

Brussels, 16 July 2008

Sustainability Action Plan: an opportunity?

Today, the European Commission has adopted a package to promote sustainable industrial policy and sustainable consumption and production, a move fundamentally endorsed by Orgalime.

“For our industry, sustainability is something we must achieve and which is achievable”, stated Adrian Harris, Secretary General of Orgalime, adding that “At the level of the energy efficiency of our products, we are already delivering innovative solutions. We are also working all the time on further reducing raw materials usage and on the other factors which impact the environment. The main challenge, however, is to get our innovative products into the market”.

Orgalime believes that if this policy is about moving towards a low carbon economy, then the Action Plan has to be about more than just labelling or an extension of the scope of the Eco Design (EuP) Directive, as the Commission’s video news release seems to imply.

“It is essential that the Action Plan creates the framework where consumers are aware of the role they play, can afford sustainable products and invest in these. This will bring about the required change in the market without creating collateral damage to the competitiveness of industry. We must have a win-win situation for the environment, the consumers and industry” continued Harris.

Orgalime sees the potential that the Commission’s Action Plan offers for a sustainable industrial policy if it helps to increase awareness among consumers, whether private, public or professional, of the need to adopt a more sustainable investment and consumption behaviour. It is essential to avoid the situation where only wealthier consumers can afford better performing products. Consumers need to be attracted to invest in innovative products, as otherwise the efficiency gains in which industry has invested heavily will go to waste.

If this package is implemented properly, it can underpin the framework under which our industry is already operating: the EuP Directive with its minimum requirements, voluntary benchmarks developed by our companies, and the implementation of the proposals recently made by the industry in the Electra report on how to effectively reach the EU’s 2020 climate change goals.

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Notes for the Editor:

Orgalime comments to the EC Commission Stakeholder Consultation on Action Plans Sustainable Industrial Policy and Sustainable Consumption and Production can be found at <http://www.orgalime.org/positions/positions.asp?id=285>

Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, speaks for 35 trade federations representing some 130,000 companies in the mechanical, electrical, electronic, metalworking & metal articles industries of 23 European countries. The industry employs some 10.9 million people in the EU and in 2007 accounted for some €1,813 billion of annual output. The industry not only represents more than one quarter of the output of manufactured products but also a third of the manufactured exports of the European Union.