



Deliverable 3.3: Report summarizing the sharing best practices events



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Introduction

As part of Work Package 3 (Consumer outreach), BEUC organised two workshops to present the key changes to the energy label and share best practices to inform consumers about such changes. The target audience was composed of national consumer organisations and personalities, which are members of BEUC and its sister organisation ANEC (the European consumer voice in standardisation). During both events, officials of the European Commission were invited to present the key policy developments on energy labelling and the European Commission's communication campaign on the EU Energy Labels. Participants were invited to share information about how consumers perceived the recent changes in their country and what were the main challenges and best practices in the communication activities.

Webinar 1: The New EU Energy Label – How to best communicate the rescaling to consumers?

The first webinar was organised on 30 October 2020, just before one of the milestone dates for the rescale of the energy label for fridges and freezers, washing machines and washer dryers, dishwashers, and TVs and monitors.

From 1 November 2020 to 1 March 2021, in fact, the new rescaled label for these appliances could begin to be shown with products, together with the old label. Following this transitory period, only the new rescaled label could be shown in shops, with some exceptions for old stocks.¹ BEUC took this occasion to present the key changes to the energy label and discuss the potential challenges that consumers may face during the transition period.

The webinar was attended by over twenty-five participants from different national consumer organisations that are members of BEUC and ANEC. The event was divided into three sessions, all followed by a Q&A, during which different speakers from BEUC, Altroconsumo, and the European Commission (DG ENER) presented the novelties of the new label, the role of the BELT project, and the European Commission's communication strategy on the new energy label.

Summary

The first session was dedicated to an introduction to the new energy labelling rules and the most important aspects to consider when communicating the rescale to consumers. The focus was given to the four-month transition period that started in November 2020, during which both the new and the old energy label could appear with sold products. It was discussed how the presence of the two types of energy label could confuse consumers and the type of messaging delivered through BELT's communication activities.

¹ Some old stocks of household appliances could be sold in shops without the new label until 30 November 2021.



The representative of the European Commission later presented their communication work regarding the rescaled label and invited participants to make use of the official material for their own communication campaigns. Member States' authorities should also run information campaigns about the rescaled energy label and collaborate with EU founded projects such as BELT.

Participants were interested to know the timeline of future rescales of the energy label for other white goods (such as ovens, vacuum cleaners, dryers, etc), as well as how authorities would ensure compliance with the new rules as of 1 December 2021. These two aspects were identified as important to avoid confusion among consumers and ensure continuous trust in this instrument.

Best practices

A. Clear messaging from the beginning of the communication campaign.

To ensure consumers become aware of the new energy label and to avoid confusion, clear and concise messages should be communicated from the start of the communication campaign. The key messages identified and communicated through the BELT project are:

- **The old and new energy labels should not be compared**, as formulas, parameters and ranges of values that determine the energy class of a product are different for each label. Consumers should only compare products' energy efficiency based on the same type of energy label.
- **The information is more accurate, the performance remains the same.** The downgrading of a product energy class from "A+++" to a lower class in the new label does not have any effect on the energy efficiency of the product.
- **The absence of products in the upper classes of the new energy label is due to stricter efficiency and performance standards.** This is intended to encourage manufacturers to improve the technology and make it more efficient with time.

We shared these messages in a [news piece](#) published on BEUC's website, at the beginning of the transition phase.

B. Targeted communication material and tools depending on the audience

The BELT project produced several communication material and tools for each interested target group, i.e., consumers, retailers, producers, and public buyers.² This differentiation allowed the BELT partners to focus on key messages and adapt the narrative based on the target group's needs and expectations.

C. Easy-to-access information for consumers

The European BELT [website](#) and the national BELT webpages set up by the partners of the project provide a useful repository of information and tools to understand the new energy label, for

² This material is available on the BELT Project's website: <https://www.belt-project.eu/news>



consumers and other interested stakeholders. Since the start of the project, we recorded more than 25.000 page views of the European BELT website.

