

Work Programme 2022



January 2022

ECOS

Environmental Coalition on Standards

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About ECOS



ECOS, Environmental Coalition on Standards, is an international NGO with a network of members and experts advocating for environmentally friendly technical standards, policies and laws.

We ensure the environmental voice is heard when they are developed and drive change by providing expertise to policymakers and industry players, leading to the implementation of strong environmental principles.

Our successes consistently impact standards and laws promoting the environment, pushing for a shift to a circular economy and ambitious actions to fight climate change. We also work towards a more inclusive, open and transparent

standardisation system, internationally and at the European and national levels, at the same time ensuring the appropriate use of standards in support of environmental legislation and policy.

We are part of a number of impactful alliances and campaigns, such as the [Rethink Plastic alliance](#), [Coolproducts](#), [Right to Repair](#), [Cool Coalition](#), [Platform for Electro-mobility](#), [Coalition for Energy Savings](#), and [One Planet Network](#), where we cooperate with other NGOs, progressive companies, and researchers, advocating for a greener future for all. We are also a member of the Global Electronics Council's [EPEAT Advisory Council](#).

Introduction

2022 has the potential to be a critical year for environmental policy, with a focus on international climate action, negotiations for a global treaty on plastics, making sustainable products the norm, and leveraging environmental policy as a key tool of the economic stimulus following the COVID-19 pandemic.

For global environmental challenges, standardisation will play a key role in providing a common language and methods. ECOS will work to make sure that standards are drafted taking into consideration the highest level of environmental ambition, that they reflect the technical expert input that we have provided, and that they are developed smoothly and in a timely manner. Importantly, we will continue to work to ensure that standards are not misused, particularly to replace legislation or political action.

In Europe, standardisation is higher than ever on the political agenda - 2022 will see the adoption of the EU Standardisation Strategy, a unique opportunity to ensure standards work for the environment.

In 2022, the European Commission will also be halfway through its mandate and it will be time to deliver on the European Green Deal, its Circular Economy Action Plan and a major file that could make sustainable products the norm: the Sustainable Product Policy Initiative. A plethora of initiatives will follow, notably the Circular Electronics Initiative, the Packaging and Ecodesign Directives revision, the Construction Products Regulation revision, the new Ecodesign Working Plan, the EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles, and the Empowering Consumers Initiative.

As the only NGO at the table where standards are developed, ECOS is perfectly placed to drive, define and assess how to improve the environmental sustainability of key sectors and products. Among the wide range of work areas we cover, several will stand out in 2022 for their relevance in terms of standardisation or policy opportunities, or both.

In 2022, we will focus on five priority areas:



How do we work?

For over 20 years now, ECOS has worked towards a healthy and clean environment, protected by robust rules that respect nature and its resources. Representing a network of more than 50 members, we bring our environmental expertise and vision to European and international discussions.



Standardisation

Standards can provide important definitions, determining, for example, what it takes for a product to be called 'bio-based', or what criteria are needed for a product to be termed 'home or industrially compostable'. They can also provide measurement methods that will facilitate the enforcement of policies, for instance on how to assess product repairability.

We push for robustness and environmental ambition in the development of key international standards.

- ✓ We advocate for the standardisation system to be as open and inclusive as possible, at all levels. We are also part of the [ENgage project](#), aiming to support the engagement of national actors and environmental NGOs in standardisation processes.
- ✓ We represent the environmental voice in the Standardisation System. At the regional level in Europe, we are recognised as an official partner. ECOS is one of the so-called 'Annex III organisations' recognised by the Standardisation Regulation.
- ✓ We advocate for the development of certain missing standards that can help the implementation of crucial environmental policies or innovations.
- ✓ We make sure standards and policy objectives are compatible, as well as that policy ambition is not undermined by decisions made at standardisation level.
- ✓ We raise awareness and interest in the standardisation work, fostering greater involvement of environmental NGOs in standards-making.

