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ATTITUDE OF ROMANIAN CONSUMERS RELATED TO PRODUCTS' ECOLOGICAL LABELLING

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Abstract
The consumers play an important role in the protection of environment by their choices when they purchase products. Consequently, with a view to manufacture products with minimum impact on environment as well as to influence the conduct of consumers and improve the ecological performance of products and services, the ISO 14000 standards were elaborated for ecological labelling and analysis of life cycle of products and national and regional systems of ecological labelling of products were introduced.
Also, in order to support a healthy and non-polluting environment, the European Commission adopted, pursuant to some specialised studies, a legislation related to the assignment of the condition of ecological product to different categories of products and services, having as purpose the environment protection and ensuring a durable consumption. At the same time, in order to improve the range of instruments of environment protection, financial and technical instruments were introduced as well The European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – EMAS, but also the European ecological label Eco-label.
The European ecological label is useful in order to supply to the consumers essential information that may allow them to make choices knowingly, acting as well as a passport that authorises the free circulation of products on the European territory. All the European Union's states adopted the communitarian ecological label. Consequently, the integration of Romanian in the European Union imposed a range of measures related to the procedure of granting the ecological label.
In Romania, there is a specific legislative frame concerning the determination of the procedure of granting the ecological label and of their conditions of use. Each group of products to which a label is assigned is governed by a specific legislation that sets forth the granting criteria.
The main objectives of article concern the featuring of some fundamental elements related to eco-labelling by emphasizing the main theoretical-methodological and conceptual delimitations, the presentation of this phenomenon on international, European and national level, ending in an analysis related to the attitude of Romanian consumers towards the ecological labelling of products.

Keywords: eco-labelling, the European ecological label, eco-labelling in Romania, consumers

JEL Classification: D18, F18, Q56

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Introduction

Eco labelling is an activity that has as purpose establishing a volunteer system for granting the ecologic label for products with a minimum impact of the human health and environment, during the whole life cycle of product.

The ecologic label is a graphic symbol and/or a descriptive text applied on the product or packaging, in a brochure or other information document that accompanies the product and offers the necessary information regarding the ecological criteria for the products offered on the market.

An ecological label identifies the environment performance of a product, within the category of products to which it belongs, based on its analysis of life cycle.

The analysis of products' life cycle**,** in terms of ISO 14000 standards, has as purpose to emphasize the impact of products over the environment, during each stage of this cycle, namely upon the conception-design, passing through the supply with raw materials and power and, further on, through the stages of manufacturing, distribution, use and after-use, during this stage being assured their reuse or reintegration in nature.

Granting the ecological label takes place in terms of some ecological criteria and on groups of products.

The ecological criteria refer to a range of specific conditions defined in connection to one or several environmental issues of the groups of products: air quality, water quality, soil protection, reduction of the waste generated, saving power, management of natural resources, prevention of global heating phenomenon, protection of ozone layer, environment security, noise and biodiversity.

A group of products contain the goods used in similar purposes and which are equivalent in terms of their use and perception by consumers. In order to include a group of products in the eco-labelling scheme (by which it is granted an ecological label to those products considered less damaging for environment than other in the same group), it has to meet two conditions: to represent a significant volume of sales and to have a significant impact on the environment. The following groups of products meet these conditions: textile, shoes, detergents for laundry, dishwashing machines, personal computers etc.

The eco-labels may be classified in two categories: those financially supported by government and those that rely on private initiative. The schemes of voluntary eco-labelling initiated by private organisations do not involve the participation of government and may be included in one of the following situations: schemes with criteria imposed by third parties and schemes based on affidavits of manufacturers.

There are several kinds of voluntary ecological labels. Thus, according ISO 14000 standards related to ecological labelling of products, three kinds of voluntary ecological labels are identified. Their purpose is to offer an international acknowledged means of assessment of ecological characteristics of products and of information of consumer related to such characteristics.

