



European
Commission



30
YEARS

EU
Ecolabel
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Promoting a greener choice: EU Ecolabel turns 30

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#EUEcolabel

The 'flower' remains key tool in transition to climate neutrality.

by József Barna, Commission en Direct



On this day 30 years ago, the [EU Ecolabel](#) – or as it was called back then: the 'Community eco-label award scheme' – was born. Shining a spotlight on products and services with a proven low environmental impact, it has become a reliable point of reference for consumers over the years.

The EU Ecolabel was established on 23 March 1992 by the [Council Regulation](#) on a Community eco-label award scheme. According to the legislation, the purpose of the label was "to promote the design, production, marketing and use of products which have a reduced environmental impact during their entire lifecycle, and provide consumers with better information on the environmental impact of products."

Originally, the EU Ecolabel was meant to cover goods only, with the exception of food, drinks and medicines. Since 2003, however, criteria for services have also been introduced - first for tourist accommodations, followed by campsite services and indoor cleaning services. While new product groups have been continuously added, a few existing ones – where industry uptake was low – have been discontinued. Currently, the EU Ecolabel portfolio includes criteria for 24 product group categories.

Since 2010, the EU-level label of environmental excellence applies in all Member States as well as Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein. It is a voluntary scheme, which means that producers, importers and retailers can choose to apply for the label for their products. It promotes the circular economy by encouraging producers to generate less waste and CO2 during the manufacturing process, and also to develop products that are durable, and easy to repair and recycle.

Growing interest

The number of EU Ecolabel products has increased over the years, even during the pandemic, and now exceeds 83,500. "This clearly shows that there is growing interest from both manufacturers and consumers. And that is also a result of the hard work a very committed team in the Commission has done to boost uptake and awareness of the scheme," says Silvia Ferratini, coordinator of the EU Ecolabel scheme in DG ENV.

Countries with the highest number of EU Ecolabel products are: Spain (17,139), Italy (13,181), France (8,347), Germany (7,780) and Belgium (5,582). The product groups with the most 'labelled' products are indoor and outdoor paints and varnishes (38%), tissue paper and tissue products (17%), hard coverings (9%) and textiles (9%).

And what does the future hold for the label? "The EU Ecolabel will continue promoting the transition to a clean and circular economy, contributing to the Commission's zero pollution and climate neutrality goals. It will work in synergy with the new product policy initiatives expected this year, such as the new proposal of the Commission on the ecodesign for sustainable products regulation," says Silvia.

Currently, the focus is on promoting the existing portfolio, rather than enlarging it. "We want to increase both industry uptake and consumer awareness," she says.

There is room for improvement in this area as there is considerable variation between Member States in the extent of awareness of the EU Ecolabel. The percentage of people who have heard about it is highest in Luxembourg (62%), France (61%) and Denmark (51%), and lowest in Romania (13%), Bulgaria (14%) and the Czech Republic (16%).





Celebrating 30 years

For the anniversary, the team in DG ENV has prepared a campaign which includes posts on social media, articles published in magazines in Member States as well as a communication package made available for the competent bodies.

On 31 May, during EU Green Week, they will also launch a mobile Ecolabel showroom, the 'EU Showroom on Wheels', which will turn up at different events across Europe and finish its tour in Brussels on World Ecolabel Day, on 13 October.

Links

- [EU Ecolabel](#)
- [1992 Eco-label Regulation](#)
- [EU Ecolabel key figures](#)

ECOLABEL FUN FACTS

- The very first EU Ecolabel criteria were developed for dishwashers and washing machines in 1993.
- The EU Ecolabel was initially named 'a Community eco-label award scheme', which was changed to 'the EU Ecolabel' in the 2010 Regulation. It is also referred to as 'the flower' after its flower-shaped logo.
- In 2002, on the 10th anniversary of the EU Ecolabel, a fashion show was organised, featuring designer clothes made with eco-labelled fabrics by the best Danish fashion school graduates.
- At the same event, a competition was held for Brussels art school students. 100 participants had to create a poster featuring the EU Ecolabel logo and the different product groups.
- [10 years of EU Ecolabel event](#)