

ECOS Newsletter

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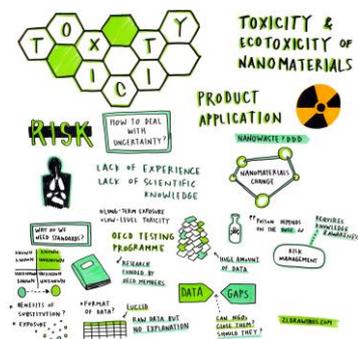
Going big on the small – ECOS Nanotechnology Workshop



ECOS, together with project partners [CIEL](#) and [Öko Institut](#), held a Strategic Workshop on Nanotechnology on the 10th of February in Brussels. The day-long event, which aimed to bridge the gap between research and policy, went big on the, in this case, very small things, shedding some light on the challenges posed by nanomaterials in products.

Keynote speaker Axel Singhofen, the advisor on health and environmental policy for the Greens-EFA in the European Parliament, kicked off the event with a passionately frustrated speech linking the new European Commission and their (lack of) environmental agenda, including with nanomaterials, and what could be expected in this field.

Throughout the day, presentations were given by scientists, policy officers and lawyers, and inspired discussions took place, highlighting the amount of work left to be done in this field, in both policy and standardisation, but also commending what has been accomplished so far. The summary of the event is available to read [here](#).



The Energy Union – A step in the right direction

The Communication released by the European Commission in February, introducing a “resilient Energy Union with an ambitious climate policy” made reference to a number of ECOS work areas, including ecodesign and energy labelling, waste, smart grids and e-mobility.

Overall, ECOS welcomes the communication, which mentions the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Directives, albeit without noting the importance of the cornerstones to achieving the EU’s energy saving 2020 objectives. The Energy Labelling Directives will be revised this year by the EC, enabling it to work even harder for EU citizens, businesses and the environment. [The Coolproducts campaign](#), of which ECOS is a driving member, has already put forward its [views](#), on how to get the most out of this reform.

The Communication did also put forth strategies which ECOS does not fully agree on. For example, the strategy sees “waste to energy” as a potential energy source. With limited natural resources and ever-growing landfills, ECOS urges the European Commission to clearly prioritise zero-waste policies, such as reuse and recycling, and material recovery as a means to cut down greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage while promoting the use of renewable energy sources, as opposed to “waste to energy”.

ECOS’ remarks, in full, are available to read [here](#).

Winning recipe in the Ecodesign Directive



Energy-wasting stoves, hobs and range hoods were banned across the EU from the 20th of February, under Directive 2009/125/EC with regard to Ecodesign requirements for domestic cooking appliances.

ECOS' Senior Policy Officer Stamatis Sivitos summarises what the legislation entails: "Power does not equal performance and too often consumers end up buying products that appear cheap, but cost a fortune to run. These rules mean that design standards will go up, and low quality products that cannot stand the heat will have to leave the kitchen."

The Regulation, which received an enthusiastic reception by the press, provides consumers with more transparent information and can save them up to €50/year on their energy bills. The three [ecodesign measures](#) which have been applied to electric and gas ovens and hobs, and to range hoods, are expected to:

- *"reduce CO2 emissions by more than 1 million tonnes/year from 2020 onwards; which is equivalent to the CO2 emissions generated by around 140.000 people;*
- *reduce the EU's energy need by the equivalent of almost 5 million barrels of imported fuel each year; this is equivalent to heating around 400.000 homes for one year."*

[Reuters](#), [The Guardian](#), and [EurActiv](#) have reported further on the news.

ECOS, one of the founding members of the [Coolproducts campaign](#), strives

towards large-scale energy saving possibilities for Europe, ensuring that Ecodesign and Energy Labelling directives are not watered down by industry.

[Sign up to the Coolproducts' newsletter here!](#)

ECOS leads campaign for victorious results in flame retardant votes

ECOS has long been campaigning against the incorporation of external ignition requirements for electronic equipment in European and international standards. Since 2008, a series of external ignition requirements for electronics have been rejected as there is a lack of evidence for their fire safety benefits and could potentially lead to a greater use of flame retardants that can harm human health and the environment. Their rejection has, so far, hindered manufacturers from using flame retardants in TVs.

Earlier this week, ECOS saw the fruit of its labour after leading a campaign of national NGOs, alongside campaigners in the United States. The technical specification (TS 62411) will not be elevated to an International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) or CENELEC standard, following a vote from 32 participating members. The implications of these results are crucial. If TS 62411 were to become an IEC or CENELEC standard, it would have opened the door to external ignition requirements that are likely met with potentially toxic flame retardant chemicals.