Policy and advocacy

- ✓ We bring our expert eye to push for a high level of environmental ambition for major legislative developments. We are there even before the legislative process starts, to help prepare the ground for discussion, and we closely follow the process all the way through the final decisions. Finally, we remain present for the implementation phase.
- ✓ We run advocacy campaigns to call for certain measures or reorient others, supported by our invaluable network of members.
- ✓ Internationally, we cooperate with the United Nations, as a member of the [One Planet Network](#) and the UN-led [Cool Coalition](#), and we actively collaborate with the [Global Electronics Council's EPEAT ecolabel](#).
- ✓ We work with the EU institutions, particularly as a member of the European Commission's Expert Groups on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Ecodesign and Energy Labelling, Energy Intensive Industries, ICT standardisation, the Platform for Sustainable Finance, and as an observer on the Committee on Standards.
- ✓ We lead or support key campaigns, such as [Coolproducts](#), [Rethink Plastic alliance](#) or the [Right to Repair](#).
- ✓ We develop a wide range of campaign and communication materials, strengthening our advocacy, and ensuring our messages are echoed among a wide range of stakeholders.
- ✓ We are also part of key projects which help us meet our policy goals, such as the recently launched [CircThread project](#), supporting the development of a product digital passport, and the [HARP](#), [RiskGONE](#) and [NANORIGO](#) projects.

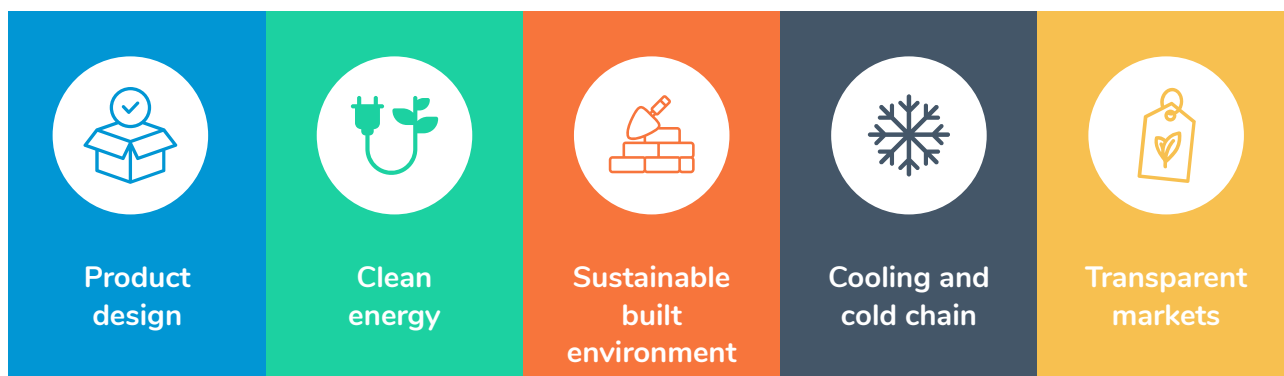
Campaigns

With the support of our extensive network of members and partners, we push for change to happen. ECOS is part of a number of impactful alliances and campaigns, such as the [Rethink Plastic alliance](#), [Coolproducts](#), [Right to Repair](#), the [Cool Coalition](#), [Platform for Electro-mobility](#), [Coalition for Energy Savings](#), [Wardrobe Change](#), and the [One Planet Network](#), where we cooperate with other NGOs, progressive companies, and researchers, advocating for a greener future for all.



Our 2022 priorities

Among the wide range of areas we cover, we have identified five priorities for ECOS work, factoring in the environmental urgency linked to certain files, as well as policy and standardisation developments already on the table, or urgently needed in the year to come:



Our 2022 priorities will contribute to the attainment of the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Here below, we will explore the crucial importance of these priorities for our environment, our objectives, and how we intend to deliver our work in these areas. A full list of our activities can be found in the comprehensive '[Our Work Areas](#)' section.

