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# New ecodesign rules freeze out Europe's local space heaters

Proposed EU rules could see almost 100% of solid fuel local space heaters disappear from the European market, destroying European jobs, growth and competitiveness, warns CEFACD

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BY CEFACD, EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF MANUFACTURERS OF DOMESTIC HEATING AND COOKING APPLIANCES

At a time when the European Union is striving to increase its competitiveness through its Competitiveness Compass, the new ecodesign rules for solid fuel local space heaters (i.e. your wood stove) may do the opposite. The European Commission is rolling out its ecodesign requirements with the aim of achieving resource and energy efficiency while boosting the circular use of materials that help decarbonization, competitiveness and economic security. Manufacturers underline that they are keen to help achieve that objective, but what's currently on the table is not fit for purpose.

European manufacturers warn that the draft proposal published on Jan. 24, 2025 will not only undermine European competitiveness, but also destroy a European industry that accounts for 11,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and around 200,000 jobs.

Raymond Zantinge, president of the European Committee of Manufacturers of Domestic Heating and Cooking Appliances (CEFACD), said: *“We are deeply committed and engaged in producing cleaner and greener ways to heat homes. However, innovation takes time. Setting unachievable standards to be met in unrealistic timelines derails our innovation journey. The draft text creates more uncertainty rather than achieving better outcomes. This is especially the case when new testing standards for products being rolled out are not scientifically backed. In fact, we can end up with products that are worse. Also, having these new standards come into force on Jul. 1, 2027 places an unreasonable burden on manufacturers, especially SMEs, with insufficient time for retesting, recertification and necessary product re-design. It feels very much like ideology getting in the way of science and, frankly, it risks jobs, growth and worse environmental outcomes.”*

The proposed requirements, in their current form, use widely untested and unreliable standards, that are not developed through the scientifically backed normalisation route approach through the European standardisation system (CEN).

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Manufacturers have underlined that a better roll-out would include reasonable testing standards as well as a more realistic period of five to seven years. This would allow for sufficient preparation and adaptation, aligning better with the industry's capabilities and the goals of the European Competitiveness Compass.

With over 41 million Europeans already struggling to keep their homes adequately warm, this roll-out plan leaves a large part of Europeans at risk of greater energy poverty.

Many of us rely on local space heaters, particularly in recent months with the cold weather in Europe. This locally sourced technology is used to improve our everyday lives, providing comfort and essential heating while supporting Europe's energy sovereignty. As we transition to renewable energy in Europe, energy prices remain high, and domestic stoves offer a stable and manageable low-carbon heat source that reduces the strain on electric grids and gas networks. These stoves are particularly vital for vulnerable rural populations, providing cost-effective means to heat homes amid the ongoing challenges of energy security and affordability.

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Maintaining woodland sustainably produces fuel and promotes rural economies and supports responsible woodland management. The decline of this sector would not only impact energy affordability, but also our maintenance of rural woodlands and the renewable energy mix. Biomass, including wood, is the main source of renewable energy in the EU and there are sustainability requirements for the wood and wood pellets used for heating homes. By eradicating solid fuel local space heaters, the Commission risks undermining this portion of our renewable energy mix, which is an essential heating source for some Europeans.

Manufacturers also warn against the decision-making process. CEFACD's secretary-general, James Verlaque, said: *"We are really concerned that the requirements propose elements based on an impact assessment that has not been made available to us. It is important that the Commission is transparent on the impact of its proposal as, based on our assessment, this legislation is not fit for purpose. Legislation with such a strong impact on the European economy deserves involvement from the European Council and the European Parliament. Bringing in standards that have such huge ramifications with one institution acting alone does not allow for the necessary democratic oversight that this deserves."*

The industry's ability to innovate and improve to produce ever-cleaner burning, efficient stoves has been demonstrated through significant advancements made in products since the first Ecodesign Directive came into force. This included increases in the efficiency of products so that they require less fuel to generate heat. It has also included improvements to the combustion technology of appliances, reducing emissions. Furthermore, the industry has made progress on transitioning toward a circular economy model, with products that now mainly consist of almost completely recyclable materials and have a long life span to reduce waste.

The industry is speaking up in an unprecedented fashion to ensure that this important European market is not destroyed to the competitive advantage of international players bringing product to the EU.

*"The EU's pursuit of environmental ambition must be balanced with needing to protect jobs, support SMEs and ensure energy affordability."*

The EU's pursuit of environmental ambition must be balanced with needing to protect jobs, support SMEs and ensure energy affordability. The proposed Ecodesign

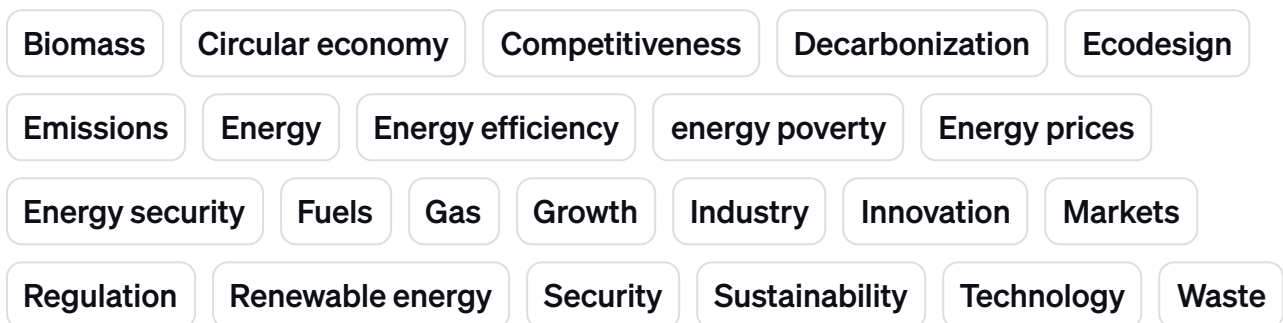
Regulation , in its current form, risk undermining these objectives by imposing unrealistic standards and unvalidated testing methods on the solid fuel local space heaters sector. By adopting a more balanced and scientifically grounded approach, the EU can achieve its goals of decarbonisation and competitiveness without sacrificing the economic sustainability of a vital industry. Transparent and inclusive policymaking, informed by thorough impact assessments, is essential to navigate this complex landscape and ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all European citizens.

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