

# Press Release No. 41/2010

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## Producers of energy-saving lamps must use Blue Angel eco-label

**vzbv and UBA call for better quality – merchants must simplify take-back of used lamps**

**Producers of energy-saving lamps ought to use the Blue Angel eco-label for the sake of better consumer purchasing orientation. This demand has been made by the Federation of German Consumer Organisations – vzbv and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) as the second phase of the Commission Regulation on household lamps enters into force on 1 September. Standard light bulbs of more than 60 watts will no longer be sold. Both organisations expect merchants to set up a functional and comprehensive take-back system to ensure proper disposal of the new products, which contain minor amounts of mercury.**

To help customers a new Blue Angel eco-label for energy-saving lamps, especially compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) and LED lamps, was developed. It covers all important aspects of their use as well as ecology and health protection, and its standard surpasses statutory requirements. Test results from Stiftung Warentest were also included in the development of criteria. "The Blue Angel stands for quality and will make it easier for consumers to find the right lamp, which can only be in merchants' interest, too", said Dr. Evelyn Hagenah, Chief of the Sustainable Products and Consumption Patterns Department at UBA. Many producers nevertheless remain hesitant, claiming the Blue Angel logo takes up too much space, that separate packaging for the German market only is too expensive, and that meeting statutory requirements is sufficient. "Considering the size of the German market, these arguments are unjustifiable," said vzbv Director Gerd Billen critically. Producers' drawing attention to the CE marking is not convincing either for "this marking means nothing to consumers as it is affixed to products without any independent monitoring by third parties.

### Improving disposal

The issue of disposal has not been yet been settled satisfactorily: energy-saving lamps hold a few milligrams of mercury and may not be disposed of with regular household waste. Consumers may deposit spent lamps at municipal recycling yards at no cost. In some cases they may even return them to merchants, but there are not nearly enough. "We cannot expect consumers to travel great distances to the nearest recycling yards for a single lamp. It would make a lot more sense to be able to take spent lamps back to the shop," said UBA's Hagenah. vzbv and UBA are calling for the trade to voluntarily set up a standardised and comprehensive take-back system. Consumers ought to be able to easily and safely dispose of spent lamps where they also buy their new ones.

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## Consumer associations lend support

The Federation of German Consumer Organisations -vzbv have determined that consumers have been very confused since the gradual phase-out of light bulbs started on the European market in the name of energy efficiency. Since the range of products on the market has become considerably larger with compact fluorescent lamps and LED lamps, consumers have had to come to terms with product properties such as luminous power and colour temperature in order to find the right lamp to suit their purposes. However, only the widespread use of energy-saving lamps would result in tangibly felt savings. "At the moment many people are buying the wrong lamps, which are then put aside or disposed of improperly," says Billen. Tips on buying are given during energy informational sessions at consumer association offices. Information is also available from the Federal Environment Agency website.

Links:

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/energie/sparen.htm>  
<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien/3915.html>  
<http://www.verbraucherzentrale-energieberatung.de/web>  
<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/energie-e/licht/index.htm>

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