D. Use of social media

Most of the communication material produced by the BELT Consortium has been disseminated via social media. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the social media activities performed by some members of the Consortium:

- ALTROCONSUMO: realised a social media campaign publishing and promoting several posts mainly on its Facebook channel that counts more than 500,000 followers. Contents of the posts were related to the energy label, especially in the different products tested and to the web calculator on consumption and possible savings. These posts received over 40M impressions and over 100,000 clicks to the pages dedicated to the topic and the project, while the promoted BELT videos reached about 400,000 complete views.
- BEUC: BEUC organised a social media campaign with the objective of explaining what the new label is about. They chose to break down the label's elements, explaining in individual visuals what each part means. They also put together an animated GIF to obtain a visual dynamic which shows all the different aspects of the label in one visual. The [thread](#) published on Twitter gained more than 7,000 views in total. BEUC's linked third parties (ALCO, CAI, EKPIZO, KEPKA) also extensively used their social media channels to share information about the new energy label and the BELT project.
- DECO PROTESTE: During the time of the project, they launched several social media campaigns to present the new label, to explain the differences between the new label and the older one, to present the timeline, among other information. In total they had 12 Facebook posts, 6 LinkedIn posts, 9 Twitter posts and 3 Instagram posts.
- ERION: starting from the end of 2020 and until the end of February 2021, the month before the displaying of the new energy label in shops, ERION communicated to consumers the main changes related to the new labelling system through its social media channels and website. Specifically, to prepare consumers to the change of the energy labelling system, ERION published 5 posts on Twitter, 4 posts on Facebook and 3 post on LinkedIn, reaching overall more than 11.700 followers, generating more than 3,700 views and more than 200 interactions.
- MCBO: The primary target for Metropolitan City of Bologna was the public and private procurement, so the communication was focused on the information useful for public and private buyers also for the preparation/participation in public tenders. The communication realised reached also citizens and consumers in general. MCBO created a LinkedIn page "[Belt](#)



[for buyers](#)". On 21 December 2021, a payment digital campaign was launched on LinkedIn. The target countries involved were: Italy, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania, Belgium, Switzerland, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia. was completed on 15 February 2021 and reached very good results. The campaign - in Italian, English, German, and Spanish - has achieved the following results: 231,672 unique users (of which 188,769 users from private companies and 42,903 users from public administrations); 74,424 views; 2,910 social interactions. The campaign was completed on 15 February 2022.

- OCU: During the project, OCU performed different communication activities towards consumers through their social media channels, explaining the main changes between the old and the new label. OCU made publications on Facebook (9), Twitter (8), LinkedIn (2) and Instagram (1). OCU also uploaded different news in its [Website](#). The piece of news about the new label (published in March 2021) was one of the most visited ones in 2021 in the Web with almost 190.000 viewers. Several payment digital campaigns were also launched with very good results.
- SONAE/WORTEN: during March 2021, following the formal retail implementation of the new energy label, WORTEN ran a social media campaign using posts and stories on Facebook and Instagram with a combined reach of 2,136,093 users.
- TEST ACHATS: during the time of the project, Test Achats launched several social media campaigns in Dutch and French to present & explain the new label, to promote the BELT tool & video, to communicate about the impact on the use of ecocheques in Belgium, and to communicate the results of a survey on the implementation of the new energy label by the retailers. In total they made 24 Facebook posts, 2 LinkedIn posts, and 6 Instagram posts.
- ZPS: ZPS informed its followers, Slovenian consumers, on Facebook and Twitter (FB: 51,000 followers/ TW: 4,400 followers) about the changes to the energy label through social media posts. While some posts were informative and they contained one specific piece of information or they contained BELT video, the goal of others was to get consumers to click on the link where they could access additional information. ZPS created simple visuals, short video content, and also an advertisement for the BELT tool. ZPS published more than 50 posts dedicated to the project, reaching a total of more than 80,000 impressions.

