

#EUCircularTalks

Why choose the EU Ecolabel for businesses?

The EU Ecolabel as a tool
to boost the circular economy
& competitiveness

31 March 2026

10:00–11:30 CEST



Agenda

09:50 – 10:05

Virtual lobby welcome, opening of the room

Arthur ten Wolde - Executive director and circular economy expert at Ecopreneur.eu

10:05 – 10:10

Introduction to the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Alexandra-Ioana Ionescu – ECESP Secretariat

10:10 – 10:20

WHY circular competitiveness matters & WHY the EU Ecolabel is the right tool for it

Małgorzata Gołębiowska - EU Ecolabel Team Leader, European Commission

10:20 – 10:30

Business cases: WHY circularity and the EU Ecolabel pay off

Melanie Kenway - Global Environmental Processes Director at Essity

10:30 – 10:40

National insight: How the EU Ecolabel competent bodies help boost competitiveness

Ineke Vlot - Dutch Competent Body representative,

10:40 – 11:10

Interactive round table: From circular policy to market success

Moderated by Arthur ten Wolde, in the presence of

Miriam Thiemann - BEUC & EEB

Park Bao - Diversey - A Solenis Company

11:10– 11:25

Interactive Q&A

11:25– 11:30

Closing remarks

Małgorzata Gołębiowska - EU Ecolabel Team Leader, European Commission



WHY circular competitiveness matters & WHY the EU Ecolabel is the right tool to boost competitiveness

Małgorzata GOŁĘBIEWSKA

Team Leader EU Ecolabel, DG ENV, European Commission

31 March 2026



EU Ecolabel - the official European label



- Official EU voluntary label for environmental excellence since 1992
- Awarded to high-quality and best in class products (goods and services) - in terms of environmental performance - placed on the EU market
- Reliable and trustworthy ecolabel: multi-criteria; life-cycle and scientific approach; open-transparent-multi-stakeholder criteria setting; third party verified (ISO 14024 Type 1)
- Managed by the European Commission and the Member States