Type I – The voluntary labelling, based on multiple criteria and employing a third party (governmental and non-governmental body), consists in assigning a licence that authorises

the use of environment labels on products, indicating that a particular product is preferred for environment within a give category of products, depending on the consideration of life cycle. It needs the certification of a third party.

Type II – In terms of the affidavits of manufacturers, importers, distributors or other interested parties, having different forms: graphical symbols, mentioned on product or on package, a writ attached to the product.

Type III – It includes quantifiable information about the product, based on pre-determined indexes, set forth by a third party pursuant to the analysis of life cycle of product.

To avoid these schemes of ecological labelling to become a non-scheduled barrier in international trade, there was defined a range of principles to govern their application:

- providing the necessary transparency related to the characteristics of products;
- the information used for ecological marking relies on the analysis of life cycle of products;
- use of scientific, reproducible methods in the assessment of environment impact of products;
- use of acknowledged guides, related to the testing methods, avoiding the tests that may prevent the trade;
- providing the necessary transparency with respect to the procedures and methodologies used;
- securing the equal access of all interested parties to the labelling schemes;
- determining an information system of consumer;
- treating non-discriminatorily the products from internal production and those from other countries;
- encouragement of innovation with a view to improve the environment performance;
- periodical analysis of the criteria for ecological marking, with a view to improve them in terms of the progresses registered in the field of knowledge.

1. National systems of ecological labelling in European Union

The more and more intense preoccupation of reducing the negative impact of their procedures and results over the environment is emphasized, in time, through the existence of some eco-labelling programs.

The first eco-labelling program is dating since 1978 and it was carried out in Germany. Subsequently, such programs were initiated and developed in the States of the European Union, The United States of America, Canada, Japan, Russia, Ukraine, China, Brazil, Croatia, Israel, New Zealand, Korea, India, Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore etc.

The majority of these programs are included in The Eco-Labelling Network – GEN, created in 1994, network that concerns the encouragement of cooperation, of the exchange of information, harmonization and promotion of these programs in the entire world.

The main characteristic of the eco-labelling programs is that they are voluntary. They appear on the initiative of some independent bodies and are supported, in the majority of cases, by the governments of such countries. The bodies determine, on scientific grounds, the criteria that will be considered in the ecological labelling of products, criteria that refer, mainly, to the potential impact of products over the environment, during their entire life cycle.

On European level, the first initiative of this kind was „Blue Angel", in Germany, in 1978, followed, in 1989, by „Nordic Swan", a system of ecological marking of products, common in northern countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland), and, in 1991, by „NF-Environment" in France. During the period 1991 – 1998, such labelling programs appeared in Austria, Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Czech Republic and in 2002 in Romania.

The most known ecological labels in the states members of European Union are presented further on.

- **Blue Angel** was introduced in Germany, in 1978, as an answer to the intensification of ecological preoccupations of consumers. During the following period, one set forth criteria of ecological performance for around 11,500 products grouped in around 90 categories, among which: products manufactured from recycled materials, products that do not contain chlorofluorocarbon, chemical products of domestic use, automotive accumulators, film products with low pollution effect etc.

- **Nordic Swan** was introduced in 1989 and represents the official label for five north-European countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. The label indicates that a product with such label meets high standards of environment. This label is most often encountered on paper products, detergents and on the products of maintaining the motor vehicles. The decision concerning the right to apply this ecological label is adopted on national level, the authorisation obtained being acknowledged as well in the other northern countries.

- **NF-Environnement** was introduced in 1991, being the French ecological label, the property of AFNOR (Association Française de Normalisation). It is considered that this system relies on the most advanced techniques of analysis of life cycle of products. The right to apply this sign is assigned to the requiring enterprises, in terms of a three-year contract, providing a very strict supervision of meeting the conditions, through the team of experts constituted in this respect.

Other national ecological labels existent in the European countries are emphasized in table no. 1.