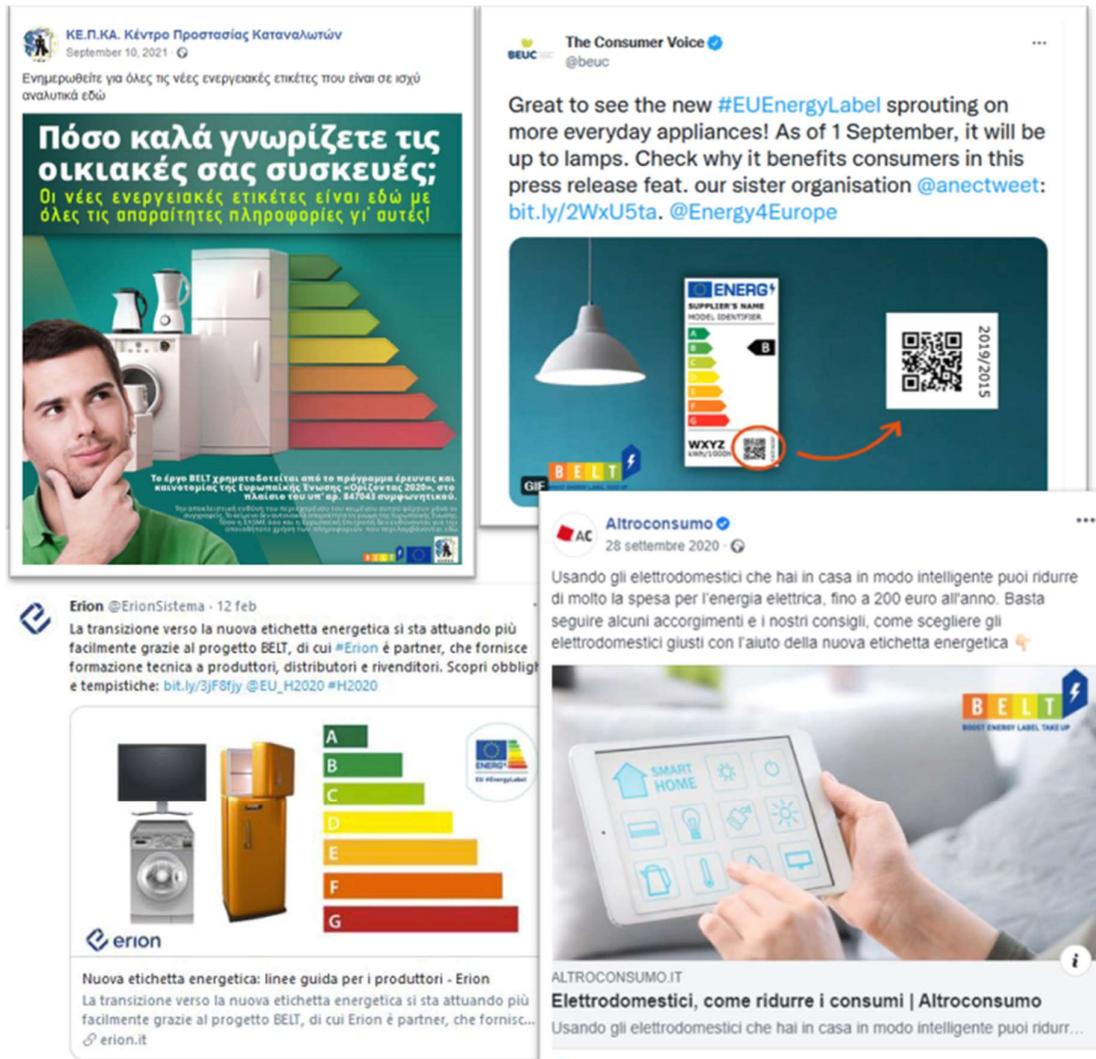


Figure 1: Examples of social media posts on the topic of the new energy label created by the BELT partners and linked third parties.

Future improvements

A. Dealing with Covid-19-related constraints

Due to the restrictions imposed by many EU governments to face the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the communication and dissemination activities carried out by the BELT partners were performed online. For most of the BELT partners, it was impossible to organise live events and physical activities, and this made the communication process more complex. We still strived to bring the information close to consumers thanks to a flyer we designed specifically to appear in retailers' shops.

In the future, when the pandemic situation will improve, one of the most effective activities to revamp communication to consumers will be to organise physical events, workshops, and meetings where it



would be possible to establish direct relationships and answer doubts consumers and other interested stakeholders may have.

