

## **EPEE solicits new ideas to enforce green product policy**

**27 February 2014** - The EU should consider creating a European enforcement authority for laws such as ecodesign and energy labelling, heard a debate organised by EPEE representing the heating and cooling industry, in Brussels on 19 February 2014. The debate was held on the fringes of an [international product policy conference](#) organised by the European Commission. In her introductory statement, Andrea Voigt from EPEE stated that market surveillance was one of the top priorities of the association as it ensures a level playing field for all manufacturers in Europe and contributes to guaranteeing the R&D and design investments made by the industry. She added that Market surveillance remains a cornerstone of the success of the Ecodesign and Energy labelling Directives.

Enforcement is one of four priorities for the European Commission in the context of product policy and efficiency, confirmed Paul Hodson, Head of Unit for Energy Efficiency. The other three are: energy efficiency in a 2030 energy and climate package, a revision of the existing energy label and potentially ecodesign laws, and a greater international focus with a view to minimising the burden on European business of different standards around the world.

Poor market surveillance and enforcement are a huge problem in Europe. Only five member states are “active” in enforcement and 10-25% of products are estimated to be non-compliant with ecodesign and energy labelling laws, according to a report by consultancy Ecofys. Yet these laws should deliver at least one-third of the EU’s projected energy saving to 2020, compared to business-as-usual, said Hodson.

Cost is a big barrier to proper enforcement, explained Tamara Janke from the Ministry of Environment, Climate Protection and the Energy Sector of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany, responsible for the organisation and planning of market surveillance. For example, a testing lab for vacuum cleaners can cost € 400,000 and each test thereafter another €4,000. Testing requirements should be designed more with market surveillance in mind, she suggested. This is even more so the case for complex products such as heating and cooling technologies.

Hans-Paul Siderius from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, who represents the Netherlands in EU ecodesign and energy labelling fora, proposed a pan-European enforcement authority to match a pan-European product policy, since according to him “Enforcement has lagged behind.”

Janke said cross-border enforcement even within the EU remains problematic, but Hodson was cautious, suggesting that the Commission’s energy department, as a relative newcomer to product policy, was not the department to propose it.

One delegate suggested that product testing could be done at European level – with the results valid in all member states – while national and regional agencies would still man the field for verification.

Siderius also advocated third party certification for selected products and suggested a central database into which manufacturers would upload product information when they place a product onto the market. Els Baert, representing manufacturer Daikin Europe, described ecodesign as a business opportunity and welcomed the idea of a central database, provided it remained voluntary.

Several delegates questioned where the funds for enforcement should come from. There was a general consensus among the panel that this cannot be left entirely to the private sector; the “neutral” public sector is essential.

Dr Zitouni Ould-Dada, representing UNEP, called for public-private partnerships to lead the global transformation of product markets to greater energy efficiency. UNEP has led the way with its enlighten programme and now hopes to extend that effort to other product groups, including air conditioners.

#### **About EPEE:**

The European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) represents the refrigeration, air-conditioning and heat pump industry in Europe. Founded in the year 2000, EPEE’s membership is composed of 40 member companies, national and international associations.

EPEE member companies realize a turnover of over 30 billion Euros, employ more than 200,000 people in Europe and also create indirect employment through a vast network of small and medium-sized enterprises such as contractors who install, service and maintain equipment.

EPEE member companies have manufacturing sites and research and development facilities across the EU, which innovate for the global market.

As an expert association, EPEE is supporting safe, environmentally and economically viable technologies with the objective of promoting a better understanding of the sector in the EU and contributing to the development of effective European policies. Please see our website ([www.epeeglobal.org](http://www.epeeglobal.org)) for further information.

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