

Proposed energy label designs for further testing

To inform the Commission's review of the energy label, two studies were commissioned:

- A study concerning the evaluation of the Energy Labelling Directive and specific aspects of the Ecodesign Directive
- A study on the impact of the energy label – and of potential changes to it – on consumer understanding and on purchase decisions.

The first study identified in its draft recommendations of January 2014 several aspects of the label that could be improved or further investigated. In particular it highlighted that the question of rescaling/updating of the label is the key issue to provide an answer to.

The second study reported in its interim report of January 2014 on consumer understanding and behaviour tests in relation to five basic framing aspects of potential energy labels. It found that these five framing aspects were worth further investigation. For the second phase of the study, consumer understanding and behaviour testing of four label designs in brick-and-mortar shops is planned.

Based on the results of the two studies taken together it is proposed that the second phase of label testing will focus on the question of rescaling/updating of the label and that the label designs to be tested are in a form as they would look after rescaling/updating of the label. The proposed label designs are based on the first phase, as well as the business-as-usual label which would add further plusses to the label classes. The proposed labels are the following:

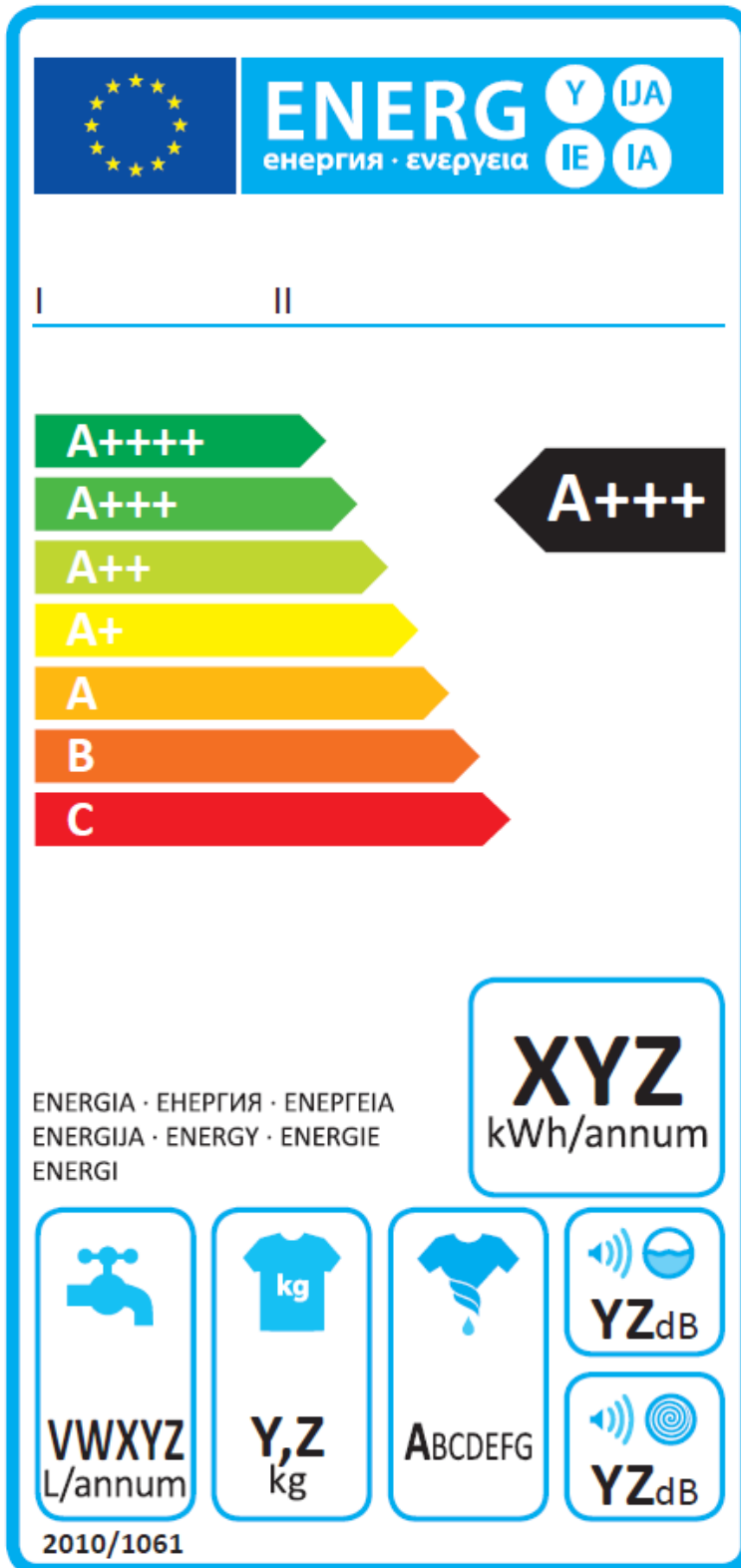
- Business-as-usual: A++++ to C label, representing the addition of at least one further plus to the current label when updating
- Alphabetic: A to G label, which rescales the label classes when updating
- Numeric: 40 to 100 label in which classes no longer used after updating (>100) and not yet available classes (0-40) are presented in grey and in which a bench marker indicates the best available technology in a certain year
- Reverse numeric: 12 to 6 label, which adds higher numbers on top and removes lower numbers on the bottom when updating. The label's starting scale would run from 7 to 1, the situation portrayed is one that is possible after the first update.