Table no. 1: National ecological labels

Nr. crt.	Country	Name of the label	Year of creation	The eco-label Logo
1.	Austria	Umweltzeichen (ecological)	1991	
2.	Sweden	Bra Miljöval (corresponds to the environmental)	1992	
3.	Netherlands	Milieukeur (ecological product)	1992	
4.	Spain	AENOR (Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación)	1993	
5.	Hungary	Környezetbarát Termék (ecological product)	1993	
6.	Czech Republic	Ekologicky šetrný výrobek (environmentally friendly product)	1998	
7.	Romania	Eticheta Ecologică (ecological label)	2002	

The features common to all these schemes of national ecological labelling are the following:

- the schemes are voluntary;

- the ecological criteria are determined in terms of the life cycle of the groups of products;
- the levels of granting criteria are determined so as to encourage the development of the products with a minimum impact over the environment;
- are legally protected by a symbol or logo;
- are periodically reviewed, considering the technological development and the market position.

2. Ecological labelling in European Union

Under the conditions of proliferating some national systems of ecological labelling of products, it became necessary the elaboration of a harmonised legislative frame in this field.

A first step in this respect was made through the CEE Regulation no. 880/1992 of EU Council that introduces a unitary system of ecological label on communitarian level that has as logo a "flower" (figure no. 1) and further on through the Council Regulation (CEE) no. 1980/2000 concerning the determination of some procedures of granting the ecological label, the Decision (CEE) no. 729/2000 concerning the contract related to the conditions of use of ecological label and the Decision (CEE) no. 728/2000 related to the determination of rates and fees for ecological labelling.

Figure no. 1: The EU ecological label 1992

The experience gained through the application of (CE) Regulation no. 1980/2000 proved the need to change this system of ecological labelling in order to become more accessible and to increase its efficacy, in order to simplify its procedures and reduce the costs, as well as to facilitate its operation; simultaneously, it was also considered the increase of the number of labelled products, through the extension of the list of products' categories to 50, until 2015.

In this respect, due to reasons of clarity and juridical security, the (CE) Regulation no. 1980/2000 was replaced by the (CE) Regulation no. 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of Council (CEE) of November 25th 2009, concerning the ecological labelling of EU.

Also, in order to facilitate the trade of products with an ecological label on national and communitarian level, with a view to reduce the additional efforts of enterprises, mainly of SMEs, and to avoid the confusion among the consumers, it is necessary to increase the

coherence and harmonisation of European national systems with the communitarian system in terms of ecological labelling.

According to (CE) Regulation no. 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of Council (CEE) dated 2009, related to ecological labelling of EU, its logo is changed, including as well the space where are stated the relevant criteria for such group of products (figure no. 2).

Figure no. 2: European ecologic label

The registration number of EU ecological label appears as well on the product. This has the following form:

EU Ecolabel: xxxx/yyy/zzzzz

where: **xxxx** refers to the registration country, **yyy** refers to the group of products and **zzzzz** refers to the number assigned by the competent authority.

The general objective of using the ecological label is to promote the production and sale of products with a low negative impact on the environment, comparatively to other ecologically non-labelled products in the same group of products.

The European ecological label was created by the European Commission in 1992 and it is a unique scheme of certification with two main targets, namely: offers the consumers a reliable assessment of products concerning the impact on environment; and promotes the production and use of products with a minimum impact on the environment.

The main traits of the communitarian scheme of eco-labelling are:

- *it is voluntary* – it is not determined in terms of some ecological standards that the manufacturers shall follow, offering the manufacturer or the trader the possibility to decide if it applies it or not; in this respect, the eco-labelling scheme does not become a commercial barrier;

- *it is selective,* being assigned only to those products that present a minimum impact on the environment;

- *it is transparent* – the criteria were determined in accordance with the technical and scientific guides elaborated with the wide participation of independent and neuter bodies;

- it has a *dynamic and evolutional character*, being assigned on determined term;

- *they operate in terms of a multi-criteria approach*, the criteria do not rely on a single parameter, but on studies that analyse the impact of product over the environment during the life cycle;

- *it has an European dimension* – a manufacturer or a trader that accomplishes the criteria for a group of products and obtains the eco-label may sell on the market of European Union.