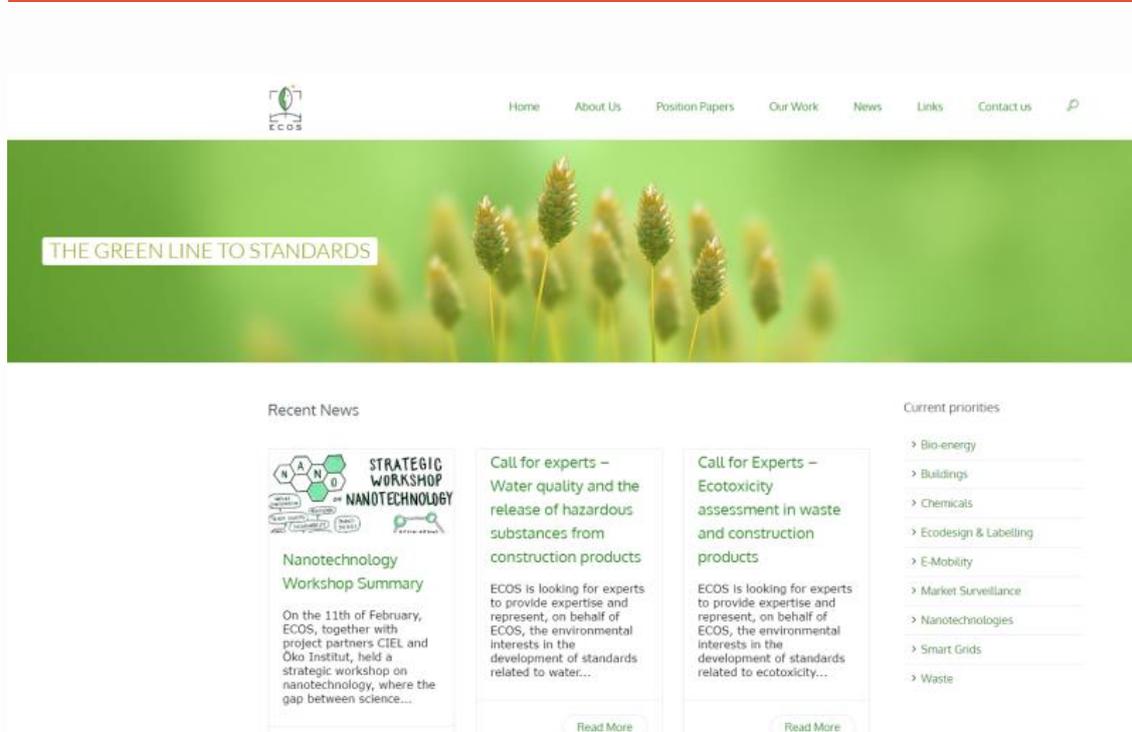
Many of these chemicals are suspected to pose serious risks to human health and the environment while others have never been tested for (long-term) effects, making consumers involuntary test subjects. Children are the most vulnerable group, as they are highly sensitive to e.g. endocrine disruptors and neurodevelopment toxins.



The use of flame retardants also makes recycling the casings of electronics more difficult, expensive, and in some cases, impossible. This reduces the economic viability of recycling in developed countries and harm the health of recycling workers in developing countries.

Despite this successful outcome, the battle is not yet won, and ECOS will continue to campaign against future industry efforts to include these harmful chemicals in TVs.

The new ECOS website!



It is with great pleasure that we present [our new website](#) to you! After many years of having a somewhat vintage design, the ECOS website has received a fresh makeover. The change reflects ECOS development over the past years, growing on several fronts. In the space of three years, the organisation has tripled the number of staff, increased our activities, strengthened our reputation and seen 12 new members join. Thank you for your continued support for ECOS!

Make sure to check the site regularly to stay updated on ECOS' work, developments in standards, events and so on.

And if you aren't already, make sure to follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn, where we give you the latest news on standards!



[Twitter](#)



[LinkedIn](#)

Manufacturers make use of the 'eco-mode' - But is it in the right way?

We have been keeping you posted on the [developments](#) made regarding ECOS' identification of the different operation modes of some water heaters, such as "eco-mode" and "comfort-mode". Currently, there are no specifications regarding which mode the appliances should be tested in, and ECOS has deplored that there is a risk that manufacturers will test products in the "eco-mode" in order to achieve better energy classes on the labels or even comply with EU legal requirements for energy efficiency. Although the most energy efficient, it might rarely be used by consumers for their daily needs, and instead occasionally, for instance when leaving their homes to go on holiday. This clearly jeopardises the energy savings expected by the regulation.

The European Commission has recognised the loophole, and responded to ECOS' concerns in an EC Communication with transitional methods for water heaters. The issue still remains unaddressed in the standards under development, where ECOS advocates for a clear specification.

