Public Consultation on new product priorities for the Ecodesign workplan

Input from The Netherlands

A End-use products

Product groups	Agree with identification of the end-use product?	Importance
Textiles and footwear	Yes	3 High
Furniture	Yes	3 High
Ceramic products	Yes	1 Low
Tyres	Yes	2 Medium
Detergents	Yes	2 Medium
Bed mattresses	Yes	3 High
Lubricants	Yes	1 Low
Paints and varnishes	Yes	2 Medium
Cosmetic products	Yes	2 Medium
Toys	Yes	2 Medium
Fishing nets and gears	Yes	1 Low
Absorbent hygiene products	Yes	3 High

Motivation end-use product groups

Textiles and footwear

Setting Ecodesign requirements for textiles and footwear should be the Commission's priority, as also set out in the EU sustainable textiles strategy. We would support measures on the following specific product aspects:

Microplastics: according to recent studies by TNO[1] and RIVM[2], textiles and clothing are an important source for microplastics pollution. Textile and clothing manufacturers can: 1) use materials that release fewer microplastic fibres; 2) prevent and limit microplastics emissions from textiles and clothing by setting industrial standards for fibre loss in textiles and clothing; 3) pre-wash garments on industrial sights and filter (and dispose) the microplastic from the disposed water. The NL therefore suggests to: 1) develop a uniform measuring method for microplastics in water[3], 2) set a maximum standard for fibre release which should be applied by textile and clothing manufacturers; 3) based on the industrial standard, include a mandatory standard for fibre release; 4) include industrial pre-washing criteria.

Chemical use: we ask to prioritize regulatory actions for minimizing and phasing-out the use of harmful substances in textiles, such as persistent hazardous substances. These are not only harmful to health and the environment[4][5], but also form an obstacle for recycling. New and legacy chemicals continue to be released into Europe's environment, adding to the total chemical burden on Europe's citizens and ecosystems.[6][7] Besides, the level of chemicals safety should not be lower

---

[1] Microplastics | TNO
[2] Measures against polluting microplastics from garments | RIVM
[3] Ontwikkeling van een thermo-analytische kwantificatie methode voor analyse van Microplastic Vezels uit textiel | TNO Publications
[4] https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe
[5] https://www.ecotex.nl/contents/nl/d837548_PFAS-en-gezondheidsrisico-in-textiel.htm
[6] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/oecd-guidelines-for-the-testing-of-chemicals_72d77764-en
[7] https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe

for recycle-based articles compared to the other products on the market. Special attention must be given to chemicals such as PFAS.

Minimum lifetime & quality requirements: in the current proposal, textiles is only considered for the availability of repair information, but not for the horizontal provision 'minimum lifetime and labelling'. But according to research by the European Environment Agency, the use time of clothes decreased by 36% over the last 20 years, with each garment used an average of seven or eight times. And 40% of all reasons for consumers discarding clothes are linked to (functional) changes of garments. We therefore suggest to include textiles under this requirement, for example by requiring that a textile product should at least be able to be washed a certain number of times. Other examples of minimum quality requirements could be shrinkage, colour fastness and pilling.

Sustainability label: we also call for a mandatory label to inform consumers in a direct, simple and comprehensive manner about both the environmental and social impacts of a garment at the moment of purchase. Consumers have a right to know what the environmental and social impact of their purchases is. Access to accurate information at the moment of purchase makes it easier for them to make sustainable choices. There is ample experience with initiatives at both national and EU level to improve transparency. The Ecolabel certificate, for example, indicates whether a certain product complies with environmental standards. However, current initiatives are voluntary and often fail to raise consumers' awareness or answer their questions. More transparency on both the environmental and social impact of garments is necessary, regardless of companies' actual performance. A single, uniform, mandatory labelling system at EU level (similar to, for instance, the 'traffic light' food label or the energy label) could give consumers a direct and simple indication of the sustainability of the clothing they are buying.

Recycled content: We very much welcome that textiles is included in the provision for recycled content. We would strongly urge the COM to include a minimum standard for recycled content in textiles and clothing. According to current studies[8] a lot of recyclate is used in the textile sector. Nevertheless, the percentage is still modest. Certainly closed-loop recycling is still limited: less than 1% of the total supply of textiles is recycled back into clothing.

Destruction of unsold goods: We would strongly support measures to avoid the disposal of unsold goods, via a ban, as it is unacceptable that products skip the use-phase entirely. This not in line with the principles of the circular economy.

Furniture

Setting Ecodesign requirements for furniture would contribute to decreasing their substantial environmental impact. Especially the upholstery (textile) contributes most to the impact, despite the relatively limited weight in a piece of seating furniture. In terms of contribution to environmental pressure, the usage of the following materials is disadvantageous: wood (chipboard) and polyurethane foam. End-of-life furniture is usually incinerated, recycling furniture is not common. Dutch recyclers have indicated that the usage of flame retardants in furniture and mattresses hinders the recycling of those product groups. For this reason, it should be considered to limit the usage of flame retardants, provided that more environmentally friendly and better recyclable alternatives are available.

