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**COMMISSION DECISION**

of **XXX**

**establishing the EU Ecolabel criteria for printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products**

(Text with EEA relevance)

# COMMISSION DECISION

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## establishing the EU Ecolabel criteria for printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 8(2) thereof,

After consulting the European Union Ecolabelling Board,

Whereas:

- (1) Under Regulation (EC) No 66/2010, the EU Ecolabel may be awarded to those products with a reduced environmental impact during their entire life cycle.
- (2) Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 provides that specific EU Ecolabel criteria are to be established according to product groups.
- (3) Commission Decision 2014/256/EU<sup>2</sup> established criteria and related assessment and verification requirements for the product group 'converted paper products'. The period of validity of those criteria and requirements was extended to 31 December 2020 by Commission Decision (EU) 2017/1525<sup>3</sup>.
- (4) Commission Decision 2012/481/EU<sup>4</sup> established the criteria and related assessment and verification requirements for the product group 'printed paper'. The period of validity of those criteria and requirements was extended to 31 December 2020 by Commission Decision (EU) 2018/1590<sup>5</sup>.
- (5) The EU Ecolabel Fitness check (REFIT) of 30 June 2017, reviewing the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 66/2010<sup>6</sup>, concluded on the need to develop a

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel (OJ L 27, 30.1.2010, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Decision 2014/256/EU of 2 May 2014 establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for converted paper products (OJ L 135, 8.5.2014, p. 24).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Decision (EU) 2017/1525 of 4 September 2017 amending Decision 2014/256/EU in order to prolong the validity of the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel to converted paper products (OJ L 230, 6.9.2017, p. 28).

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision 2012/481/EU of 16 August 2012 establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for printed paper (OJ L 223, 21.8.2012, p. 55)

<sup>5</sup> Commission Decision (EU) 2018/1590 of 19 October 2018 amending Decisions 2012/481/EU, 2014/391/EU, 2014/763/EU and 2014/893/EU as regards the period of validity of the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for certain products, and of the related assessment and verification requirements (OJ L 264, 23.10.2018, p. 24)

<sup>6</sup> REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the review of implementation of Regulation (EC) No 122/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-

more strategic approach for the EU Ecolabel, including the bundling of closely related product groups where appropriate.

- (6) In line with those conclusions and after consulting the EU Ecolabelling Board it is appropriate to revise the criteria for the product groups 'converted paper products' and 'printed paper', taking into consideration the current success, stakeholders' interest in the product and potential future windows of opportunity for increased uptake and market`s demand on sustainable products.
- (7) Since the two product groups 'printed paper' and 'converted paper products' are closely related and their criteria will be similar, it is appropriate to adopt a single decision establishing both sets of criteria in the same Annex. The new product group name should be modified to 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' to better reflect product functionality and ensure the clarity of the products included in the scope. This should also increase the visibility of the schemes for market participants and reduce the administrative burden for national authorities.
- (8) In addition, in line with the review, certain modifications should be made to the definition of the product group "printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products", notably to make a clearer distinction between different type of products.
- (9) The revised EU Ecolabel criteria aim at using paper produced in a more sustainable way and sourced from sustainably managed forests or recycled materials. The new criteria are based on a life cycle analysis approach and aim to promote energy efficient manufacturing processes which deliver reduced emissions of substances that contribute to the photochemical oxidation, human toxicity, abiotic depletion, eutrophication acidification, and climate change. The revised criteria restrict the use of hazardous substances, addresses emissions generated during the printing process, reduce the quantity of paper waste generated in a process and increase product recyclability which contributes to facilitate the transition to a more circular economy.
- (10) To better reflect best practice in the market for these product groups and to take account of innovations introduced in the intervening period, it is appropriate to establish a new set of criteria for the merged product groups.
- (11) The new criteria and related assessment and verification requirements for each product group should remain valid until 31 December 20XX, taking into account the innovation cycle for the two product groups.
- (12) For reasons of legal certainty, Decision 2014/256/EU and Decision 2012/481/EU should be repealed.
- (13) A transitional period should be allowed for producers whose products have been awarded the EU Ecolabel for converted paper products, or printed products on the basis of the criteria set out in Decision 2014/256/EU or Decision 2012/481/EU respectively, so that they have sufficient time to adapt their products to comply with the new criteria and requirements. For a limited period after adoption of this Decision, producers should also be allowed to submit applications based either on the criteria established by those Decisions or on the new criteria established by this Decision. EU Ecolabel licences awarded in accordance with the criteria set out in one of the old Decisions may be used for 12 months from the date of adoption of this Decision. The

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management and audit scheme (EMAS) and the Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel (COM(2017) 355).

measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee established by Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 66/2010,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

*Article 1*

The product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' shall comprise the following products:

- (a) printed paper products that consist of at least 90 % by weight of paper, paperboard or paper-based substrates, except for books, catalogues, booklets or forms that shall consist of at least 80 % by weight of paper or paperboard or paper-based substrates. Inserts, covers and any printed paper parts of the final product shall be considered to form part of the product;
- (b) envelopes that consist of at least 90% by weight of paper, paperboard or paper-based substrates;
- (c) paper carrier bags including paper wrappings and gift paper that consist of 100 % by weight of paper, paperboard or paper-based substrates;
- (d) stationery paper products including filing products that consist of at least 70 % by weight of paper, paperboard or paper based substrates, except for suspension files and folders with metal fastener for stationery paper products;

For the products referred to in points (a) fixed inserts to the printed paper product (not intended to be removed) shall fulfil the requirements of the Annex to this Decision. Inserts that are not fixed to the printed paper (such as flyers, removable stickers) but sold or provided with it, shall fulfil the requirements of the Annex to this Decision only if the EU Ecolabel is intended to be placed on them.