Our priorities

Product design



Sustainable products can pave the way to a circular economy

Designing better is key: more than 80% of a product's environmental impact is determined at the design stage, be it for electronics, textiles or plastics. Legislation, underpinned by environmentally ambitious standards, can and should stimulate sustainable design for durability, reusability, repairability and recyclability, in order to make circular products the norm.

The situation is serious: the Earth Overshoot Day when 'humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate' falls earlier each year, with the demand for materials in the EU expected to double between 2010 and 2030. At the same time, a record 53.6 million metric tonnes (Mt) of electronic waste was generated worldwide in 2019, up 21 % in just five years.

We need more sustainable products, ones that are designed to last - if we do mean to begin a true transformation towards circularity.



Each European generates
16.2kg of e-waste per year



150m tonnes of plastics
have accumulated in our
oceans



Average European
consumes **26kg** of textiles
per year

Our push for ecodesign as a tool for environmental change

The European Union has an environmental policy with a proven track record of success – ecodesign. This policy currently applies only to the so-called energy-related products, ranging from computers through to fridges and TVs. For years now, we have been asking policymakers to apply its principles to all types of products on the market, prioritising those with the highest environmental impact, and deliver equally encouraging results.

We advocate for ecodesign principles to be effectively applied to all high-impact product categories, resulting in all unnecessary, inefficient, toxic, wasteful and polluting products disappearing from the market. At the same time, we work to ensure that existing and new EU ecodesign rules are ambitious in their implementation and enforcement, and are underpinned by state-of-the-art, consumer-relevant test method standards.