In the procedure of determining the ecological criteria, specific to different categories of products, are involved the national boards of granting the ecological label and The European Union Eco-labelling Board - EUEB.

The criteria for granting the ecological label to a group of products are valid a 3-5-year term. These criteria are reviewed before the expiration and may be amended. If they are amended, the contracts must be renewed, and if the validity term of criteria is extended (without review), the contract may be extended automatically. The ecological label may be used since the date when it is granted until the end of the validity term of the criterion.

The ecologic label is usually assigned to a group of products. Theoretically, all group of products are eligible for the eco-labelling, except for food products, beverages and medicine. In practice, though, the award of the EU Ecolabel is limited to a reduced number of products groups, specifically: *cleaning products* (detergents for dishwashing machines, hand dishwashing detergents, universal detergents and detergents for sanitary groups, soaps, shampoos and hair conditioners); *paper products* (absorbent paper, copy paper and graphic paper); *home products* (materials for rigid floors, interior paints and lacquers, bed mattresses); *products for the garden* (soil breeders, culture substrates); *electric and household products* (washing machines for household use, dish washing machines for household use, refrigerating appliances, televisions, electric lamps, portable computers, personal computers, vacuum cleaners); *shoes; textiles* (clothing, bed linen, interior textiles); *heat pumps; lubricants*.

Since 1992, when the ecological labels began to be granted, the number of companies that demanded and received the eco-label has increased every year, reaching in October 2010 to 1126. A high frequency in using communitarian eco-label is met in Italy (331 eco-labels) and in France (232 eco-labels), as it results from figure no. 3.

Figure no. 3: Awareness of the EU Eco-label with The Flower Logo by Country

Source: European Commission, 2010

Related the distribution of ecological labels in terms of the group of products, it is noticed that the cleaning products (detergents) occupy the first place with a percentage of 20.73% (147 eco-labelled products), then the textile products and the group of dyes and varnishes, with a percentage of 12.69% (each holding 90 eco-labelled products), as it results from figure no. 4.

Figure no. 4: Awareness of the EU Ecolabel with The Flower Logo by Product Group

Source: European Commission, 2010

Obtaining the European ecological label involves several operations, presented further on:

- *Checking the eligibility of product.* The product must belong to one of the groups of products that may obtain an European ecological label. This must fulfil the following conditions: high potential of protection of the environment; competitive advantages for the manufacturers of goods; high demand of consumption or final use through the volume of sales.

- *Checking the eligibility of company.* The granting of European ecological label may be required by any economic operator: manufacturers, importers, traders.

- *Contacting the competent authority.* In Romania, the authority competent to grant the European ecological label is the Minister of Environment.

- *Filling in the application forms.* The economic operator that wants to obtain the European ecological label must submit a file with evidence that the product corresponds to the ecological exigencies *established by the* European Commission.

- *Evaluation of application and granting the European ecological label.* The competent authority receives the application and, if the ecological criteria are met, informs the European Commission on its decision of granting the right to use the label.

The use of eco-label offers a range of advantages, generated by the advantages of label, as follows:

- targets a sustainable society, since it contributes to the reduction of pollution, protection and conservation of environment;
- the European ecological label, being a mark of collective certification of products, provides a high degree of reliability and credibility;
- promotes the products with minimum impact on environment and human health during their entire life cycle;
- contributes to the improvement of the image of manufacturer and presents advantages for the final consumer;the ecological label is a modern marketing tool in communication – offers the products a competitive advantage on market and allows the development of retail market of these products on European level**.**

3. Attitude of Romanian consumers towards the ecological labelling of products

In order to apply the European regulation related to ecological labelling of products, it was elaborated, in February 2002, the G.D. no. 189/28 concerning the determination of the procedure of granting the ecological label (currently, it is abolished). On March 7th 2007 it was adopted the G.D. no. 236 concerning the determination of some measures for the application of the Regulation of European Parliament and of Council no. 1980/2000/CE of July 17th 2000 related to the reviewed system of granting the European ecological label. Also, starting with 2010, in granting the European ecological label, one considers the disposals of the Regulation no. 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of Council dated November 25th 2009, with respect to ecological labelling of EU that replaced the (CE) Regulation no. 1980/2000.