B. Closer collaboration with Member States

To ensure larger dissemination, EU-funded projects such as BELT should be implemented alongside Governments-led campaigns. This is especially important where there is no project-partner from that country.

C. Direct communication with authorities

There should be direct communication channels with the competent authorities for consumers and interested stakeholders to be able to ask questions regarding the energy label rescale and share own experiences. This type of communication can inform policymakers regarding potential challenges and opportunities and provide useful input for future policy developments.

Webinar 2: The New EU Energy Label for Lamps

The second webinar was organised on 22 September 2021, right after the introduction of the new energy label for lighting sources, on 1 September 2021. The objectives of the webinar were to explain the key steps of the rescale for this product group, present the functioning of the EPREL database and its use by consumers, and exchange on the communication and dissemination activities performed by BELT partners and BEUC members.

The webinar was attended by over twenty participants from different national consumers organisations that are members of BEUC and ANEC. At the event, officials of the European Commission (DG ENER) gave presentations on the most recent policy developments regarding energy labelling and expectations for future rescals and the public interface of the EPREL database. Altroconsumo and the Association of Conscious Consumers presented the initial findings of their analysis on the energy label in Italy and in Hungary, respectively.

Summary

The focus of this webinar was the new energy label for lighting sources and the timeline of its introduction, which is longer than for white goods.³ As it was the case for the previous webinar, it was discussed how the presence of the old and new energy label for the same product could initially raise confusion among consumers and how to best communicate about the changes.

The first session was followed by two presentations by the representatives of the European Commission (DG ENER), who outlined the next phases of the energy label rescale and the key elements of EPREL. The priority for future rescals will be given to heating and cooling appliances, considering their key role for the green transition and the renovation wave.

³ Old stock of lighting products can be sold with the old label until 28 February 2023, while new products (placed on the market after 1 September 2021) can only be sold with the new label.



Finally, the BELT project leader Altroconsumo presented their most recent analysis on the energy label in Italy, focusing on the importance of providing consumers with information about the rescaled label at the point of sale (both in shops and online). They assessed the presence of information regarding the rescaled label in Italian online and physical shops during the month of August 2021. They found that only 5 out of 28 web-shops and 4 out of 8 physical stores had information readily available for consumers at the time.

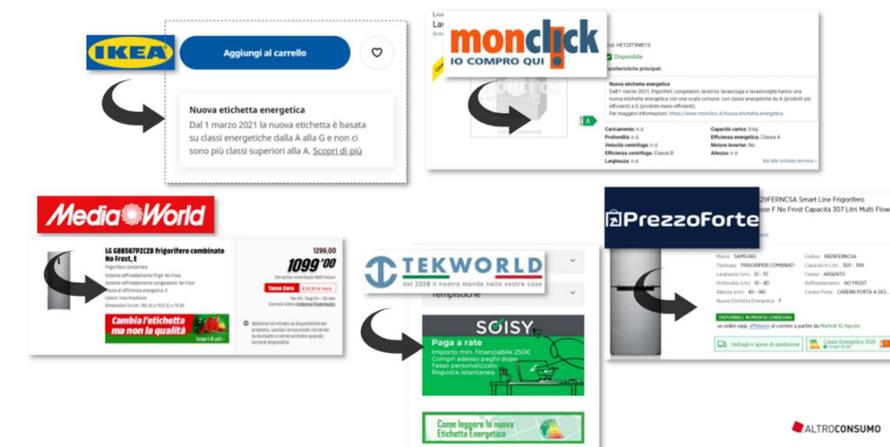
A similar analysis was performed by BEUC's Hungarian member the Association of Conscious Consumers, which analysed consumers' perception of the new label in Hungary.⁴ While most of the surveyed consumers identified the energy label as an important tool for their purchasing decisions, only 4 out of 10 had heard about the new energy label in Hungary. The most common source of confusion for consumers was the derating of the energy efficiency class of certain products in the new label and the absence of A-class options on the market.

Best practices

A. Information available at point of sale

The presence of clear and accessible information about the new energy label at the point of sale helps consumers understand the changes and reasons for these at the time of purchase. This information should clearly appear both in physical and online shops, so consumers have easy access to further explanation and details. EU-funded projects such as BELT can provide customisable information material to share with retailers. During the workshops, Altroconsumo shared some examples of best practices in Italian online and offline retail shops (Figures 2 and 3 below). In Slovenia, online and offline retail shops also displayed BELT information material on the new energy label (Figure 4 below).

