
REVISION OF THE COMMUNITY ECO-LABEL CRITERIA FOR BED MATTRESSES

(Decision 98/634/CE)

MINUTES OF THE FIRST ADWG MEETING

28 march 2006

Paris (Saint Denis)

1. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. Introduction
2. Scope of the contract and time schedule
3. Presentation of the present bed mattresses
4. Discussion on each criteria : round table and opinions of the participants
5. Conclusions on criteria to be revised and time table
6. Any other business

The presentation reference is made to the PowerPoint presentation provided with this e-mail. The following minutes provide a reflection of the discussions in the AHWG and the conclusions drawn.

The results of the discussions and the input provided will be taken into account in finalising the draft report for the next meeting to be held in Brussels in October 2006.

2. PARTICIPANTS

List of the participants is available. File attached.

3. SCOPE OF THE CONTRACT

This minutes forms part of a project to prepare a draft Commission Decision establishing revised ecological criteria for the award of the EU Eco-label to mattress. This project has been assigned to AFNOR, the French competent body for the EC Eco label. The practical development of the project is carried out by CTBA (Centre Technique du Bois et de l'Ameublement / www.ctba.fr).

The project takes place within the framework of the EC Regulation 1980/2000 on a revised Community Eco-label award scheme.

The objective of the Community eco-label award scheme is to promote products which have the potential to reduce negative environmental impacts, as compared with the other products (functional unit) in the same product group, thus contributing to the efficient use of resources and a high level of environmental protection.

This objective shall be pursued through the provision of guidance and accurate, non deceptive and scientifically based information to consumers.

The environmental impacts shall be identified on the basis of examination of the interaction of the products with the environment, including the use of energy and natural resources, during the life cycle of the product.

The objective of this project is :

To provide a document which can be used as a basis for a draft Commission establishing revised criteria for the award of the Community Eco-label to bed mattresses.

Sub-objectives of this project (and corresponding time table) are :

In the phase 1 (2006) – 1 (or 2) meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

- To form an ad'hoc working group, with all relevant interest group, including industry, SMEs, trade unions, ...
- To evaluate the past, current and likely future success of the product group (bed mattresses), including the related potential environmental benefits,
- To establish, update and extend as appropriate market information and life cycle considerations,
- To present the results of these evaluations and estimate whether the ecological criteria related assessment, as well as compliance verification requirements should be either prolonged, withdrawn or revised.

In the phase 2 (2006- 2007) – 2 meetings of the Ad How Working Group.

- To develop a revised criteria proposal, covering the relevant environmental aspects related to the product group, that can be successfully proposed to the Eco-label Regulatory Committee,
- To prepare a list of relevant options for testing and methods the different proposed revised criteria,
- To prepare a user manual for applicants and competent bodies
- To prepare a final report including :
 - related documents used for completing the work and meeting the objectives, list of interested parties involved in the work or that have been consulted or expressed their opinion, executive summary.
 - Details of the proposed marketing and communication strategy.

4. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF THE PRODUCT GROUP

The report produced in 1998 by Tauw Milieu regarding LCA and criteria proposals gave an extensive and comprehensive definition of the scope. The product group “mattresses” was defined as follows :

Products providing a surface to sleep or rest upon, that are fit for use by human beings for a long period of time, consisting of a strong cloth cover filled with materials, and that can be place on an existing supporting bed structure. This includes framed sprung mattresses, which are defined as an upholstered bed base consisting of springs, topped with fillings, on a rigid frame to be used in a bed frame or free standing, combined with a mattress pad which is not intended to be used separately.

The product group bed mattresses consists of a variety of mattress types. Therefore, it is not possible to identify one “typical” mattress that covers the entire product group. Due to this diversity, the product group has to be divided into various categories.

- Latex mattresses (also called latex foam or cellular rubber)

- Polyether mattresses (also called PUR foam or cellular plastics)
- Spring interior mattresses (includes Bonnet, pocket spring, LFK, etc ..)
- Scandinavian mattresses / bdes (wood frame integrated with a spring system, with a mattress fixed on it. Box spring and mattress are not separable and are sold as one piece. The whole is covered with a thin replaceable mattress pad).
- Mattresses of other materials (e.g. cotton or coconut fibre core). Quid sofa bed ?

Permanent concern should be dedicated to the “fitness for use” property (see point 5).

Product excluded from the scope of the Eco label :

- Inflate air beds are excluded from the scope, as there are not meant to sleep for a long period of time (they will not meet the criteria “fitness for use”).
- Water beds are excluded from the scope, as the market for this type of product is below 3% of the demand.
- Mattresses used in hospital are excluded from the current scope.