27 Eligible Product Groups



Cleaning



Paper products



Personal and animal care products



Clothing and textiles



Coverings



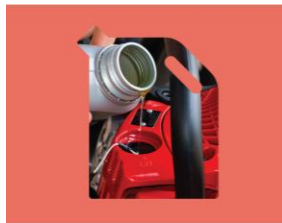
Paints & varnishes



Electronic equipment



Furniture & mattresses



Lubricant



Tourist accommodation



Absorbent & hygiene products



Gardening

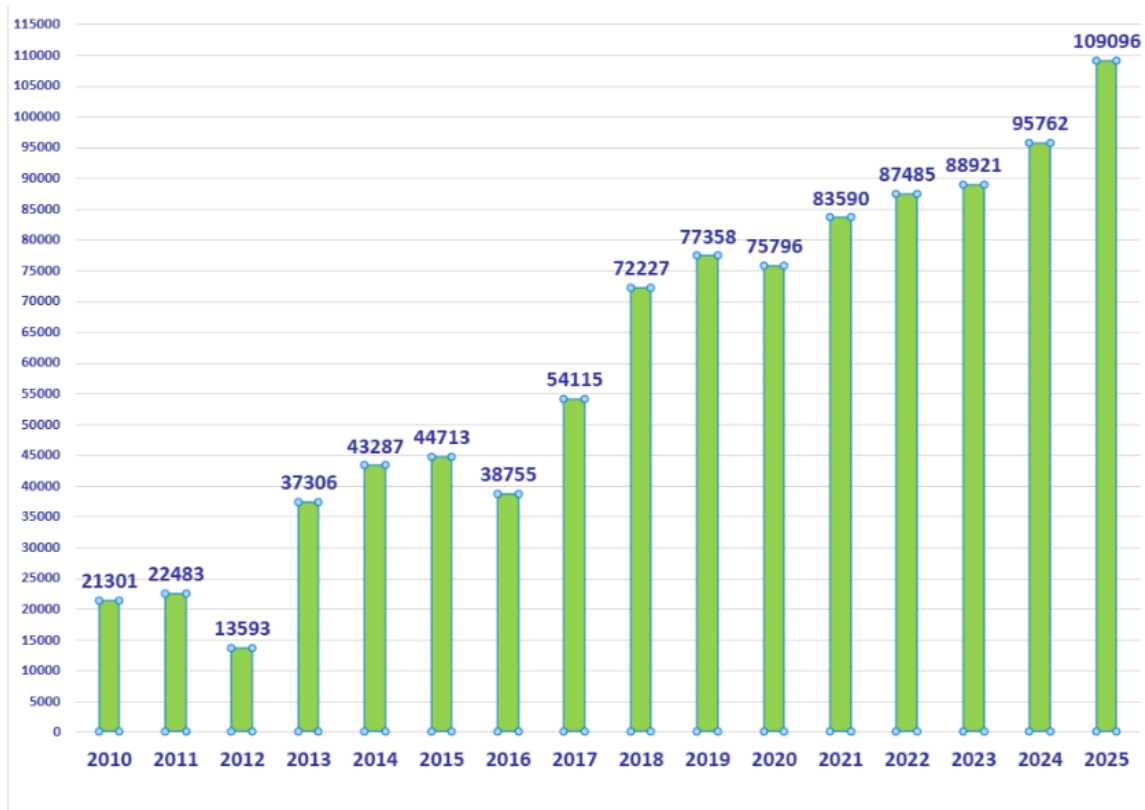
[EU Ecolabel Product Groups and Criteria](#)
[ECAT – EU Ecolabel product catalogue](#)

EU Ecolabel in figures



The EU Ecolabel keeps growing!

Evolution EU Ecolabel certified products 2010-2025



- **109 096 products**
- **Most popular product categories** (number of products): paints and varnishes, paper products, cleaning, clothing and textile
- **Highest number of awarded products:** IT, ES, FR, DE and PT
- **57%** of the EU Ecolabel licence holders are **SMEs**
- **38%** of EU citizens **recognise** the **EU Ecolabel** ([Eurobarometer 2023](#))
- **75% consumers trust** products awarded have lower environmental impact ([Eurobarometer 2023](#)).

EU Ecolabel promotes circularity



- ✓ **Durability, reusability, recyclability, and recycled content** of products
- ✓ **CO₂, water, air, soil emissions** are minimised
- ✓ **Hazardous substances** are restricted in production processes and products
- ✓ **Resources and energy** are saved
- ✓ **Raw materials** are sustainably sourced
- ✓ **Packaging** is limited
- ✓ **Waste is reduced**, recyclates are of high quality

The EU Ecolabel boosts businesses competitiveness and provides circular solutions

EU Ecolabel promotes circularity



Absorbent hygiene products

- **Recycled or renewable materials** (recycled fibres, recycled plastic, bio-based plastics)
- **Reduction of waste** generation during production / recycling of scraps
- **Compostability** (optional) in line with standards
- **Reduction of hazardous substances** (limits on heavy metals, phthalates, VOCs)
- **Packaging requirements:** 100% recyclable or compostable, min 30% recycled content in plastic and 50% for paper/cardboard
- Instructions to **consumers on disposal**



Tourist accommodation

- **Reusability** (donations) of **furniture and textiles** at end of their usable life at the accommodation (2nd-hand markets, charities)
- **No single dose packages** for non-perishable food stuffs; refillable containers for drinks
- **Monitoring of generated waste**, including of food waste and procedures to reduce it
- **Reducing** use of **disposable** toiletries, food service items, disposable towels or bed sheets
- **Waste separation**

EU Ecolabel offers legal certainty /competitiveness



- EU Ecolabel complies with new legislation ‘Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition’:
 - reliable **third-party certification**
 - one of the few means to demonstrate **generic claims on overall environmental excellence** (otherwise banned)
- Easier access to **Green Public Procurement (GPP)**
- EU Ecolabel - proof of compliance to Ecodesign **(ESPR) requirements** for the same product groups & requirements (synergies to be explored)
- EU Ecolabel products can receive **incentives** from Member States



EU Ecolabel rewards your efforts!