Same tests, different results – Measurement uncertainty and verification tolerances

A primary issue which affects Ecodesign and Energy Labelling of products is measurement uncertainty and verification tolerances.

The two concepts are often misinterpreted. It has been observed that

manufacturers may abuse the tolerances by using them on test results to achieve higher energy labelling classes for products in shops, or to pretend they meet EU Ecodesign legal requirements, when in fact, their products might not be as energy efficient as declared. This may result in products being less efficient than the regulations permit and above the uncontrollable “uncertainty” value.

In a recently published [position paper](#), ECOS and ANEC call to ensure that the distinction between the two concepts is clarified, that further abuse is avoided, and that verification tolerances are not set arbitrarily. Only this will allow grasping real energy savings from product use.

New Project: Hazardous Chemicals

ECOS, together with the Danish, Austrian and Spanish standard bodies, has launched a 30 months long project on chemicals. This collaboration will create a guidance document which both raises the awareness of standardisers about hazardous chemicals in products, and also assists them with developing specific provisions in product standards.

Through the establishment of such a document, it is hoped that standards effectively guarantee that products sold on the EU market comply with the chemicals legislations in place. Furthermore, it will contribute towards minimising the health and environmental impacts of chemicals in consumer products.

Putting consumers first – ECOS at the 7th Citizens' Energy Forum

ECOS' Project Officer Alun Jones was a panellist at the seventh Citizens' Energy Forum in London, on the 12th of March. The event, which was opened with a [speech](#) by the Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete, covers topics which aim to create competitive, energy-efficient and fair retail markets for consumers.

Alongside panellists from the [European Committee of Domestic Equipment Manufacturers](#) (CECED) and the British [Department of Energy and Climate Change](#) (DECC) the topic "Innovative ways of engaging consumers" was discussed where it was explored how to establish an appropriate framework to both engage and protect consumers.

The conclusions of the event are available [here](#).

EC requests standards for material efficiency of Ecodesign products

Up to now, the Ecodesign Directive has solely focused on energy efficiency aspects of energy-using and energy-related products. When questioned why resource efficiency is not included, the reason has largely been put down to a lack of metrics.

Now, the European Commission is developing a standardisation request for the European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI) to develop horizontal (generic, i.e. not product-specific) standards related to the material efficiency aspects of products, which could range from methods to assess reusability/recyclability/recoverability, to methods for durability and reversible disassembly of products (or of its components) at end-of-life.

ECOS has joined forces with the [EEB](#) and [UK SNS](#) in a [position paper](#) addressing the draft standardisation request on material efficiency aspects for Ecodesign products. Amongst other urgings, we argue that a revised draft standardisation request must provide greater clarity on the outcomes that the proposed standards, in conjunction with regulations, intend to achieve. We call for the extension of product lifetimes through design for upgradability, durability and reparability. The reuse,



refurbishment and remanufacturing of whole products should be increased as well as the recovery of materials in order to enable resource circularity.

CONNECTing with CEN-CENELEC

ECOS invites you to read the latest issue of [CONNECT](#), the CEN and CENELEC newsletter, which covers some of the topics which ECOS works on and provides a general overview of what has been happening in the world of standards over the past months.

Nanotechnology

ECOS attended the CEN and CENELEC conference on “Standardisation for nanotechnologies and nanomaterials”, which aimed to introduce standardisation work carried out in the framework of EC Mandate 461. Although ECOS gladly supported the idea of informing the attendees about the mandate and encouraging them to join committees, we regret the little time allocated to discussing the actual content of the work of the technical committees.

Smart Grids

The low-down on standards and smart grids is given by Ralph Sporer, Chairman of the CEN-CENELEC-ETSI Smart Grid Co-ordination Group, who amongst other things, discusses the next steps regarding standardisation in relation to smart grids. ECOS has provided comments on the Privacy and Security Report (Part Three) of the Smart Meter Co-ordination Group, which have yet to be resolved.

Upcoming events

- **21-22 April 2015:** [StandarDays Training Event – “Your chance to discover the world of European Standards”](#) (Brussels, Belgium)
- **19 May 2015:** [CEN-CENELEC Seminar on “Including environmental provisions in European Standards”](#) (Brussels, Belgium)
- **4 June 2015:** [European Standardisation Summit 2015](#) (Riga, Latvia)

ECOS will be participating in and supporting the organisation of the CEN-CENELEC seminar on May 19 and the European Standardisation Summit on June 4.

- **June 2015 (date TBC): ECOS 2015 General Assembly and Annual Event** (Brussels, Belgium)

Remember to regularly check our website to find out about events which ECOS are participating in, or which are related to standards in general!