The groups of products for which are set forth the criteria of granting the Romanian ecological label are similar to the European ones. The exceptions are the alimentary products, the drinks, the medicines and medical appliances meant for being used in professional purposes. Also, the criteria of granting the ecological label promote mainly: the reduction of power consumption; the reduction of water consumption; the reduction of waste quantity; favouring the use of renewable resources and the substances less damaging for environment; promoting the communication and education in the field of environment protection. These criteria were set forth by Governmental decisions, on categories of products, through the application of the decisions of European Community Commission.

For the ecological label to be assigned to the economic units (manufacturers, importers, service performers, traders) that operate in Romania, the following traits must be considered:

- require the ecological label to the *Ministry of Environment,* that represents the competent authority in the field;
- the products are tested by specialised institutions recommended by the Ministry of Environment and/or by other institutions with accredited laboratories;
- the performances of product are assessed by the competent authority (Ministry of Environment) that collaborates with the *National Board for Granting Ecological Label* in

taking the decisions with respect to granting the ecological label and with the *National Authority for Consumer Protection,* with a view to assess the efficiency degree of ecological label in answering the information needs of consumers;

- the applications for obtaining the ecological label are submitted to the payment of a 300 Euro rate (reduced by 25% for SMEs), rate that does not include the costs of testing or verification of products in the process of assessment of their performances (costs incurred by the solicitors of ecological label);
- the ecological label is granted by the National Board for Granting Ecological Label, on the category of products in which it is included.

In order to ensure the term of conformity of product to the exigencies of European ecological label, the competent authority and representatives are entitled to perform periodical controls to beneficiaries. The ecological label is assigned only for a certain period of time, equivalent to the validity of criteria, subsequently, the right to use it must be renewed.

Despite all the measures taken by Romanian Ministry of Environment to promote the ecological label, until 2011 only four companies obtained the European ecological label, among which: the Company "Argeşeana" - S.A. Piteşti (for the textile products group), the Company "Bioflex" - S.A. Sibiu (for bed mattresses products group), the Company Maguay Impex SRL - Bucharest (for personal and portable computers – one portable computer and one desktop computer, being the first Romanian company in the IT field that has this certification) and the Company "Duraziv" SRL - Popeşti Leordeni, that has ecologically certified, for the first time in Romania, the super washable dye with Caoutchouc® (a very elastic and thinly sensitive resin in contact with water) "Odourless Duraziv" meant for the protection and decoration of internal surfaces.

The reasons for which Romanian economic operators are not interested in eco-labelling their products reside, mainly, in the voluntary character of European eco-label (consequently, the economic units do not have the obligation to apply the eco-label on their products) and in the fact that the use of ecological label determines the increase of the price of eco-labelled product, which would induce the fear of sales' reduction.

It is necessary to emphasize as well the lack of an "ecological culture" of Romanians and also the fact that Romanian consumer is not used to this kind of products, thus, the companies are not motivated to perform the demarches to obtain the right of using the ecological label. These issues are reflected by the attitude of Romanian consumers opposite to ecological labelling of products. In this respect, the observations and results of "*Europeans' attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production, Analytical report, April 2009*" study are significant, synthesizing the attitudes of Europeans with respect to durable development of production and trade.

We shall present further on a range of issues related to: the buyer/consumer becomes aware of the impact of a product bought/used on the environment; importance of the impact of a product on the environment in the purchase decisions; importance of ecological label in the purchasing decision; the most important information stated on the ecological label; becoming aware of the symbol of EU ecological label (comparatively reported to the opinions of consumers on European level).