Handling end-of-life furniture is expensive, due to difficult disassembly of most pieces of furniture. Design requirements for disassembly would help, usage of glue and staples should be minimized as it complicates disassembly. Standardization of materials and assembly techniques is important for disassembly too. The focus of Ecodesign measures for furniture should be on facilitating repair, recycling and ensuring the possibility of disassembly. These measures can lead to lifespan extension and facilitate reuse in the longer term.

We would prefer setting the following Ecodesign measures for furniture focusing on the following:

       a. Standardization of textile and foam used.
       b. Production techniques. Decrease use of staples and more use of other binding techniques.

---

[8] CE_Delft_200289_Mandatory_percentage_of_recycled_or_bio-based_plastic_Def.pdf

c. performance requirements on design for durability, design for reliability e.g. resistance to stress or weathering), design for disassembly, design for refurbishing and/or recyclability, availability of spare parts and mandatory minimum recycled content of materials.

Fast furniture is increasingly an issue, design for a longer lifespan does not help when changing furniture quickly and often is in fashion. If possible some measures could be included to combat the fast furniture trend.

Ceramic products

Setting Ecodesign measures for ceramic products should be given low priority, since the energy efficiency of the production process contributes most to the sustainability of ceramic products. The energy efficiency of production processes is regulated under different EU legislation applicable to industry. Product specific design measures will thus not be the most effective for decreasing the environmental impact.

Tyres

Setting Ecodesign requirements for tyres is a medium priority. In the Netherlands, an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme is in force, meaning that producers collect and process used tyres. We consider the JRC report's findings on using tyres as infill as no longer relevant, since this will be prohibited under the REACH restriction for intentionally added microplastics. As for recycling of tyres, the devulcanization technique is the best and it should be the EU's aim to stimulate the use of this technique. Design measures for tyres should match the devulcanization technique. Enabling the remanufacturing of tyres through retreading by setting suitable design requirements would be even more beneficial. Retreading should be possible for all types of tyres, including tyres used for cars and motorcycles.

Tyres are an important source of microplastic pollution in the environment. Ecodesign requirements for tyres should therefore include a measure to reduce microplastic pollution. Mandatory usage of different materials, which have no disadvantageous effect on the environment in case of wear and tear, should be considered.

Detergents

Setting Ecodesign requirements for detergents should be a medium priority. The environmental impact of those products is significant. However, measures for those products do already exist under the legislation for chemical consumption products. In addition, the European Commission has presented her proposal for a regulation on detergents and surfactants. This product group should thus not be targeted in the first workplan under the Ecodesign Regulation, but could be included in the second working plan.

Bed mattresses

Setting Ecodesign requirements for mattresses should be a high priority. Setting requirements that improve the disassembly is important. Matresses are often incinerated at the end of life because they cannot be disassembled. Possibility of disassembly is most important for recycling, there are currently no guidelines for producers how to ensure recyclability. Setting requirements for recyclability of the mattresses (e.g. measures on disassemblablity or use of recyclable materials) and for a percentage recycled content is essential. Most mattresses contain textiles, steel and foam. Dutch recyclers have indicated that the usage of flame retardants in furniture and mattresses hinders the recycling of those product groups. For this reason, it would be preferable to limit the usage of flame retardants, provided that more environmentally friendly and better recyclable alternatives are available.

Lubricants

Setting Ecodesign requirements for lubricants should not be a priority. In the JRC study, lubricants receive a low score for almost all impact categories, meaning that setting design requirements for this product group would not lead to a significant positive effect on the environment.

Paints and varnishes

Setting Ecodesign requirements is quite important because of the microplastics the products contain and the fact that the EU depends on other continents for the supply of paints and varnishes. Nevertheless, because paints and varnishes are regulated by other EU legislation such as REACH, we do not think those products should be prioritized to be included in the first working plan for products regulated under the Ecodesign Regulation.

Cosmetic products

For cosmetics, especially the destruction of unsold goods is an issue. We think the reporting obligation for unsold goods is a step in the right direction. We thus don't think this product group should be prioritized for the Ecodesign working plan in the coming years.

Toys

We are positive about the inclusion of toys and think regulating toys should be a medium priority. When requirements such as minimum recycled content are set for toys, we wonder whether this is suitable because of the link with human toxicity and chemical safety. Safety remains the most important criterion for toys, and this is regulated in the Toy Safety Directive. Ecodesign measures could complement this policy by establishing measures to ensure recycled content can be safely used. Especially for toys made of plastic, it is difficult to guarantee toys' safety whenever recycled content is used. Traceability of materials is often difficult, because many toys are produced outside the EU, e.g. in China. We are of the opinion that the free toys distributed at certain restaurants or in supermarkets, which are often solely used once, should be forbidden.

