

March 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

## **Position paper on the Environmental technology verification scheme**

As announced during the release of the July 2008 “Sustainable Consumption and Production” package, a proposal for a Regulation on an Environmental Technology Verification scheme should follow to support eco-innovation through increased confidence in new technologies.

According to the Action Plan (COM(2008) 397 final), this EU wide environmental technology verification scheme should rely on third-party verification of the performance and the potential impacts on the environment of new technologies. It will be a voluntary, partially self-financed scheme, which should help to provide confidence for new technologies emerging on the market. The Commission will build on its consultation paper on a EU system for Environmental Technology Verification, on different consultation events and on the Consultation analysis report of July 2008.

AmCham EU believes innovation is best boosted through a competitive commercial marketplace, pro-active Research&Development policies, supportive environments that attract and retain talent and the absence of barriers that may hinder investments. Additional complexities, overhead costs, multiple monitoring, onerous regulation, administrative burdens and benchmarks or duplicated efforts do not facilitate the development of new technologies. AmCham EU is therefore concerned about the added value that an EU wide environmental technology verification scheme would bring to innovators in a cost-constrained environment. The European Union has already developed a strong regulatory framework to ensure that production processes meet high environmental standards.

Particular attention should be paid to avoiding the creation of an artificial market to benefit third party certification bodies whereas resources could perhaps be better spent. There are many options to certify production processes, including self-declaration with legitimate references. Complete third-party certification of the products or third-party certification of the processes may not be the best option to deliver innovative eco-efficient products to the market.

The core principles of technological neutrality and a science-based approach should also be built into the policy to avoid picking early winners and losers. Companies’ proprietary information should be protected and all confidentiality requirements should be met. The responsibilities and liability of the third party certification body should be clarified.

While AmCham EU would welcome efforts to limit the proliferation of national or regional schemes that add complexity to the functioning of the internal market, we would also question the establishment of an EU wide scheme that would not be compatible with international standards and initiatives. The market for eco-innovative technologies is global and the regionalisation of supportive schemes is not the preferred approach. Ultimately, the establishment of non-tariff trade barriers would hinder the development of innovation.

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AmCham EU will closely and carefully assess the Commission proposal, when it becomes available and would be delighted to provide comment.

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