With respect to the awareness of the buyer/consumer related to the impact of a product bought/used on the environment included in the question: *How much do you know about the impact of products, that you buy or use, on the environment?,* the share of Romanian consumers that declare that are fully aware of this impact is with 6.1% higher than the same category of European average, but with 12.9% under the European average when it comes to the most significant knowledge of this impact. Also, the category of those who declare that they do not know anything about this impact cumulated to that of those who refuse to answer is higher with 7.1% of the same category of European average (figure no. 5).

Figure no. 5: How much do you know about the impact of products that you buy or use, on the environment?

Concerning the importance of the impact of a product on environment in the purchase decisions, included in the question: *How important is the impact of a product on environment in the purchase decisions?,* the Romanian consumers, in proportion of 43%, consider this impact very important (with 9.2% higher than European average), but the share of those who consider the impact only important is inferior to European average (negative difference of 14.9%). The segment of those who do not consider important this impact cumulated to that of those who do not know/ not answer has an almost double share opposite to the same segment of European average (11.4% opposite to 6.2%) (figure no. 6)

Figure no. 6: The importance of the impact of a product on environment in the purchase decisions

Related the importance of ecological label in the purchasing decision, on the question: *Some products have an eco-label that certifies their ecological nature. Which is the*

statement that characterises better this aspect?, the answers of Romanian consumers are not too different of the answers of European average. It is noticed the same rather high share of those who consider that ecological labelling plays an important role in the purchasing decisions (45.5% in the sample of Romanian consumers, respectively 47.4% in European average). It is relevant that the share of Romanian consumers who consider that ecological labelling *does not play* an important role in the purchasing decisions is higher with 2.2% than the segment of EU consumers who share this opinion. It is equally important to notice that the share of those who declare that they do not know or who are not answering this question is almost three times higher among Romanian consumers comparatively to those from EU (4.5% opposite to 1.7%) (figure no. 7)

Figure no. 7: Some products have an eco-label that certifies their ecological nature. Which is the statement that characterises better this aspect?

On the question: *Which are the most important specifications that must be included on the ecological label?*, Romanian consumers consider the information related to the recyclable/ reusable nature of products much less important than the information that the product comes from ecological sources (27%, opposite to 33.4%), a situation totally opposed to that resulted from the investigation of EU consumers, where the importance order of the two pieces of information is reverse (37.9% and, respectively, 31.6%). There are not significant differences in terms of mentioning the recyclable nature of package and the indication of the level of polluting emissions between the opinions of Romanian consumers and those of EU ones: on both issues, the share of Romanian consumers that consider important this information is rather high. But, among Romanian consumers, the share of those who do not express an opinion (not knowing/not answering) on this question is twice higher than EU consumers (9.8% opposite to 4.7%) (figure no. 8).

Figure no. 8: Which are the most important specifications that must be included on the ecological label?

With respect to the awareness of the symbol of EU ecological label, encountered in the question: *Are you aware of the symbol of EU ecological label?,* Romanian consumers, as the EU ones, prove to a great extent (59.3%, respectively 60.7%) that they are not preoccupied with the eco-label issue. It is interesting to notice that the share of those who have seen and bought eco-labelled products is, in EU, almost equal to that of those who saw that did not buy such products (19%, respectively 18%); however, among Romanian consumers, those who saw and bought eco-labelled products represent only 63.7% of the share of those who saw but did not buy eco-labelled products (figure no. 9).

Figure no. 9: Are you aware of the symbol of EU ecological label?

The observations resulted in terms of the answers to the five questions presented above allow us to present a few observations.

