

Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 16th December 2016

CC: College of Commissioners

Co-operative Retailers support the EU Ecolabel for tissue products

Dear President Juncker,

We are writing to you as a group of concerned co-operative retailers.

The minutes from the orientation debate held by the College of Commissioners on 25th October indicate that you proposed that the EU Ecolabel for the “tissue paper” product group should be discontinued. Unfortunately, the reasoning behind this suggestion is unclear. This Product Group can be considered to be very successful, since a large number of licenses have been issued for it, and there is an extensive range of products with the label on the market.

As a recognized and rigorous standard, the EU Ecolabel allows us, as retailers, to buy trusted products from our suppliers, and we pass on that trust to our customers who can then make informed decisions about the environmental credentials of products. For some of our members, their engagement with the EU Ecolabel for tissue products goes back years.

Such is the interest in EU Ecolabel for tissue products that some of our members collaborate with suppliers to have their own private-label ones. For instance, in 1999, Coop Italia launched a private-label toilet paper with the EU Ecolabel, and this has since extended to include tissues, kitchen roll and serviettes. Vivi Verde, Coop Italia’s private label of EU Ecolabel products, grew by 3% this year and has a turnover of €15 million. Not only does the EU Ecolabel represent an important sector of the market for tissue paper products, the label itself is crucial for gaining consumers’ trust and allowing them to make conscious decisions about their purchases.

Furthermore, according to the Commission Communication “Next Steps for a sustainable European future”, from 22 November 2016, the EU is “fully committed to be a frontrunner in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and part of this is to support consumer policies “that raise awareness and allow consumers to make informed choices contributing to sustainability.” The EU Ecolabel for tissue paper products supports this objective as it contributes to SDG 12.8 to ensure that people have the relevant information for lifestyles in harmony with nature.

Rather than diminishing the EU Ecolabel by discontinuing the Tissue Paper Product Group, we strongly recommend that further resources be directed towards the scheme in order to strengthen the EU Ecolabel as a whole and stimulate greater uptake of the label across the EU.

Yours sincerely,

Massimo Bongiovanni
President