Opened question raised during the meeting :

1. Would it be relevant to include in the scope the hospital bed-mattresses (hospital market may represent a market for green product (Green Procurement Policy)).
 - V Gourvès (CTBA) says that 80% of hospital mattresses have a **similar functional unit** than regular mattress, and could be include within the scope. For the rest of the market (corresponding to therapeutic mattress), it may be more difficult.
 - Flame retardants necessary for the product – Fire safety
 - ☞ CTBA will investigate the subject for the next meeting.
 - According to Austria, there is a need to qualify the functional unit with legal requirements (fire safety, ...) of hospital mattress.
 - EEB (Doreen Fedrigo) pointed out that an extra investigation should be done on the therapeutic mattress (ergonomic, ...) to identify whether there is no a possibility to include the product into the scope : considering the objective of the eco-label (to put forward good green practices, it may be logical to try to include such products)
 - ☞ CTBA will investigate the subject for the next meeting.
 - ☞ EEB will send to CTBA as a contribution a report on bed mattresses.
 - B Demarne (UNIFA) pointed out that there is a directive for medical devices. It is necessary to analyse the compliance of the requirement of this directive with those required for the ecolabel.
 - ☞ CTBA will investigate the subject for the next meeting.
 - EC and UK pointed out that medical devises are excluded from the scope of the Scheme.
 - ☞ CTBA will need to investigate the expansion of the scope to mattresses and bed bases for medical purposes bearing in mind the Medical Devices Directive
2. Considering the increasing concern of consumers for the health and health impact of consumer product (and particularly home used product), baby mattress manufacturers express a special interest on the Community Eco-Label. The relevance of integrating baby mattress in the scope of the product group is discussed during the meeting.
 - EUROPUR (Dr Hubert Creyf) asked about the possibility to incorporate health aspects. European Commission says that there is a room for health aspects.
 - Baby mattress are concerned with special specifications (air rate through the mattress, ...) that may be included in the part “fitness for use”
 - ☞ CTBA will investigate the subject for the next meeting with the collaboration of Okopol having information to supply.

3. Qualification of bed base :

- Suggestion is made to interfere in article 2 point 1 (Composition) and point 2 (Definition)
- Question is raised about wood bed base to be included within the scope.
 - ☞ *Okopol (Anne Ipsen) supplies to CTBA contribution from the Blue Angel Label, concerned with wood certification (or equivalent).*
 - ☞ *DK and Norway supplies to CTBA contribution from the Swann requirement.*

From a more general point of view, the Community Ecolabel criteria should be an harmonized compilation of criteria identified in national and other Ecolabel (Nordic, Blue Angel, NF Environnement, OEKOTEX, retailers (IKEA, ...) requirement ...)

☞ *CTBA will establish a compilation of all requirement, and propose a range of value to comply with. Contribution of interested parties is required to react and propose implemented values if necessary.*

4. MARKET INFORMATION

Please refer to the draft report available for the meeting.

All comments from interested parties and competent bodies are required, regarding :

- Updated data (consumption, import, export, ...)
- Development of the “eco-demand” and implementation of Green Procurement Policy, and corresponding development of eco-labelled products.
- Potential market for green house hold product

National particularities (comments and updated data are welcomed) :

- Germany will suffer from the decrease of the population and corresponding ageing; leading to a light decrease of the sales (- 50 000 units) but an increase of the quality,
- In France, mattress demand will still increase due to a higher birth rate than in other EU states. Ageing of the population will increase the demand of higher quality mattress, although the demand of low range product is increasing.
- The bed and mattress market in the UK will increase, and particularly for high range products,
- In Spain, the market will increase to an higher ranger of products,
- Eastern Europe countries, as Hungary or Poland, will probably boost the mattress market.

5. LISTING OF CRITERIA

The actual criteria were listed one by one and discussed in order to identify whether each should be maintained, withdraw or revised.

1. Latex foam

- DK suggests to reduce the limit value for extractable formaldehyde from 30 ppm to 20 ppm, considering the carcinogenic property of the substance (see information released from the Quality Association for Environmentally Compatible Latex Mattresses)
- OKOPOL suggests modification of the protocol of the test to assess the value (duration before measurement)
- Harmonization of requirement of existing labell (Eurolatex, QUL, ...) is required.

☒ CTBA will establish a compilation of all requirement (Eurolatex, QUL, ...), and propose a range of value to comply with. Contribution of interested (Europur, Ecopol) parties is required .