On the questions 1 and 2, the share of Romanian consumers who answered that they *are fully aware* of the impact of products on environment (question 1) and respectively that the impact of product on environment is *very important* in the purchasing decision was higher than that in the same category of European average (1.43 times higher on question 1 and 1.27 times higher on second question). This situation may have two explanations: on the one hand, among Romanian consumers one could distinguish a segment characterized by a better knowledge of reality, a high education and high knowledge, that allowed their passing from knowledge to an attitude fairly and decisive oriented towards objectives that transcend the individual horizon and concern the social wide references; on the other hand, it must be presumed as well a specific Romanian cultural particularity, respectively an easiness in super characterial formulation of non-median opinions/situations.

Correlating these opinions to the situation of the answers to the third question, we must notice that it is obvious *a default on the level of ecological education*. One can no longer distinguish a segment that may be quoted over the level of European average opposite to the pre-formulated opinion according to which „*Ecological labelling* ***plays*** *an important role in the purchase decision"*, and, more than that, it is obvious that the share of those who consider that "*Ecological labelling* *is not playing* *an important role in the purchase decision"* is higher than that of European average. These observations confirm the presumption of an *education in progress on Romanian territory*, with respect to the importance of eco-labelling.

Most of the answers in favour of the priority granted to the importance of indicating the ecological nature of the sources of product, offered by Romanian consumers, opposite to the opinion of EU consumers according to which the indication of recyclable/reusable nature of the good is the most important information, present – in our opinion – *an orientation clearly closer to the principles of sustainable development and durable consumption***,** relying on a preventive attitude in terms of environment protection, and not a corrective one. Or, the trend of the attitude of goods' manufacturers and consumers is preferred in this direction.

The net superior share of Romanian consumers who *Do not know/Do not answer* is, on four out of the five questions, much higher than in case of EU consumers, situation that shows clearly *differences of information, knowledge and attitude*, specific to a period of economic and cultural transition, when most of Romanian consumers are concerned with the next day: how to feed and shelter their families, how to survive and how to have a decent life, how to find a job, how to maintain their dignity and basic human rights.

Romanian consumers understand too little the impact they have on environment, consequently, the pressure on companies to turn their products or procedures is rather moderated. Therefore, awareness actions are necessary through campaigns of information.

The promotion and mediatisation of European ecological label among consumers must be performed either by developing a strategy of "ecological education" with a view to change the conduct of consumers in the purchase process, or through the development of "marketing and advertising tools" for the specific needs of consumers.

The main means to promote the European ecological label on the level of consumers are the following:

- promoting the European ecological label in stores, supermarkets or other sale points that are trading ecological products through boards with ecological label as well as the display of grouped products in a certain place in the store;
- distributing folders and informative booklets with ecological specificity;
- use of mass-media means, respectively television and radio programs as well as written press to supply more information related to ecological products;
- creation of websites with information related to ecological labelling of products;
- participation of schools - by informative courses and of non-governmental specialised organisations that may present the advantages offered by ecological products.

The ecological label must supply the consumers reliable information related to the impact of products on environment during their life cycle (production, packing, distribution, use, removal), securing the quality of using them.

The consumers must be informed about the importance of ecological criterion that they should consider when buying products, and the ecological label is the one that has „to come" to them.

Conclusions

To sustain a healthy and unpolluted environment, the European Committee adopted, based on specialty studies, prescriptions regarding the assignment of the status of ecologic products and the law in the field was taken over and put in practice by the countries members of EU.

The ecologic label acts as a passport that authorizes the free circulation of products on the European territory, increasing the number of consumers for the products that do not affect the environment.

Also in Romania there are concerns regarding the ecologic labelling of products, only that it's especially required to encourage the ones whose products are according to the criteria regarding eco-labelling and the costs for the use of the ecologic label should be reduced. Also, the ecologic public acquisitions should be promoted, and to be known and accepted by the wide public it is essential for the non-governmental organizations specialized in environment protection and the organizations of the consumers to be actively involved in informing and making aware the public about the ecologic labelling through local, national information and education campaigns. These actions are also necessary to give to the system an increased degree of attractively for producers and traders.

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