heating appliances) form part of technical building systems, and as such, are not directly comparable with non-ErP goods or consumer-level products such as computers or mobile phones. As such, their sustainability and information requirements may not be the same of other products.

Requirements should be introduced based on relevance and proportionality to the expected benefits.

- Even within individual categories of products, their environmental impacts differ significantly. Product sustainability requirements must be evaluated to ensure they will ultimately lead to more sustainable products. The right balance needs to be found in relation to product performance, environmental impact and circularity; a thorough preparatory study and impact assessment phase is necessary in order to determine which requirements would contribute most to achieving the aims of the ESPR.

Sufficient time should be granted to allow industry to adapt.

- Given the implications for innovation, design and manufacturing of products, a suitable length of transition period should be allowed between the publication of the legislation and the application date for requirements. Industry will need to adapt processes and products, potentially involving complex supply chains.
- With the widening of the Ecodesign Directive scope and the inclusion of horizontal measures, all stakeholders should be consulted and be able to express their opinion to ensure a fair, transparent and open process.

Tracking substance of concern should not be duplicated.

- Substances of concern that are already regulated in other EU pieces of legislation (e.g., REACH, RoHS) should not be subject to additional restrictions under the ESPR; information already available should be able to be reused under the ESPR.
- The exact scope of ‘substances of concern’ should be clarified as the current definition under the ESPR is very broad and does not provide certainty on what will be regulated.

The Digital Product Passport proposal needs to be further defined and clarified to ensure that it delivers the expected benefits.

- If properly designed and implemented, the Digital Product Passport (DPP) has the potential to bring many benefits for the environment and industry. For example, the DPP could avoid the need for printed documents (e.g. user manuals etc.) in multiple languages, thus saving paper as well as resource and costs. It would also provide a way to improve transparency and facilitate the update of product information. However, the DPP proposal needs to be further defined and clarified to fully understand its impacts.
- There should be an appropriate and proportionate balance between sustainability, relevance of information for stakeholders able to access the DPP and avoiding over-burdening manufacturers and the supply chain on gathering unnecessary information for consumers. For example, manufacturers should not have to upload the same information to different platforms (e.g. EPREL, SCIP and DPP) as this could lead to errors and inconsistencies. There should be an automatic link between such platforms to avoid duplication and unnecessary administrative burden.

- The confidentiality of certain information provided in EPREL (e.g. technical documents for use by the European Commission and market surveillance authorities) should be protected.

The role and scope of Sustainable Labels needs to be clarified.

- The requirements under the ESPR for labels energy-related products is not clear. Article 14 states that “for energy-related products, where information on a relevant product parameter [...] cannot be incorporated in the energy label established pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2017/1369 the Commission [...] may, if appropriate, require the establishment of a label in accordance with this Regulation”. We strongly recommend conducting a specific study for energy-related products to assess the best way to present the required information to consumers.
- The interaction between new requirements and existing labels should be made clear; potential new or additional labels should not create confusion for customers and should not duplicate information. In the case of multiple labels, the role of each should be clear. Sustainability related information should be weighted and presented in such a way that consumers can easily understand it and make informed decisions. Comparison should be facilitated but only where appropriate. In the case of energy related products, energy efficiency will remain an important sustainability factor. Clarification should also be provided around the implications for products will already fall under the Energy Labelling Regulation (EU) 2017/1369.

Harmonised standards are the best tool for providing presumption of conformity.

- Technical standard and common specifications should continue to be provided by standardisation committees rather than by the European Commission as part of the Regulation. Requirements must be based on scientific assessment methods through recognised European or ISO /IEC/ITU international standards and must be reliable and ensure reproducible results.
- Standardisation bodies and global standards, which also rely on technical expertise from industry and relevant stakeholders, should be used in the design of the new requirements. Definitions must be clear, easily understandable, and where possible, based on related standards to avoid misinterpretation of the legal text. Self-declaration based for the CE marking should be maintained.
- Additionally, there is a need for a strong single market in order to avoid national inconsistencies or deviations from the Ecodesign from Sustainable Products Regulation which would cause undue burden for manufacturers. Overall, we see an increase of sustainable requirements at the national level which leads a regulatory fragmentation and unnecessary complexity and costs.

The methodology for assessing ecodesign compliance should be clearly defined and enforceable.

- The ESPR proposal lacks a clear methodology to assess ecodesign requirements, but it implies that a mix of Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) and circularity concepts should be used when assessing future product requirements. We believe that an indicative methodology to integrate sustainability and circularity aspects is essential to ensure the applicability of the ESPR. Based on experience of the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling legislation for energy-related products, we recommend that all requirements imposed by the ESPR should be measurable, enforceable, repeatable, and verifiable in order to preserve competitiveness.
- Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) and the Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) generated from them are already becoming established and internationally accepted methods for benchmarking and measuring or scoring products on an environmental impact scale. We would suggest using this system with clearly defined scope parameters would be the best-practice solution for assessment.

About Glen Dimplex

Glen Dimplex Group, a privately owned, Irish head-quartered business with a 50-year heritage in manufacturing, operates across an international footprint in heating and ventilation, flame, precision cooling and consumer appliances. Our portfolio of products and solutions spans the living and working environment, all created with a simple and shared mindset of empowering daily life and helping customers transition to a more sustainable world.

Glen Dimplex designs and manufactures a wide range of innovative and highly energy efficient electric heating & ventilation solutions (including heat pumps, direct electric heating, high heat retention storage heaters and ventilation, integrated with smart controls and Internet of Things capability) for domestic and light commercial buildings, for new build and retrofit applications.

In the heating & ventilation segment, Glen Dimplex has R&D, manufacturing and operations in multiple European countries including France, Germany, Ireland, Austria, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and the UK.

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