BEST PRACTICES IN WEB-SHOPS



⁴ The Association of Conscious Consumers, https://tudatosvasarlo.hu/uj-energiacimke-tapasztalatok-legjobb-mosogatogep-huto-mosogep-haztartasi-gep/?utm_medium=main-newsletter&utm_source=email&utm_content=tudvas%20hirlevel%20augusztus%2028.

Figure 2: Slide shared by Altroconsumo during the webinar of 22 September 2021.

BEST PRACTICES IN STORES



ALTRCONSUMO

Figure 3: Slide shared by Altroconsumo during the webinar of 22 September 2021.

NOVA ENERGIJSKA NALEPKA
Manj razredov, večja učinkovitost

KAJ JE ENERGIJSKA NALEPKA?

Energijska nalepka je pomembna orodila, ki potrošnikom omogoča lažje razumevanje energijskih učinkovitosti aparatur, kot so hladilniki, televizorji, pomivalni stroji ipd.

Priloga kje pri zagotavljanju te informacije, izpolnitve in smiselne izbire, nevarne izbire.

NOVA ENERGIJSKA NALEPKA
Manj razredov, večja učinkovitost

ZAKAJ NOVA ENERGIJSKA NALEPKA?

Revidirana Evropska potrošniška organizacija (EUCP) je prepričana, da oblikovanje standardizirane energijske nalepke omogoča potrošnikom, da lažje razumejo in primerjajo energijsko učinkovitost aparatov, kot so hladilniki, televizorji, pomivalni stroji ipd.

Priloga kje pri zagotavljanju te informacije, izpolnitve in smiselne izbire, nevarne izbire.

Elementi, skupni energijski skim nalepkam za vse skupine izdelkov

1. Na novo dodana koda QR, potrošniku omogoča, da dobi dodatne informacije o izdelku, in sicer tako, da lahko prebrava opombe o njegovem porabljenem energiju.
2. Nova lestvica od A do G, brez razredov, označenih s plusi. V njih ni razredov, saj bodo najbolji potrošniki v vsakem z določeno o določeno primerno razredov, označenih s plusi.
3. Prikaz energijske porabe na različne načine. Pri hladilnikih je prikazana letna poraba energije, pri pomivalnih strojih in pralnih strojih pa poraba energije za 100 ciklov. Pri televizorjih pa za 1000 ur uporabe.
4. Prikaz in druge lastnosti: Stvarilo in vrsta pakiranja so od izdelka do izdelka različni. Izstavitveni razredniki so označeni s številkami, druge s besedami od A do G.

STARA NALEPKA vs **NOVA NALEPKA**

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Poraba energije: prikazano na različne načine. Pri hladilnikih je prikazana letna poraba energije, pri pomivalnih strojih in pralnih strojih pa poraba energije za 100 ciklov, pri televizorjih pa za 1000 ur uporabe.

Prikaz in druge lastnosti: Stvarilo in vrsta pakiranja so od izdelka do izdelka različni. Izstavitveni razredniki so označeni s številkami, druge s besedami od A do G.

1. november 2020 | **1. marec 2021** | **1. september 2021**

Preizkušali morajo za aparate pripraviti poleg stare nalepke, vendar to ne pomeni, da se ne bo na njem potrošniki.

Premišljati, kako in kako razložiti, vendar to ne pomeni, da se ne bo na njem potrošniki.

Vsa svetila na prodajnih mestih morajo biti opremljena z novo energijsko nalepko.

NAMEN NOVE ENERGIJSKE NALEPKE

Bolj jasne in natančne informacije

Namen nove energijske nalepke je omogočiti potrošnikom, da bi:

- Bolj razumeli, kako energijsko učinkoviti so izdelki.
- Razumeli, energijsko učinkovite izbire, in sicer tako, da bi lahko izbrali bolj učinkovite izdelke.