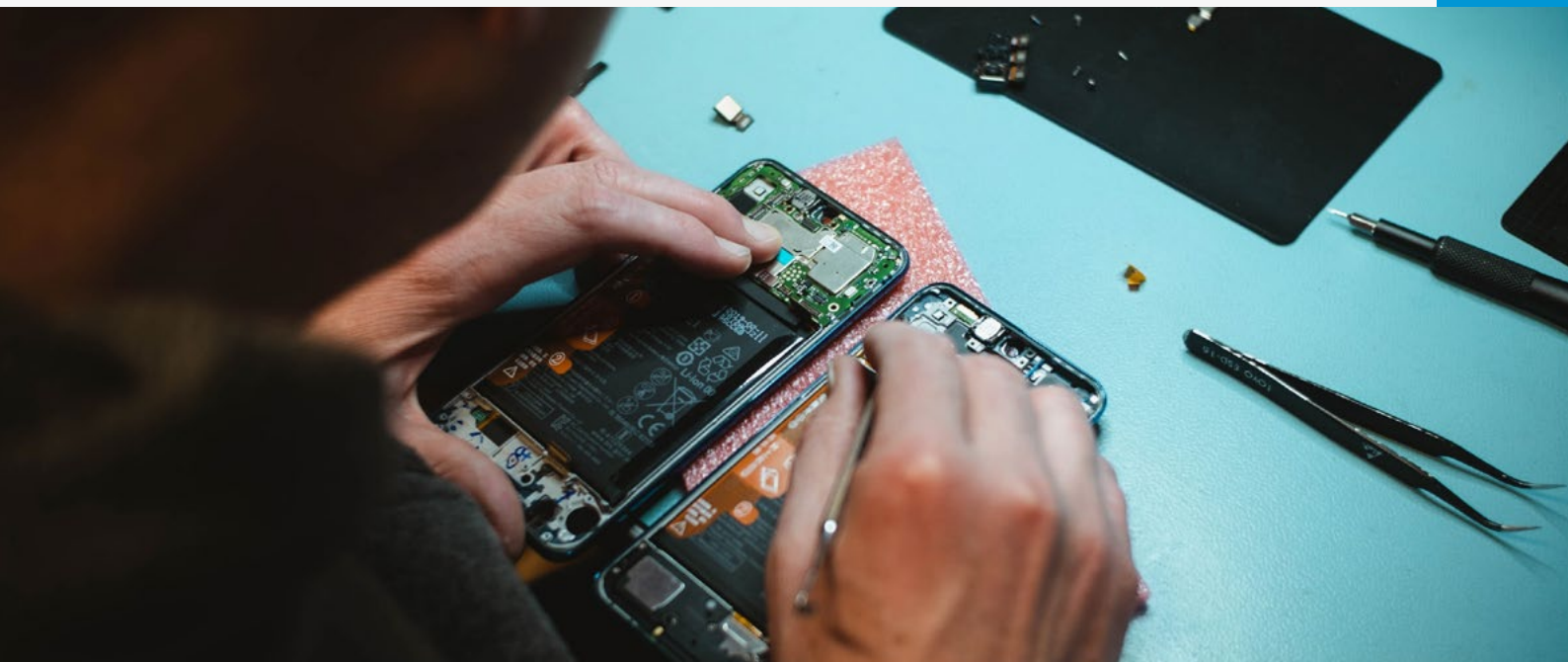
Our activities in 2022

We will work towards making safe and sustainable products, materials and circular business models the norm, focusing on:

- ✓ The establishment of a strong and ambitious Sustainable Products Policy Framework that requires companies to make all products environmentally sustainable by design. This Framework will need to be complemented by a number of ambitious rules applying to key sectors, and notably:
 - The adoption of the EU Battery Regulation with concrete provisions on recycled content, durability, reuse and recycling.
 - A global treaty on plastic pollution to reduce production, and drive ecodesign of plastic products worldwide.
 - Rules to reduce overpackaging, and a clear set of targets and incentives to ramp up the development of reusable packaging systems.
 - The effective implementation of the Single Use Plastics Directive, with strong rules on accounting for plastic recycled content and circularity of fishing gear.
 - Limits to the release of microplastics into the environment.
 - Ambitious legislative/regulatory actions to drive the circularity and sustainability of the EU Sustainable Textiles Strategy.
 - A clear strategy on circular electronics, with ambitious ecodesign rules for computers, mobile phones, tablets and printers, which effectively tackle premature obsolescence of these devices.
 - The Ecodesign Working Plan 2020-2024, which will pave the way for improved ecodesign and energy labelling rules for products already regulated under the framework, and list new categories of products where improvements are needed.

- ✓ Phasing out substances of concern and integrating robust and clear 'safety-by-design' criteria within product policy, as put forward by the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability.

- ✓ Relevant, accurate, easily understandable and comparable product sustainability information, empowering consumers to choose the most sustainable products and services available on the market.

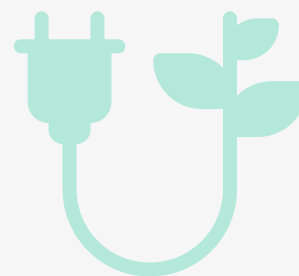


Alliances and campaigns



Our priorities

Clean energy



Decarbonisation is the key

The European energy sector is undergoing a period of rapid transformation, and its decarbonisation should be a top priority if we are to mitigate the climate change emergency. Power generation is becoming progressively more decarbonised, distributed and renewable but we

are nowhere near done; in fact, decarbonisation needs to advance at a quicker pace in order to meet the 2050 climate objectives. As it is, the energy sector is responsible for 75% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, and its impacts are devastating.



Energy sector causes **75%**
of EU's GHG emissions



32% share of renewables in
electricity consumed in 2018



400k Europeans die due to
poor air quality every year

Renewable electricity produced from wind turbines and solar photovoltaics is key to the solution and will continue to dominate in the future. However, other options, such as hydrogen produced from renewable sources or biofuels and bioenergy, are also on the table in the discussion on decarbonising certain energy segments such as heavy industrial processes, maritime transport or aviation – all of which are difficult to electrify. We need to remember

that ramping up hydrogen production and consumption raises many environmental concerns, mostly related to the continued use of fossil fuels. On the other hand, the promotion of bioenergy – the renewable energy most widely used today – can be devastating for biodiversity and destroy carbon sinks. A clean, smart and secure power system can be based solely on renewable sources.