- VOC : OKOPOL suggests to identify the different VOC compounds which may have potential impact. Norway says that, regarding the severity of the criteria, it is not relevant to list the different VOC coupons.
 - ☒ CTBA will supply the group with back ground documentation on VOC and corresponding impact, ...: to analyze the pertinence of listing several VOC
 - when possible, use a EN standard rather than a national one when a method is given in eurolabel criteria

2. PUR foam

- An harmonization should be done with EUROPUR requirements.
 - ☒ CTBA will establish a compilation of all requirement (Europur, Blue Angel)
- It is suggested to collect the requirement of retailers (IKEA) : feasibility of the eco label : should be connected with retailer concern
 - ☒ EUROPUR send the IKEA requirement scheme to CTBA
- heavy metals : assessment method is analytical. A declaration is supplied by the producer.
- DK /Okopol suggests to ban Methylene Chloride (Dichloromethane), an R40 harmful substance for the use as a blowing agent.
- Flame retardants : UK should identify the incorporation rate of flame retardants in the PUR foam.
 - ☒ UK supplies contribution
- EEB is referring to a recent report (October 2005) regarding durability and chemical test on mattress.
 - ☒ EEB supplies CTBA with this report.
- Blowing agent : do we need to keep this criteria ?

3. Wire and springs

2 modifications should be brought to the text :

- Decrease / Decreasing should be replaced by Degrease / Degreasing (a)
- (b) : (...) with a galvanized (and not galvanic) metallic layer.
- According to a producer (Dunlopillo), **Leggett and Plat** (major producer and supplier of spring in the world) doesn't degrease the springs.

4. Coconut fibres

- FEAT, a enterprise aimed at recycling mattress in the UK, suggest to require only un-rubberised fibres, for easy end of life treatment (recycling).
- EEB suggest to progressively implement certification requirement (as the guarantee for sustainable management resources) for the 4, 5 (wood) and 6 (textiles) criteria.

5. Wood and particle board

- UNIFA suggests to keep the criteria as it is.
- EEB mentions a report referring to this subject.
 - ☒ *EEB supplies CTBA with this report.*
- Question is raised about the feasibility of requiring a 50% of E1 limit value for particle board (ie 4 mg/100 mg of dried particle board, or 1 ppm using the chamber method).
 - ☒ *A survey among particle board producer will be undertaken by CTBA. However, any contribution from interested part regarding this subject is welcome, and should be sent to CTBA.*

6. Textiles

Several competent bodies agree about the strictness of the criteria, that make it difficult to comply with. This is a major barrier for the non implementation of the Community Ecolabel for mattress among the producers.

- DK suggests to add an information to the consumer about the potential risk of permithrine for sensitive person.
 - ☒ *DK sends the description of the test results regarding the analysis of 19 mattress, revealing presence of permithrine.*
- EC stresses the strategy to support the promotion of the Eco-label products through related product groups. Alternative proposals (reflecting the experience of the CBs) to the existing criterion can be investigated during the revision process, without compromising the support to the use of EU Eco-labelled textiles.
- It should be studied with EN standard relative to mattress ticking : Ctba will suggest something for next meeting

7. Glues

- Austria : requirement on A Phrase
 - ☒ *CTBA will update the limit values considering the regulation (VOC, ...)*

6. SECURITY (SAFETY) AND FITNESS FOR USE - DURABILITY

Available European standards with regard to mattresses provide information on among others the definition of the fitness for use and corresponding test methods. These dates give a relevant idea of the degree of standardization required for mattress.

The standards cover the following topics :

- Requirements for mattresses and/or materials used in mattresses
- Test methods for mattresses and/or materials used in mattresses,
- Directives for the application and treatment of mattresses,
- Requirements for product information on mattresses.

A list of available norm in EU is attached to this document. This list is not exhaustive. Contribution of competent bodies is required to analyze these norm.

- Okopol suggests to add a criteria on ash (<1% for PUR, < 6% for latex) according to the EN1957 test.
- An harmonization of method for measuring the mattress would be welcome.
- Austria suggests to take into account ergonomic requirement.

7. INFORMATION ON THE PACKAGING

- Uk mentions to add the % of recyclable material
- NL suggests to inform about the Ecolabel directly on the mattress (and not on a plastic package)
- End of life of the mattress : the debate is opened to evaluation whether the end of life of mattress should be incineration or recycling.
- EUROPUR refers to a comprehensive study carried out by VITO, assessing environmental comparative impact of recycling and incineration.
☞ EUROPUR sends this report to CTBA.

We could also inform consumer how he could get rid of its mattress

From a general point of view, CTBA suggest to add criteria on **eco design** (considering than eco design is the methodology aimed at designing a new product while reducing environmental impact) in the decision.

- Is it relevant to add eco design criteria such as :
 - Mass of the product
 - Number of materials included in the product
 - Separability of materials
 - ... any other

☞ CTBA will elaborate more investigation with results based on LCA consideration, to identify the opportunity to add eco design criteria.