Communication / promotion activities at EU and national level



And also:

- Publication of articles, success stories, videos, organisation of events/webinars etc.
- Access to EU Ecolabel certified products data base through [ECAT](#), [EU Open Data Portal](#) or [API](#)
- EU Ecolabel website, thematic webinars, social media (LinkedIn)
- Strategic collaborations with online platforms

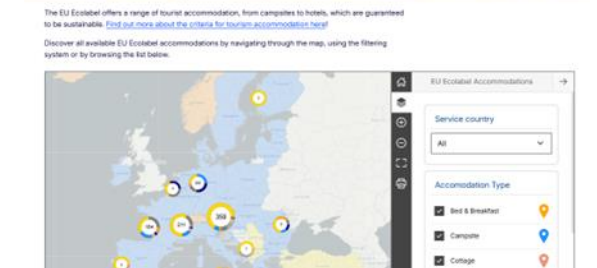
How to apply?



- Check the EU Ecolabel criteria for your product group (online)
- Contact your national **EU Ecolabel Competent Body** (country where the products are produced - if inside the EEA, or will be marketed - if outside the EEA)
- **Pre-register your product in the EU Ecolabel Tourism Accommodation Catalogue (within ECAT)***
- Use the "User Manual for applicants" to prepare your application file
- Application submission and approval by the Competent Body
- Payment of the application fee**
- Display the EU Ecolabel logo on your goods/services and communicate about it!

* *necessary to be displayed on e-retailers' platforms with whom EC collaborates*

** *reductions apply to SMEs, micro enterprises, operators from developing countries etc.*





Thank you!

More information:

Website: EU Ecolabel

Facebook: [@EUEnvironment](https://www.facebook.com/EUEnvironment)

Instagram: [ourplanet_eu](https://www.instagram.com/ourplanet_eu)

LinkedIn: [EU Ecolabel](https://www.linkedin.com/company/EU Ecolabel)





Think ahead.

Closing the Loop: Essity's Circular Innovations and the EU Ecolabel Advantage

EU Circular Talks - 31 March 2026

Melanie Kenway
RESH Director – Environmental Processes





Think ahead.

1. Introduction
2. The Strategic Role of the EU Ecolabel in Tork's Circular Journey
3. Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres
4. Business Competitiveness for Essity
5. Lessons Learned for Other Companies
6. Conclusion



Think ahead.

Introduction on Essity and the Tork brand

Every day we
care for 1 billion
people across
150 countries.

TORK

TENA

Leukoplast

JOBST

Actimove

Cutimed

Tempo

Lotus

Zewa

Libero

Libresse

Nosotras

Saba

TOM
ORGANIC

knix

modibodi

DEMAKUP

Playtex

Essity – a global, leading hygiene and health company

Net sales 2025
(SEKbn)

138

Sales in countries

150

Employees

36,000

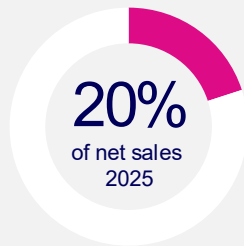
Production
facilities

70



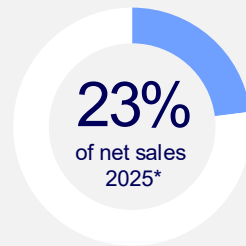
Health & Medical

Improving healthcare through pioneering solutions in wound care, incontinence, compression and orthopedics



Personal Care

Leading brands in incontinence, feminine, and baby care for well-being and confidence in all stages of life

