



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 6 December 2016
(OR. en)

15270/16

ENV 773

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: REFIT evaluation of the EU Ecolabel

- Information from the Czech delegation, supported by the Belgian, Bulgarian, French, Croatian, Italian, Austrian and Slovenian delegations

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Czech delegation, supported by the Belgian, Bulgarian, French, Croatian, Italian, Austrian and Slovenian delegations, on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 19 December 2016.

REFIT evaluation of the EU Ecolabel**- Information from the Czech delegation, supported by the Belgian, Bulgarian, French, Croatian, Italian, Austrian and Slovenian delegations -**

The Czech Republic would like to invite the (Environment) Council to consider the state of implementation of the EU Ecolabel scheme and its contribution to high environmental standards, and encourages the Commission to inform the Council about the results of the REFIT evaluation of the EU Ecolabel Regulation.

The EU Ecolabel scheme was established in 1992 and is currently based on Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel. The EU Ecolabel has achieved tangible results in terms of the number of licences issued for products in certain product groups. The EU Ecolabel is the only instrument of environmental protection policy that directly communicates with consumers and serves as a guarantee of high environmental performance aligned with high environmental standards comprising reduction of pollution, resources and energy consumption during the whole lifecycle. The EU Ecolabel also motivates and encourages the business sector to adopt environmental policy as part of the transition towards a circular economy.

Based on a voluntary principle, the EU Ecolabel provides a framework for innovations and front-runners beyond the legal requirements established through mandatory instruments such as the Ecodesign Directive. The EU Ecolabel is an ideal supplement as it covers products, such as cleaning products or paper products, and services, such as tourism and cleaning services, which are not included in other instruments. The EU Ecolabel is a perfect means for bringing high environmental standards closer to producers and consumers by providing easily accessible holistic information based on the whole lifecycle of a product. Through this holistic approach, criteria include environmental, health and quality issues and, to a certain extent, social aspects as well. The EU Ecolabel scheme should also be seen as a complementary tool to other instruments with a view to taking a further step towards the EU Circular Economy strategies and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU Ecolabel is a common instrument of the 28 Member States, together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and other non-EU countries, and it is used also by many companies outside the EU and thus helps to implement the high environmental standards set by the EU abroad as well. Consequently, the EU Ecolabel is especially important for Member States where the European Ecolabel is the only environmental label of ISO type I supported by national authorities.

Ecolabel criteria and eco-labelled products have also been important for purchase and tender offers for Green Public Procurement. With the New Public Procurement Directives, adopted in 2014, the connection has been further strengthened - public authorities are now able to require directly that bidders delivering goods fulfil the requirements of environmental labels.

The interim results of an evaluation study ¹ carried out in 2014 showed that 95 % of respondents supported the continuation of the scheme.

For this reason, we encourage the Commission to publish the results of REFIT evaluation of the EU Ecolabel Regulation as soon as possible and to provide a forum for further open discussion before any decision-making about the development of the EU Ecolabel.

We believe that this tool will continue to form an important part of EU environmental policy and that it will contribute to the EU transition towards a low-emission and circular economy and sustainable development overall.

¹ Project to Support the Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Ecolabel Regulation - ENV.A.1/SER/2013/0065r.