Namen nove energijske nalepke

Ostajati bolj pripravljeni, kar pomeni, da bi lahko izbrali bolj učinkovite izdelke.

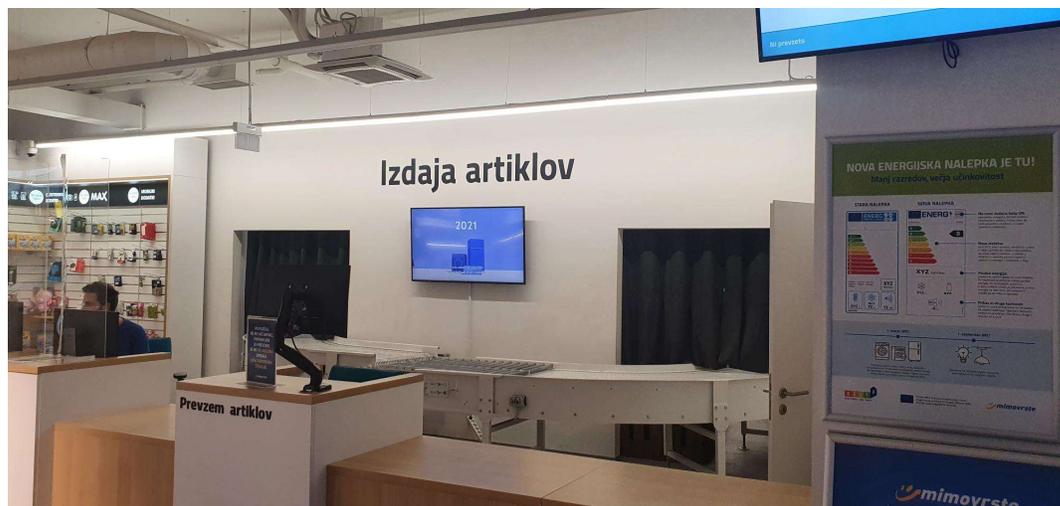


Figure 4: Landing page of an online retailer [MIMOVRSTE](#) and promotion on POS (7 POS) - poster and BELT video in Slovenia in March 2021 (share by ZPS).

Future improvements

A. Retailers' involvement should be stronger

Retailers' engagement should be stronger, to ensure information about the new energy label is easily accessible to consumers when they are about to make a purchasing decision. This is particularly important for large online platforms (such as Amazon) and large local supermarkets (such as Mediamarkt), but smaller shops should also be involved in these activities to ensure all consumers have access to the same type of information. In fact, one of the key insights from the BELT project and the interactions with retailers was that it is harder, but highly important, to reach smaller retailers in future new energy label implementations. The fact that small and local retailers, many times with only one or a few stores, tend not to be members of retailers' associations, makes it more difficult for them to access relevant information. Nonetheless, they play an important role in informing consumers, especially in less urban areas. More insights on retailers' findings and best practices can be found on Deliverable 4.3.

B. Learnings for future policy developments

The presence of the old and the new label in shops appeared to be a source of confusion for consumers. This should be avoided by shortening the transition periods for the introduction of the energy label and promptly rescaling the energy label for the remaining products.

Clearer indication of the range of classes available on the market should also be made easily accessible to consumers, through EPREL or other sources. According to the Energy Labelling Framework Regulation, the top-class of the new energy label should remain empty to encourage technological progress. However, from a first assessment of the market made in November 2021, the BELT partners



found that the “A” class was already available for most appliances, except for TVs. This had a direct impact on the messaging delivered to consumers through the BELT project, which had to be adapted accordingly, potentially leading to further confusion among consumers. An explanatory flyer was developed in November 2021, providing information on the energy classes available on the market for each appliance.⁵

To avoid similar situations in the future and ensure consumers maintain their trust in the energy label, energy labelling requirements should be developed so that the top class is empty. Furthermore, information on the range of energy efficiency classes available for each product group should be swiftly made available to consumers and market actors, to help them navigate the changes and easily understand what the best-in-class products are under the new efficiency scale. More details on BELT policy recommendations are available in Deliverable 7.2.

⁵ The BELT flyer “What is the EU energy label?” is available on the BELT project’s website: <https://www.belt-project.eu/news>