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Power-hungry refrigerators, freezers, and washing machines to disappear from the market EU Parliament to resolve new standards for lower energy household appliances

The EU Parliament is due to decide tomorrow (Wednesday) on more stringent standards in the energy efficiency of refrigerators, freezers, and washing machines. Should the Parliament approve the proposals made by the EU Member States in late March, any washing machine, fridge or freezer with an energy efficiency class lower than 'A' would be eliminated from the market starting July 2010. A second stage beginning 1 July 2012 would prohibit the sale of refrigerators and freezers that have energy efficiency class 'A' that is valid until that time. Washing machines with energy efficiency class 'A' would largely be taken from the market as of 1 July 2013. "I am delighted by these proposals. Should they be implemented, new labelling on power consumption could save 7.5 billion kilowatt hours of energy over current levels by 2020-- a volume equivalent to roughly two power plants with 800-megawatt output capacity. We would thereby save 3.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in the EU", said Dr. Thomas Holzmann, the Vice President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA).

In addition to the energy efficiency requirements, the EU Parliament is considering other proposals for updating energy consumption labelling in sessions scheduled for early May. The established energy classification of A to G in these household appliances is to continue to exist, with the A class upgraded as follows: depending on product group, it will be 'A minus 10', 20, 40, 60 or 80 percent (A-x%).

It is doubtful whether an energy label featuring energy classes that are no longer available for sale will provide good information with which consumers then opt for particularly efficient appliances. The Federal Environment Agency believes it makes more sense to regularly re-classify the energy efficiency index rather than add new classes. "Should the EU Parliament reject the labelling proposal, this would be the logical conclusion", said Holzmann.

Further information is available from a background paper (in German) titled Neue Ökodesign-Anforderungen und Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung für Kühl- und Gefriergeräte sowie Waschmaschinen [New Eco-design requirements and energy use labelling for refrigerators, freezers and washing machines] http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3618

A press release about the scheduled changes in television sets can be read here:
http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse/2009/pd09-021_fernsehgeraete_sollen_kuenftig_sparsamer_werden.htm

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