For products referred to in point (d) the plastic component cannot exceed 10 % except for ring binders, exercise books, notebooks, diaries, and lever arch files where the plastic weight cannot exceed 13 %. The metal weight cannot exceed 30 g per product except for suspension files, folders with metal fasteners, ring binders and lever arch files having a filing capacity of up to 225 sheets where it can be up to 50 g and except for lever arch files having a filing capacity of more than 225 sheets, where it can be up to 170 g.

The product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' shall not include the following products:

- (a) packaging and packaging elements such as labels (with the exception of paper carrier bags and gift wrappings);
- (b) corrugated board;
- (c) products falling within the product group 'tissue paper and tissue products' as defined by Article 2 in Commission Decision (EU) 2019/70;
- (d) fragranced printed paper products, fragranced stationary paper products, and fragranced carrier bags.
- (e) PVC shall not be used

## Article 2

For the purposes of this Decision, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) ~~'converted paper product' is a paper, paperboard or paper based substrates, either printed or unprinted, generally used to protect, handle or store items and/or notes, for which the converting process is an essential part of the production process. comprising three main categories of products: envelopes, paper carrier bags and stationery paper products;~~
- (2) ~~'converting process' means a process whereby a material is processed into a converted paper product. This process can include a printing process (pre-press, press, and post-press operations);~~
- (3) 'binders' are filing paper-based products consisting of a cover, usually made of board, with rings for holding loose papers together, such as ring binders and lever arch files;
- (4) 'books' means yarn-bound and/or glue-bound printed paper products with hard or soft covers, such as school books, fiction or non-fiction books, notebooks, exercise books, spiral-bound notebook, reports, calendars with covers, handbooks and paperbacks. 'Books' do not include journals, brochures, magazines, catalogues published on a regular basis and annual reports;
- (5) 'filing products' mean product used for organization, storage and protection of paper documents, such as e.g. suspension files, arch lever files;
- (6) 'folder' means a folding case or cover for loose papers. Folders include products such as indices dividers, document wallets, square cut folders, suspension files, cardboard boxes and 3-flap folders;
- (7) 'insert' means an extra leaf or section, printed independently from the printed paper product which is either placed within the pages of a printed paper product and may be removed (loose insert) or bound into the pages of the printed paper product and thus form an integral part thereof (fixed insert). Inserts include multipage advertisements, booklets, brochures, reply cards, or other promotional materials;
- (8) 'non-paper components' means all the parts of a converted paper product that do not consist of paper, paperboard or paper based substrates;
- (9) 'packaging' means all products made of any material of any nature to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery or presentation of goods, from raw materials to processed goods, from the producer to the user or the consumer;
- (10) 'paper carrier bags' are paper-based products used for the handling/transportation of goods. For the objective of this Decision the papier carrier bags include wrapping paper that means a loose paper sheet for packaging goods;
- (11) 'printed paper product' means product bearing the printed image resulting from the processing of a printing material. The processing consists of printing onto paper. In addition to printing, the processing may include finishing, for example folding, stamping and cutting or assembling, using glue, binding, yarn-binding. Printed paper products include newspapers, advertising materials and newsheets, journals, catalogues, books, leaflets, brochures, pads, posters, loose-leafs, business cards, and labels;
- (12) 'printing' (or printing process) means a process whereby a printing material is processed into a printed paper product. Printing includes pre-press, press, and post-press operations;

- (13) 'stationery paper products' mean writing and filing materials made of paper, including envelopes, and office materials such as folders, binders, notebooks, pads, notepads, exercise books, spiral-bound notebook, calendars with covers, diaries and loose-leaves;
- ~~(14) 'Volatile Organic Compounds' (VOC) means any organic compound as well as the fraction of creosote, having at 293,15 K a vapour pressure of 0,01 kPa or more, or having a corresponding volatility under the particular conditions of use.~~
- ~~(15) 'recycled fibres' means fibres diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process or generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end users of the product. These fibres can no longer be used for their intended purpose. It excludes reutilisation of materials generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated them (paper machine broke — own produced or purchased);~~

#### *Article 2*

In order for a product to be awarded the EU Ecolabel under Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 for the product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' it shall fall within the definition of that product group as specified in Article 1 of this Decision and shall comply with the criteria and related assessment and verification requirements set out in the Annex to this Decision.

#### *Article 3*

The criteria for the product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' and the related assessment and verification requirements shall be valid until 31 December 20XX.

#### *Article 4*

For administrative purposes, the code number assigned to the product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' shall be 'XX'.

#### *Article 5*

Decision 2014/256/EU and Decision 2012/481 are repealed.

#### *Article 6*

1. Notwithstanding Article 5, applications submitted before the date of adoption of this Decision for the EU Ecolabel for product group 'converted paper products' as defined in Decision 2014/256/EU shall be evaluated in accordance with the conditions laid down in Decision 2014/256/EU.

2. Notwithstanding Article 5, applications submitted before the date of adoption of this Decision for the EU Ecolabel for product group 'printed paper' as defined in Decision 2012/481/EU shall be evaluated in accordance with the conditions laid down in Decision 2012/448/EU.

4. Applications for the EU Ecolabel for products falling within the product group 'printed paper, stationary paper, and paper carrier bag products' submitted on or within two months from the date of adoption of this Decision may be based either on the criteria set out in this

Decision, or on the criteria set out in Decision 2014/256/EU for product group 'converted paper products', or in Decision 2012/481/EU for product group 'printed paper', as applicable. Those applications shall be evaluated in accordance with the criteria on which they are based.

5. EU Ecolabel licenses awarded on the basis of an application evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in Decision 2014/256/EU or Decision 2012/481/EU may be used for 12 months from the date of adoption of this Decision.

*Article 7*

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*  
*Karmenu VELLA*

*Member of the Commission*

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