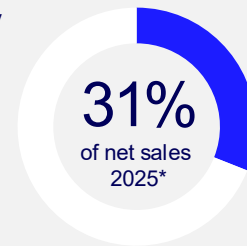


*Proforma reporting of Essity's business area structure as per January 1, 2026, based on 2025 results



Consumer Tissue

Affordable, high-quality and sustainable tissue products for everyday hygiene in homes and households

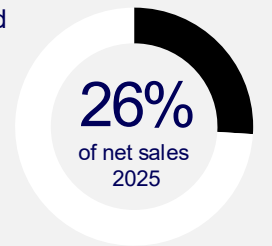


*Proforma reporting of Essity's business area structure as per January 1, 2026, based on 2025 results



Professional Hygiene

Innovative, efficient and sustainable hygiene management solutions for public and commercial spaces



Source: Essity.com

We are committed to improving hygiene and health while responsibly managing our environmental resources. Sustainability is well integrated into our business, creating lasting value for society and our shareholders



As a global leader in hygiene and health, we touch one billion people every day, meeting the growing demand while safeguarding our environmental resources.



Our focus on sustainability creates value for our customers and consumers and builds a stronger, more resilient business.



We are committed to shaping our industry and working towards a more sustainable future, creating value for all our stakeholders.



Think ahead.

Strategic Role of the EU Ecolabel in Tork's Circular Journey



**100 years of fiber
experience!**

Strategic Role of the EU Ecolabel in Tork's Circular Journey

Life-cycle–based environmental credibility



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EU Ecolabel certification aligns with Essity's call for holistic Life Cycle Perspective in our circular economy approach and provides third-party verification that our products reduce environmental impact without compromising hygiene or functionality.

Tork's Life-cycle-based environmental credibility



Clear strategic sustainability commitment:

Full tissue range certification demonstrates that we back our sustainability claims with rigorous data and transparent criteria, not on assumptions.

Recognition across all EU markets:

EU Ecolabel is a trusted reference point for customers

Tork sustainability focus areas



Think ahead.

Tork is committed to developing innovative, sustainable hygiene solutions that are better for business, people and the planet. Tork is a brand of the global hygiene and health company Essity, recognized as one of the world's most sustainable companies.¹



Materials & packaging

Responsible sourcing and increased use of renewable, recycled and natural content.



Use & waste

Reducing waste through reduced consumption and circular solutions.



Carbon

Lowering carbon impact throughout the total life cycle of Tork products and services.



Hygiene for all

We are dedicated to raising hygiene standards for the majority of users.

For the planet

And for people



Think ahead.

Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres

Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres



Think ahead.

Essity's recycled fibre mills keep high-quality fibres circulating longer



Essity only purchases fresh fibre from sustainable sources



The mark of
responsible forestry



Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres



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Hondouville: our strategic circularity flagship in Europe

- Our Hondouville mill (France) plays an essential role in the transition to circularity:
It recycles beverage cartons.
- It recovers all components turning a complex waste stream into high-value raw materials.
- Hondouville demonstrates how industrial circularity can work, not in theory, but in real operational conditions.



Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres



Think ahead.

Tork PaperCircle®: The World's First Recycling Service for Paper Hand Towels

- 
- A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white, textured paper hand towel. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame, with the fingers gripping the edge of the towel. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light grey.
- ✓ **Close the loop** and turn your used paper hand towels into new paper hand towels.
 - ✓ **Contribute to reaching your goals for waste.**
 - ✓ **Show your sustainability commitment.**
 - ✓ **Meet the demands and expectations** of legislation and society.
 - ✓ **Award-winning, sustainable, full-service concept**

Together,
we can reduce our
carbon footprint by at
least **40%¹**
and reduce waste by
20%²
compared to other
waste-handling
options

Circularity in Action: Strong Commitment to Recycled Fibres



Think ahead.