ECOS works towards the uptake of clean renewables

At ECOS, we work towards renewable solutions that are truly fit for the EU climate objectives and that are reflected in the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive and the Gas Market package.

In parallel to our policy work, we advocate for and contribute expertise to international and European standards that support clean and renewable energy sources, in particular to provide the right definitions on hydrogen, as well as demand-side flexibility sources. The latter includes for instance smart charging of electric vehicles, which determines how we will charge our electric cars and can

change the way we manage electricity flows in our homes.

We also fight for the tightening of sustainability criteria applying to biological resources used for bioenergy and biofuels.

Finally, and given the serious concerns posed by a potential wider uptake of hydrogen, we work to make sure that its traceability and certification is based on a robust system that supports renewable energy sources only.

Our activities in 2022

We will work towards a clean, smart and secure power system, focusing particularly on:

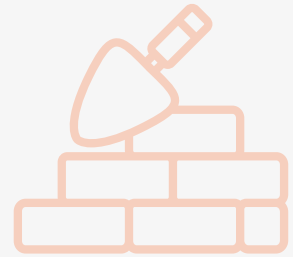
- ✓ Working towards an energy system that is based on renewable energy sources with the highest efficiency possible, as part of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Directives revisions, and the integration of additional renewable energy through the deployment of smart charging of electric vehicles, where standardisation and the recently proposed Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation play a key role.
- ✓ A decarbonised heating sector phasing out fossil fuel technologies through ecodesign and energy labelling regulations.
- ✓ The tightening of sustainability criteria applying to biological resources used for energy purposes under the Renewable Energy Directive.
- ✓ The promotion of renewable energy solutions in EU legislation and standards that are not hampered by the will to keep fossil and non-renewable energy sources alive, including fossil gas and fossil hydrogen. At the same time, we will work towards developing a certification system for renewable hydrogen, building on transparent and science-based definitions.

Alliances and campaigns



Our priorities

Sustainable built environment



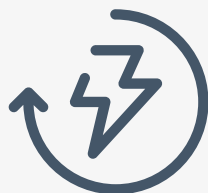
Huge impact and a lot of potential

Construction materials, products, and processes, together with building use and end-of-life impacts, account for 50% of energy consumption in Europe, as well as approximately 36% of CO₂ emissions. In making buildings more environmentally sustainable, policy efforts have so far focused on their energy efficiency and performance, as well as the appliances used in them. However, upfront and operational carbon generated by production processes and construction, and embodied in building material is yet to be regulated.

The footprint of buildings extends far beyond energy consumption and carbon emissions, though: they account for 50% of all extracted materials, 33% of water consumption and 33% of waste generated in the EU. It is evident that these environmental impacts need to be urgently curbed.

In addition, a piece of the puzzle which should not be forgotten is the role buildings can and should play in the transition to renewable energy, and electromobility. Their role should not be undervalued: they should be supplied with renewable energy and equipped smart EV chargers that can green and stabilise the grid.

Environmental impacts of construction in the EU:



1/2 energy



1/3 water



1/2 raw materials

ECOS looks at the whole picture

ECOS is the only environmental NGO taking a holistic approach to building sustainability, using both policy and standards, to address all environmental impacts of buildings and construction products throughout their lifecycle, from sourcing of raw materials to end-of-life.

ECOS has been promoting applying ecodesign principles across key resource-intensive sectors and beyond the energy-related products already regulated under the Ecodesign Directive. The latter include, for example, heating systems, which demand the majority of energy consumed by a building.

The EU's Sustainable Product Policy Initiative, as well as the upcoming revision of the Construction Products Regulation are both excellent opportunities to apply ecodesign principles more broadly from 2022 onwards. Forthcoming policies on sustainable design and use of buildings, combined with the increased uptake of lower impact products, represents a unique opportunity to tackle environmental hotspots. This can help lay the foundations for a more sustainable built environment, for which ECOS believes an EU-level strategy to coordinate policy actions must be delivered no later than early 2022.