These proposed labels for testing are presented in Annex 1. In total there are four label designs, whereas originally the second phase of consumer testing only foresaw three (the outline of the methodology for the testing in the second phase is given in Annex 2). Increasing the number of label designs from 3 to 4 is not problematic as regards the sample size needed for the analysis.

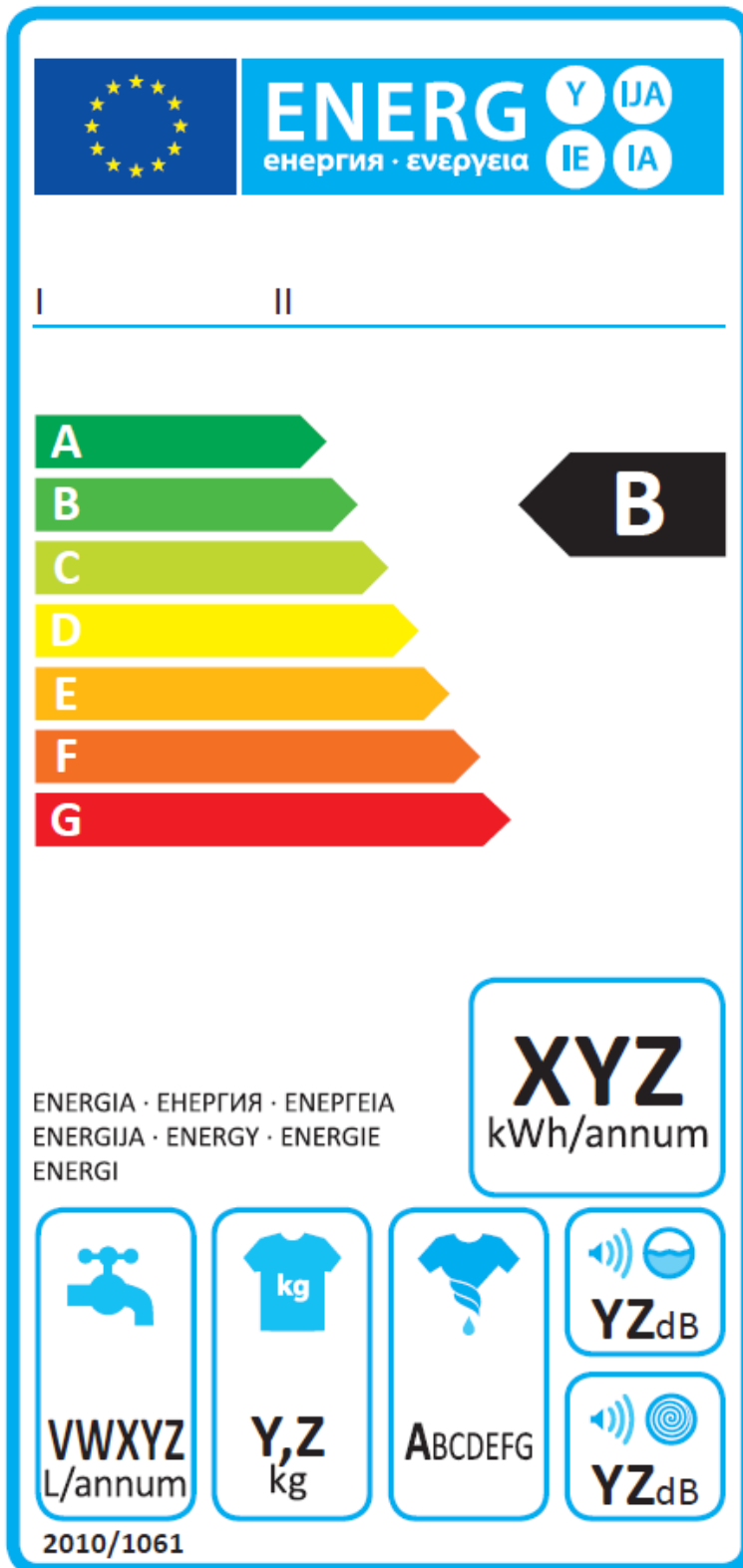
A number of other label design improvement options were discussed in the Ecofys study, and are visible in its Chapter 4. In principle, most of these options, if found interesting, could be tested subsequently to the completion of the review process, as their implementation is not regulated in the framework directive which we are reviewing now.