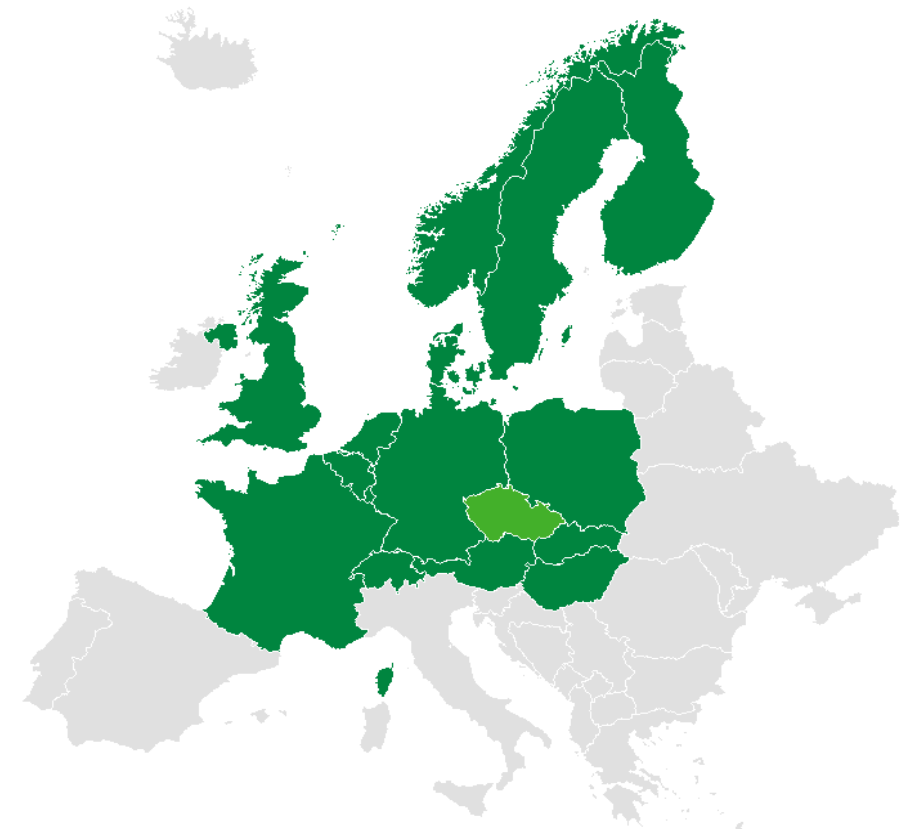
Tork PaperCircle®: The World's First Recycling Service for Paper Hand Towels



Tork PaperCircle® is used by nearly 1400 sites in 15 countries:

- **98%** say it's **easy to use**²
- **97%** agree it helps them to **contribute to a circular economy**²
- **100%** would **recommend** it to other companies²

This service already enables the recycling of more than **35 million** hand towels a month



Avec Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, Open Places, OpenStreetMap, TomTom





Think ahead.

Business Competitiveness for Essity



Think ahead.

EU Ecolabel

The mark of environmental-friendly of high-quality products

The EU Ecolabel is a world-renowned, voluntary scheme promoting goods and services that clearly demonstrate environmental excellence, based on standardised processes and scientific evidence.

Environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and consumer organisation play an important role and they are actively involved in the development and setting of EU Ecolabel criteria.

It is based on criteria defined on a scientific basis in relation to the entire life cycle of the products. Criteria concern various environmental aspects including the use of energy, water, chemicals and waste production, but also product functionality and performance.



Think ahead.

Lessons Learned for Other Companies

Lessons learned for other companies



Think ahead.



- Circularity must work in practice, not just on paper

- Third-party verification builds trust

- Scale circularity where solutions already exist

Chapter 05



Think ahead.

