

Parliament agrees stance on green construction product rules

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By Simon Pickstone - 12 July 2023

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The European Parliament's position, adopted with 498 votes in favour, 124 against, with 16 abstentions, retains the core features of the European Commission [proposal](#), in contrast to the [general approach adopted by member states](#) that would remove many of its environmental provisions. The Left and the Greens voted against the text.

Under the proposed changes, the Commission would task European standardisation bodies to set harmonised green standards for construction products, and would draw up a work plan of priority products every three years – in line with the EU Council's general approach.

But MEPs rejected an amendment tabled by the Greens – with 249 votes for, 380 against and 10 abstentions – that would require the first CPR work plan to cover at least cement, concrete and steel.

To the disappointment of green groups, Parliament's position also retains the Commission's proposal to keep cement exclusively under the scope of the CPR, meaning it could not be covered by ecodesign rules that they [say would be more effective](#).

"In the case of energy-related products included in ecodesign working plans which are also construction products and for intermediary products, with the exception of cement, priority for the setting of sustainability requirements will be given to the [Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation]," the proposal reads.

MEPs voted to only allow the Commission to draw up its own product standards as a fall-back option, where standardisation bodies fail to produce a standard, in "well-defined cases where the application of a legislative act is at risk". They deleted the possibility of doing so where there is "an urgency... that cannot be matched" by the independent bodies, as proposed by the Commission.

They also removed clauses giving the Commission the powers to restrict or overrule "deficient standards" through secondary legislation, require a minimum number of product checks by national regulators, or set minimum national penalties for non-compliance.

On green public procurement, public authorities would only be “encouraged” and not “required” to align with product sustainability criteria – where the Commission had proposed aligning with sustainability criteria and targets.

Other changes include removing products made on building sites from the scope of the regulation – unless they have not previously been placed on the EU market, deleting the possibility of setting harmonised rules for small prefabricated houses, and calling on the Commission to adopt a digital product passport.

However, unlike the Council, MEPs have endorsed the Commission’s proposal to set delegated acts setting out basic environmental requirements for products as well as labels containing information on a product’s environmental performance.

“General requirements on the gradual improvement of environmental performance, the preferred use of environmentally friendly materials, recycled content obligations and the availability of information on the use, repair, remanufacturing or recycling of products should be applicable to all manufacturers,” a recital in the Parliament’s text reads.

All products placed on the market 10 years after relevant environmental performance classes are adopted should fall “within the two highest... classes”, another amendment says.

The European Environmental Bureau largely criticised Parliament’s text, saying it was a “roadblock for progress” in reducing the construction sector’s environmental footprint. “The technical nature of the file and the non-compromising and business-biased attitude from the file’s rapporteur has meant its impact was largely overlooked by policymakers,” the group said in a statement.

A spokesperson for the European Construction Industry Federation told ENDS the negotiating position was a “good step in the right direction” that would help make the standardisation process “more efficient”.

“However, compared to the position of the Council, there is ambiguity in the position of the Parliament about the question of whether the new rules would also apply to construction companies that carry out construction works,” the spokesperson said.

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Follow-up: [Adopted text](#)