Fishing nets and gears

We understand the inclusion of fishing nets in the list, as they contribute to environmental pollution because of microfibers. Fishing nets and gears are already regulated under the Single Use Plastics Directive. The CEN is already working on projects regarding the circularity of fishing nets. Setting Ecodesign requirements does not seem strictly necessary. If Ecodesign requirements will be set for fishing nets and gears, we deem setting requirements for the biodegradability of used materials and requirements for durability specifically important.

Absorbent hygiene products

We believe absorbent hygiene products should be prioritized for the first working plan. For absorbent hygiene products, the waste stage causes most environmental impact. Currently these products are almost exclusively designed for single use and are typically not recycled after use. Design measures should therefore be set to improve the recyclability of absorbent hygiene products. Requiring the use of biobased plastics (PLA) in absorbent hygiene products, will improve the recyclability by 38%. This leads to a higher CO2 reduction compared to incineration[9].

Technical circularity potential for single-use plastic AHP is currently limited, given constraints on recycling and recycled content incorporation across the supply-chain. For this type of products, measures on the extraction of raw materials and manufacturing stages could yield the highest environmental improvements. Regulatory options for ESPR to explore could be sustainable sourcing of materials, use of materials fit for recycling and design to enable the separation of certain components for recycling. In any case, environmental improvements for this product group largely rely on users' behaviour."

Are there any other end-use products you believe should be added to this list?

In our national plan for the transition towards the Circular Economy, which contains the planned activities for the period 2023-2030, we have given priority to improving the circularity of windmills and solar cells. Those product groups could be considered for prioritization under the Ecodesign Regulation since the waste generation after their lifetime is currently problematic. These product groups are also interesting, because of the abundant use of critical raw materials in these

---

[9] Comparative mLCA on waste treatment of diaper and incontinence material – SGS search.
2020 06 22 Additional note on PLA on PLA in comparative mLCA – SGS search.

products. By improving the recyclability of clean energy technologies, Europe's dependency on third countries for these critical raw materials can be decreased[10].

B Intermediate products which are considered potentially suitable for first action under the ESPR

Intermediate product	Agree with the identification of this intermediate product	Importance
Iron and steel	Yes	3 High
Non-ferrous metals[11]	Yes	3 High
Aluminium and its alloys	Yes	3 High
Chemicals	Yes	2 Medium
Plastic and polymers	Yes	2 Medium
Paper, pulp paper and board	Yes	1 Low
Glass	Yes	1 Low

Motivation ranking intermediate products

Iron and steel

The circularity of iron and steel is important for the transition of the industry towards sustainability and circularity. Setting Ecodesign requirements for these intermediate products could help reducing their environmental impact in the waste stage.

Non-ferrous metals

Those metals should be regulated under Ecodesign with priority because of their high score on environmental impact in the waste stage, energy use and their effect on climate change as well as their high importance for the EU's strategic autonomy.

Aluminium and its alloys

Aluminium and its alloys should be given high priority for the Ecodesign working plan, due to their high impact score on air, soil, waste, climate change and energy use.

Chemicals

From an environmental point of view, chemicals should not be prioritized for the first working plan under ESPR, since chemicals are already targeted by other EU legislation such as REACH.

Plastic and polymers

Plastic and polymers do lead to environmental pollution, but are already regulated under the Single Use Plastics Directive, the Packaging and Packing Waste Regulation and the initiatives related to microplastics. When those initiatives do not lead to a significant effect, it can be considered to regulate plastics under the Ecodesign Regulation.

Paper, pulp paper and board

Paper, pulp paper and board should not be prioritized under ESPR for the first working plan since the recycling percentages are already quite high (88% is returned and recycled). It is important that one type of fibre is used in paper, pulp paper and board. Mixing materials complicates recycling.

Glass

---

[10] See https://www.centre-for-sustainability.nl/news/white-paper-critical-materials-green-energy-and-geopolitics-a-complex-mix
[11] Intermediate products made of seven primary and secondary non-ferrous metals: copper, lead and/or tin, zinc and/or cadmium, precious metals, ferro-alloys, nickel and/or cobalt, carbon and graphite electrodes. Does not include aluminium.

Glass should not be prioritized under ESPR for the first working plan since the recycling percentages are already quite high (80% is returned and recycled)

Are there any other intermediate products you believe should be added to this list?

No

C Horizontal measures

Do you agree with the horizontal measures identified for potential first action under ESPR?

We agree with the identified horizontal measures, but we are of the opinion that the inclusion of 'safety' aspects of products should be considered when setting horizontal requirements.

The safety of products should be specifically considered in relation to the Ecodesign requirements set to improve durability, recyclability and post-consumer recycled content. This is in line with the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and Safe and Sustainable by Design.

Input on the horizontal measures

We do not have specific input on the horizontal measures.