Our activities in 2022

We will focus on:

- ✓ A series of legislative actions to cut energy consumption from buildings, accelerate effective deep renovation, address lifecycle environmental impacts, notably whole lifecycle carbon as part of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive revision.
- ✓ Making construction products fit for the future in terms of sustainability, circularity, and functionality with an overhaul of the Construction Products Regulation.
- ✓ Decarbonising heating systems thanks to updated ecodesign and energy labelling rules, setting an end date to the sales of fossil fuel operated space and water heating appliances, curbing particulate matter (PM) emissions, and developing robust test method standards for innovative low-carbon heating solutions (e.g., heat pumps).
- ✓ Addressing the tremendous amount of waste coming from the EU construction & demolition sector through circular design but also waste reduction targets.
- ✓ A set of standards that support policies in assessing the environmental sustainability and energy performance of buildings, the effectiveness of renovation plans; as well as supplying critical information on construction products and buildings, in support of circularity.
- ✓ Removing barriers to the uptake of low-carbon steel, cement and concrete products.

Alliances and campaigns



Relevant projects

Our priorities

Cooling and cold chain



Phasing out of F-gases is not fast enough

In 2014, the EU F-Gas Regulation mandated that fluorinated gas emissions must be reduced by two-thirds by 2030, as compared with 2014 levels. The phase-down is ongoing. Slowly, we are replacing fluorinated gases such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) with climate-friendly alternative refrigerants in the refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump sectors.

But the technical complexities of this switch are holding the transition back. Standards drastically limit the use of climate-friendly alternatives such as natural refrigerants because of their flammable properties, without reflecting technological developments able to mitigate the risks.



By 2050 2/3 of households could have air conditioning



Aircon unit numbers are expected to increase by 4 billion by 2050



SF6 has GWP 22,000 times higher than CO2!

It is estimated that, by 2050, two thirds of the world's households could have an air conditioner due to the effects of global warming, and this growing number of appliances is the tip of the iceberg. Technical yet crucial details need to be tackled, such as allowing for more natural refrigerants, harmonising the energy label on fixed and portable air-

conditioners or developing regulations for appliances untouched by legislation so far, such as walk-in cold rooms or refrigerated containers.

ECOS is breaking down barriers

ECOS works at both international and European level to reduce the barriers posed by standards to the uptake of natural refrigerants. We advocate and build support for changes to international and European standards, through coordinating and enhancing expert participation and sharing knowledge with the wider Montreal Protocol and international community.

At policy level, we seek to increase the ambition of the F-Gas Regulation, working to ensure its timely review, creating the necessary momentum by engaging with industry stakeholders to raise awareness, and develop a positive narrative in political fora and media on the need to swiftly shift to low-GWP and environment-friendly alternatives.

Our activities in 2022

We will work towards a number of objectives, at both policy and international standardisation level, including:

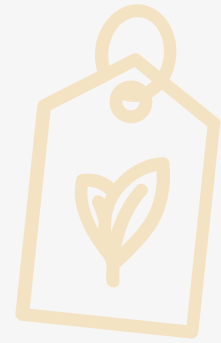
- ✓ An ambitious revision of the EU F-Gas Regulation that strengthens the HFC phase-down, tackles illegal trade of HFCs and enhances the use of truly low-GWP and environment-friendly alternatives.
- ✓ A suitable EU legislative framework for renewable and energy-efficient cooling through the revisions of the directives on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Energy Performance of Buildings.
- ✓ International and European safety standards that do not restrict the uptake of natural refrigerants and that reflect existing and new technology as well as climate needs.
- ✓ Ambitious ecodesign and energy labelling regulations and test methods for professional refrigeration, air conditioning, comfort fans, chillers and heat pumps.