Annex 1 –Label designs for testing

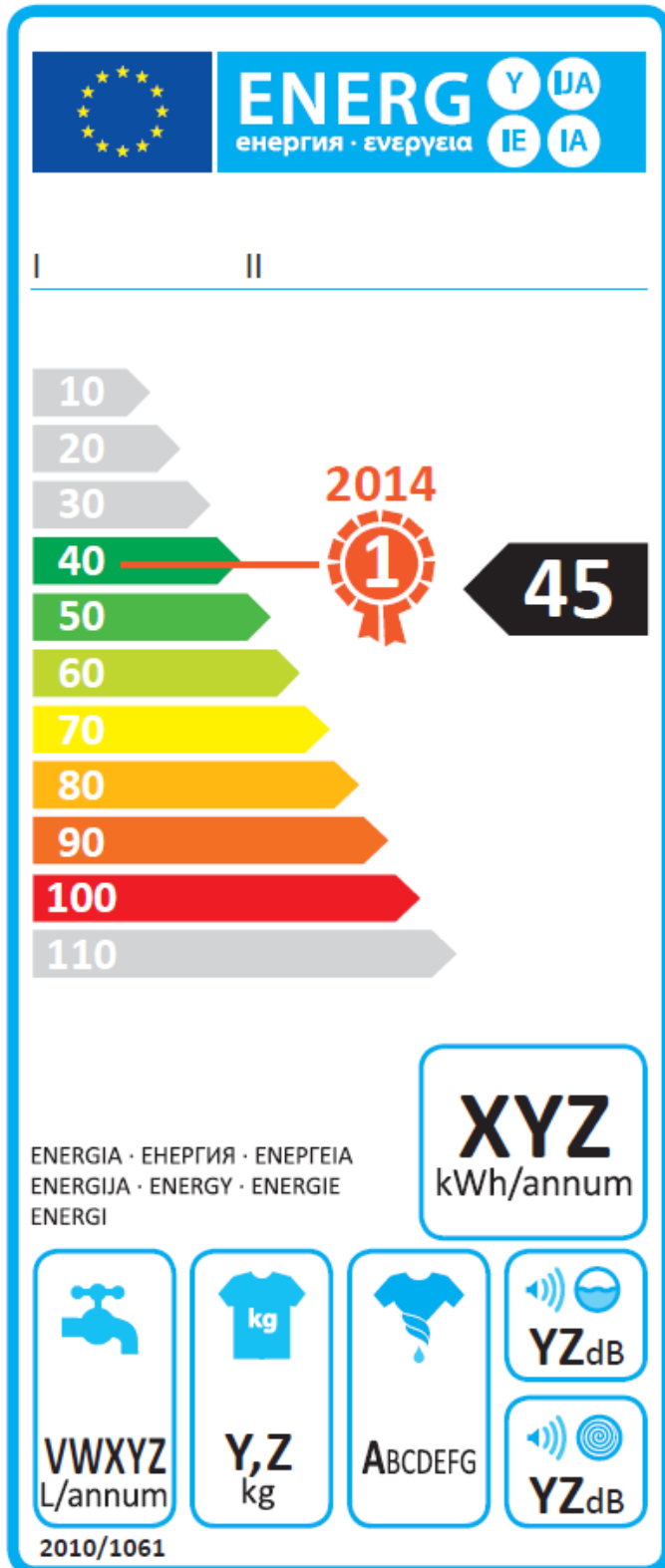
Label 1: Business-as-usual



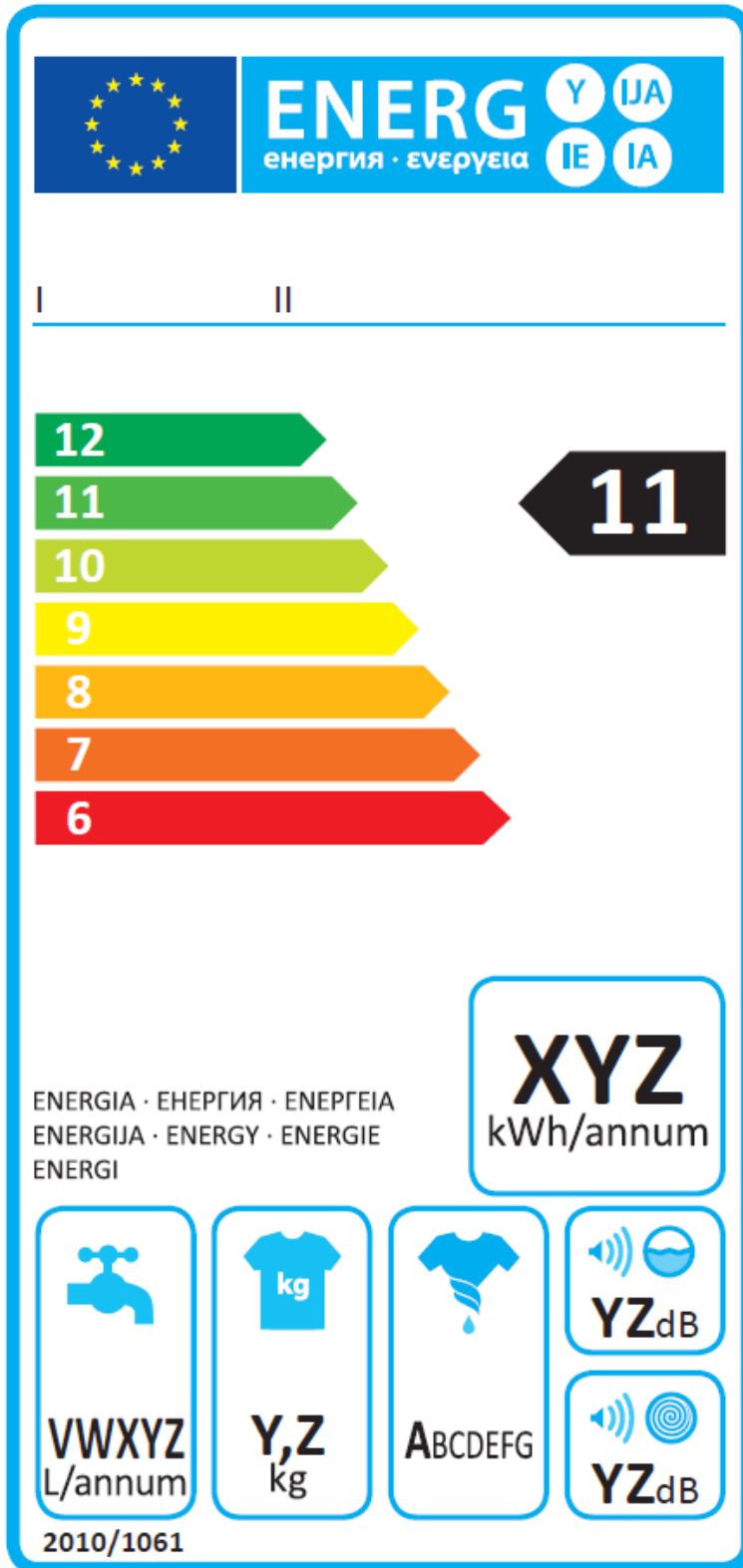
Label 2: Alphabetic



Label 3: Numeric



Label 4: Reverse numeric



Annex 2 – Methodology for testing label designs

Conducted in four countries:

- Belgium: In principle agreement* from Vanden Borre, a national chain of electrical household products
- France: In principle agreement* from MDA, a chain of franchise stores
- UK: In principle agreement* from several independents and franchised stores
- Czech Republic: Retail lab on mezzanine floor of largest Tesco store in Prague

* agreement at the stage of the study project proposal, process of confirmation on-going

Overall sample of 500 completed responses, therefore 125 interviews in each country

- At a given day a shop will always show only one of the four types of labels
- 10- 15 interviews per day
- Respondents will inspect one or two sets of products (e.g. washing machines, fridges, televisions); a set consists of two or three different models of an appliance type
- The products concerned are actual products present in the shops
- The label shown for the test would rate the appliance in the same colour class as the label in the shop would normally show
- Each product will have a price tag, information about its main characteristics, and an energy label
- Prices and products/labels will be changed periodically (treatments)
- Respondents will then indicate to the interviewer which product they would buy (done for each product they inspect)
- There will also be some in-store observations by having a researcher visit the store on at least one day to observe shopper behaviour

After making their choice the respondents will be asked in a short survey (maximum 10 minutes)

- “Why did you choose the product(s) that you did?”
- “The products you just saw differ in terms of energy efficiency. Can you tell us which one you think is most/least energy efficient?”
- Questions on understanding of the label and the various elements of the label. At this stage they will be presented with a picture (or pictures) of the label and asked questions such as: “Do you understand the meaning of this symbol; what does it mean to you?”
- The majority of questions will be closed sets