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The environmental downsides of inaction

The COVID-19 crisis, a health emergency in the first place, has rapidly become a sweeping issue, impacting every aspect of the global economy with the potential to also leave its mark on the environmental roadmap of the European Union.

Sales and delivery of home appliances have been severely reduced in the last months. "Due to the precautionary health measures put in place since the outbreak, many home appliances that had been produced to be placed on the market to cover the normal demand are currently stocked in manufacturers' and retailers' warehouses." commented Paolo Falcioni, APPLiA's Director General. This is now a significant concern because of the impending start of the new Energy Labelling Regulation for Washing Machines, Washer Dryers, Dishwashers and Refrigerator/Freezers, on 1 November 2020. This new legislation requires that products must have a new Energy Label to be placed on the European market from 1 November. The new Energy Label cannot be created for many of these products as test measurement standards are also changed at the same time the new Energy Label is introduced. There is no practical possibility to perform new testing for this large volume of products that only have the old Energy Label. These products will not be compliant after 1 November 2020. "There is now an imminent risk that, due to the disruptions of COVID-19, producers will not be able to place some products, that have only the old Energy Label, on the market before 1 November 2020. There is a huge stock that will not be able to be sold. Such products may then have to be scrapped, if this issue is not addressed." added Paolo Falcioni. "We believe such scrapping of newly produced products will not be in the interest of anyone and needs to be avoided to ensure no additional negative environmental impacts. Scrapping implies a loss of raw material and increased consumption of CO2. To understand the dimension of the problem, for washing machines alone, 27,7 million units were traded in Europe last year."

In the extraordinary situation of COVID-19, additional negative environmental impacts on the circular economy can be prevented by allowing products that only have the old Energy Label to still be placed on the market for a few months after 1 November 2020. This is why APPLiA has requested that the deadlines of the provision of the new Energy Label are adapted to the unforeseen situation. It is important to note that APPLiA is still fully committed to the original date for introduction of the new Energy Labels for the consumer at the points of sale from March 2021.

Aware of the recovery actions the European Commission is putting in place to support industry and citizens in the aftermath of the crisis, the home appliance sector draws the attention also to the downsides of inactions in the achievement of tomorrow's objectives.



APPLiA - Home Appliance Europe represents home appliance manufacturers from across Europe. By promoting innovative, sustainable policies and solutions for EU homes, APPLiA has helped build the sector into an economic powerhouse, with an annual turnover of EUR 50 billion, investing over EUR 1.4 billion in R&D activities and creating nearly 1 million jobs.