Alliances and campaigns



Our priorities

Transparent markets



Making informed choices the norm

In 2020, the European Commission adopted its 'New Consumer Agenda', and announced the adoption of two pieces of European legislation in 2021, both meant to empower consumers in the green transition, working to provide clearer and more complete information on the environmental performance of products. A necessary step towards the much-needed change - but the share of goods containing misleading and/or false green claims is still shockingly high.

Despite the growing interest in providing more environmental credibility to consumers, the enforcement of legislation against unfair commercial practices remains weak. In 2021, the International Consumer Protection Enforcement Network

(ICPEN) coordinated a global review of online green claims: 40% were found to be potentially misleading consumers. Our own 2021 [report 'Too good to be true? A recipe for reliable green claims on plastic products'](#) concluded that, in the case of plastic products, this proportion could even be 10% higher.

Thankfully, more encouraging statistics are also at hand: more than half of EU consumers (56.8%) have the environment in mind when shopping, and almost all of them (96%) believe it is important that the EU uses its natural resources more efficiently. It is time to make sure they have access to relevant, qualitative and systematic sustainability information to make informed decisions.



40% of green claims may be misleading to consumers



About 50% of green claims on plastic products may be misleading



56.8% of EU consumers shop with the environment in mind

Accompanying consumers and businesses

ECOS understands that the role of consumers in the green transition should not be neglected, and advocates for ambitious legislation to empower them to make the right choices.

For instance, we strongly believe that consumers have the right to know how repairable their appliances are, and so we have been calling for a repair score to be included in the EU's Energy Label for all relevant products, starting with new labels for the extremely popular and yet unregulated computers, smartphones and tablets. Such a repair score

needs to be underpinned by robust calculation methods, made possible for example by the repair standard EN 45554:2020, developed with active involvement from ECOS.

Besides our crucial work accompanying consumers in their purchase choices, ECOS also strives to enable companies and investors to better understand the impact of their activities on the environment and society. As part of the European Commission's Platform on Sustainable Finance, we actively contribute to the EU taxonomy framework.

Our activities in 2022

- ✓ We will work towards robust instruments to measure and reward environmental performance, with a focus on circularity. In particular, we will advocate for a repair score on all electronics and the disclosing on all products of relevant environmental and safety information including chemical and material content and circularity aspects of products.
- ✓ We will call for companies and investors to accurately and publicly report on their environmental impacts and will work on the related corporate reporting standards.
- ✓ We will advocate for policies banning unfair commercial practices, such as greenwashing, to be more enforceable and better enforced, at the same time working towards the development of a list of banned green claims.
- ✓ We will call for the review of lifecycle assessment (LCA) standards and start the revision process to better account for secondary raw materials.

Alliances and campaigns



One planet
handle with care



FAIR &
SUSTAINABLE
TEXTILES

Relevant projects



Our work areas

In addition to our carefully selected priorities, you will find below an overview of all work areas we are active on. **Click on each topic to learn more!**



Decarbonising key sectors



✓ Sustainable buildings

- Improving the energy performance of buildings
- Decarbonising heating and cooling
- Smart homes and buildings

✓ Reducing energy consumption of products with ecodesign and energy labels

✓ Decarbonising energy-intensive industries

✓ Clean energy

- Renewable energy and grid integration
- Electric vehicles
- Hydrogen
- Bioenergy
- Natural refrigerants



Making our products circular



✓ Applying ecodesign to all products

- Plastics
- Household appliances
- Textiles & furniture
- Electronics
- Batteries
- Automotive
- Construction products
- Chemicals & waste
- Food systems & bio-based products

Developing sound environmental tools



✓ Defining and measuring circularity

- Circular economy management & tools
- Material efficiency standards
- Repairability score
- Environmental management & life cycle assessment



✓ Measuring climate performance

- Carbon neutrality & accounting
- Adaptation to climate change
- Geoengineering

✓ Measuring environmental health

✓ Green claims and transparent markets

✓ Environmental finance



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