



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 12 November 2003

14405/03

**ENV 601
MI 274
ENT 206
SAN 233
WTO 118
CONSUM 124**

INFORMATION NOTE

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to : Delegations
Subject : **Integrated Product Policy**
– Council conclusions

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions concerning the abovementioned subject as adopted by the Council (Environment) on 27 October 2003

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON INTEGRATED PRODUCT POLICY

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLING:

- the informal meeting of Environment Ministers which took place in Weimar on 8/9 May 1999, where Ministers recognised the need to develop an integrated approach at Community level which deals with the entire life cycle of products,
- the Council conclusions on the Commission Green Paper on Integrated Product Policy (IPP) of 7 June 2001,
- the Göteborg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001 where an environmental dimension was added to the Lisbon process, in the form of a strategy for sustainable development,
- Decision No 1600/2002/EC laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme and, in particular, the objectives and priority areas for action on the sustainable use and management of natural resources and wastes,
- the Brussels European Council conclusions of 20 and 21 March 2003 promoting timely elaboration at both international and EU level of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production included in the Plan of Implementation from the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, on which the EU should take the lead;

2. ACKNOWLEDGES THAT:

- there is a need for economic systems to take into account the limits of the Earth to absorb pollution and provide natural resources and therefore to further support environmental policies which take into consideration the entire life cycle of products and services, preventing the mere transfer between life cycle-phases of environmental impacts,
- the main challenge is to secure both environmental protection and economic and social development, all strongly influenced by products' production and consumption. By adding market based approaches to traditional "command and control" tools, IPP provides new solutions and possibilities in achieving sustainable development,
- the involvement of enterprises and other relevant actors is needed in order to introduce innovation, develop win-win options, adopt best practice solutions and take advantage of the opportunity offered by these. The IPP also contributes to strengthening environmental decision-making processes by involving all interested parties,
- integrated product policy strengthens the product dimension in EU environment policy, simultaneously promoting EU broader environmental, economic and social targets and fulfilling the Lisbon objectives to create an EU eco-efficient economy and the related international commitments. IPP therefore needs to be closely integrated with other EU policies providing a link between production and consumption,
- IPP represents an important element of the future thematic strategies regarding sustainable use of natural resources and prevention and recycling of waste and other EU environmental strategies,
- IPP contributes to the availability and promotion, at the European level, of tools and frameworks with the purpose of providing consumers, and more generally all market actors, with product information, based on solid scientific elements, thereby contributing to a more transparent market,

- IPP has an important role in meeting the EU's commitment to elaborate the 10 year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) included in the Plan of Implementation from the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development;

3. WELCOMES:

- the Commission communication on "Integrated Product Policy – Building on environmental life-cycle thinking" and supports the key principles of the Commission's IPP approach such as life-cycle thinking, stakeholder involvement, a market driven approach, an optimal mix of instruments, as well as the intention of the Commission to establish concrete initiatives and timetables,
- the Commission's intention to encourage relevant actors to include in their policies objectives to reduce environmental impacts of all products aiming at a continuous improvement of products and services produced in their respective sectors;

4. CALLS UPON the Commission and Member States as appropriate to:

Scope of IPP

- apply, as already requested in the Environment Council conclusions of 7 June 2001, the IPP approach also for services, and especially for key areas such as tourism,
- in particular, explore further the approaches for encouraging a movement from products to services, where this would use fewer resources and reduce environmental impacts;

Green Public Procurement:

- further strengthen Green Public Procurement (GPP) in order to promote greener products diffusion and cleaner technologies as well as further encourage local and national authorities to take fully into account environmental aspects in public procurement,
- promote the role of public procurement in stimulating high environmental performance through sustainable innovation and improved technology,
- finalise rapidly the Product Group Database on existing product criteria and support actively its use on a voluntary basis by Member States and, at the same time, continue to inform public purchasers on how Ecolabel, Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) and EMAS should be used in relation to public procurement,
- promote GPP experiences and information exchange by supporting national and local networks (e.g. BIG-NET),
- promote the establishment of a GPP focused working group in order, inter alia, to exchange information and experiences , measure progress, develop suitable indicators and to discuss the need for further EU initiatives on GPP;

Consumer information:

- improve the quality of environmental information to the consumers, advise Member States in view of a better application of the existing legislation as well as its future modification, and strengthening the role of its guidelines on green claims;

Coordination of instruments and related information tools:

- present a coherent strategy for existing and future information instruments in order to promote environmental improvements through the whole supply chain. Such a strategy should:
 - = be based on the principles of life-cycle thinking,
 - = take account of the different needs of actors in the supply chain, also developing or improving all the relevant forms of information,
 - = set out plans for greater synergy between the information and management tools (inter alia ecolabelling, Life Cycle Assessment, EPD, Environment Management Scheme, GPP) that need coordination in order to make possible the use of same data for different purposes and to make existing and future product related voluntary, legal and economic instruments, more efficient and mutually supportive,
 - = show how these information tools and the resulting knowledge base can be integrated into other IPP measures, notably GPP and product standards (for example, in the context of the Commission's proposed directive on energy-using products),
 - = improve the quality and quantity of voluntary environmental information to the consumers and other stakeholders throughout the product chain by removing barriers and improving the access to such information;

Research:

- further promote the role of research in order to improve the scientific base of the assessment of the harmfulness of different substances and the environmental impact of different products and in order to provide a basis for the development of more environmentally friendly technologies, products and services,
- further promote inter-disciplinary research in order to identify challenges and opportunities to sustainable production and consumption;

Workplan and timetable:

- establish a more detailed work-plan and timetable for actions, initiatives and implementation foreseen by the communication; in particular the elaboration of action plans for the integration of environmental requirements into public procurement, the discussion on establishing a Community Environment Product Declaration (EPD) scheme or framework, the setting out a strategy on information tools and the identification of products with the greatest potential for the environmental improvement should be considered in an earlier phase;

IPP permanent working group:

- define more precisely how Member States are to be effectively involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of the IPP,
- establish a formal working group to support the Commission in the follow up of the communication, with effective means of consultation with all relevant stakeholders;

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises:

- take account of special needs of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) when developing IPP initiatives, also bearing in mind their role in the Member States' economy,
- disseminate the positive experiences of SMEs that, through clean product development and the use of voluntary IPP instruments, have increased their market share;

Pilot projects:

- involve Member States in the selection of pilot projects in order to avoid duplication and to optimise previous experiences;

Environmental Design:

- ensure that new Directives concerning products will promote environmental design of products and the efficient use of raw materials, taking into consideration the environmental impacts caused by goods and services along their whole life cycle,
- if using the "New Approach" for proposals for Community legislation, to develop these proposals so that precise environmental targets and requirements are set in the political process;

Relation to relevant policy approaches:

- develop the IPP approach in relation to the objectives to be set for products in the new thematic strategies and other relevant policy approaches as defined by the 6th Environment Action Programme such as the new chemicals policy, inter alia by ensuring that life-cycle assessment and other tools take chemical usage into account and by clarifying the responsibilities of downstream users and the role of the final consumer;

Future developments:

- review the international dimension of life-cycle thinking in the report to be presented to the Council and to the Parliament in 2007;

Environmentally negative subsidies:

- give high priority to work on a list of criteria which allow environmentally negative subsidies to be recorded;

Other economic instruments:

- consider, in the forthcoming Commission communication on economic instruments in environmental policy, how such instruments can support the implementation of IPP;

5. **CALLS UPON Member States**, in developing and implementing their national strategies on IPP and other relevant policies, to consider the content of the Commission communication and these conclusions as a guidance.