Conclusions



Essity is N°1 user of recycled fibers for tissue production in Europe.¹

Tork PaperCircle is the **N°1 recycling service** for paper hand towels.³

Our mill in France was one of the 1st in Europe to **recycle drink cartons** on a large scale into hygiene products.²

This demonstrates Essity's commitment to a competitive, circular, and evidence-based hygiene sector





Certification for frontrunners: aligning with market demands

Ineke Vlot

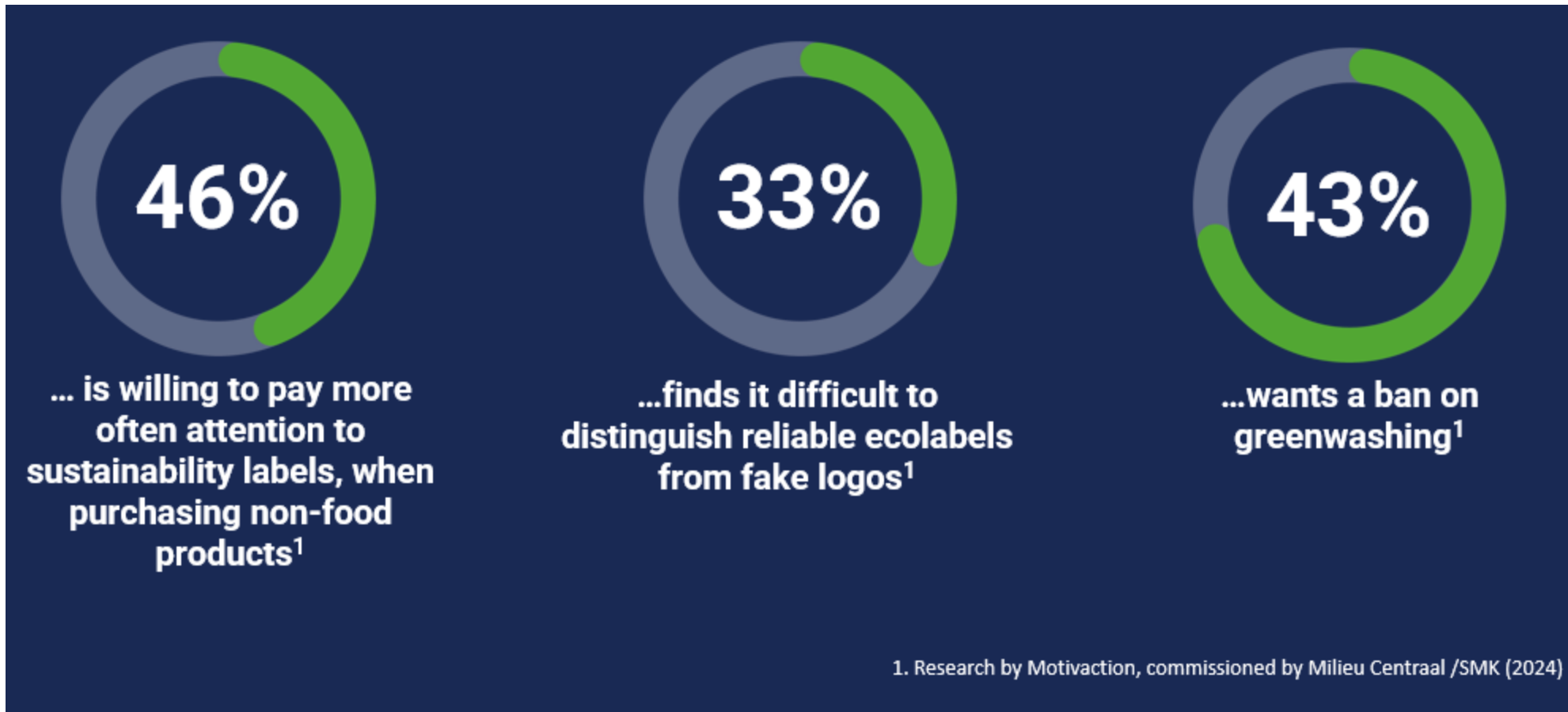
Manager non-food SMK

March 31st 2026



B-2-C: Consumer interest in reliable ecolabels: NL research¹

Of the Dutch consumers...



1. Research by Motivaction, commissioned by Milieu Centraal /SMK (2024)

Boosting competition by the voluntary EU Ecolabel

EU Ecolabel criteria



Environmentally best in class:

- Transparent criteria, based on life cycle and reliable, scientific information
- Aimed at **best 10-20%** products on EU market in terms of environmental performance
- Products (application dossiers) analyzed by independent Competent Body experts
- Certificate confirms excellent environmental product performance

Certification for frontrunners: leading the way with EU Ecolabel

10-20%

of the products/services with the best environmental performance are eligible

B-2-C: Substantiate generic green claims

Be sure of your green claim with EU Ecolabel

Environmentally sustainable

Ecological



Restricted amount of hazardous substances

Limited impact on the aquatic environment



Substantiate generic green claims with EU Ecolabel:

Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive:

“(9) (...) Examples of generic environmental claims include ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘eco-friendly’, ‘green’, (...). Such generic environmental claims should be **prohibited** when recognised excellent environmental performance cannot be demonstrated.

(10) Recognised excellent environmental performance can be demonstrated by compliance with **Regulation (EC) No 66/2010** or with officially recognised EN ISO 14024 ecolabelling schemes in the Member States, ...”

A reliable purchasing guide for consumers!



B-2-B: Sustainable/Green Public Procurement



Facilitate the purchasing process/support of procurers, who may use:

- EU Ecolabel criteria in tenders
- Using EU Ecolabel certificates for verification
- Environmentally sustainable options for reducing their environmental footprint

NB: EU Ecolabel is part of 'example criteria' in the *Sustainable Public Procurement tool* of the government of The Netherlands for certain product groups



EU Ecolabel license holders, certified products & services in NL



September 2025

3 384

License holders
in EU

109 096

Products in EU



March 2026

2252
Products in NL

109

License holders
in NL



Reiniging, schoonmaak,
verzorging

31 847
companies products



Papier

7 513
companies products



Toeristische
accommodaties

2 1
hotels hostelketen

20 vestigingen



Verf en vernis

8 219
bedrijven products



Textiel

5 168
bedrijven producten



Meubels

1 74
bedrijven products



Smeermiddelen

25 409
companies products



EU Ecolabel in supermarkets: Availability & pricing



In many European countries the majority of the ecolabelled products is cheaper ([BEUC/EEB snapshot survey, 2025](#)):

- **Affordability:** in most countries, ecolabelled products are between 9% and 27% cheaper on average than their conventional counterparts
- **Availability:** access to ecolabelled products varies enormously across countries

Ecolabelled products are on average 14% cheaper in the Netherlands

Why EU Ecolabel?



WHY
EU ECOLABEL ?

Running your sustainable choices

European Commission #EUEcolabel
EU Ecolabel
www.ecolabel.eu

In short, the benefits of EU Ecolabel are:

- Demonstration of excellent environmental performance
- Reliable purchasing guide for consumers
- Affordable product prices, sometimes even cheaper
- Support/facilitation of public procurement processes
- Opportunity to substantiate relevant generic green claims (ECGT)



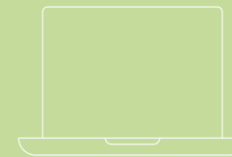
Kies milieubewust

EU Ecolabel
www.ecolabel.eu

ook bij het schoonmaken

Impressie: stadscampagne in Amsterdam, Den Haag en Utrecht





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SMK

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Thank you!

Contact us for questions and more information:

We were not able to answer all questions, if your question was not answered, send it to us via email: eu-ecolabel@ec.europa.eu

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#EUCircularTalks

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The EU Ecolabel as a tool to boost the circular economy & competitiveness

