# 'ECOmise it': EBV Elektronik Presents Latest Update on EuP-Directive Regarding Simple Set-top Boxes

## New Minimum Requirements for Simple Set-top Boxes

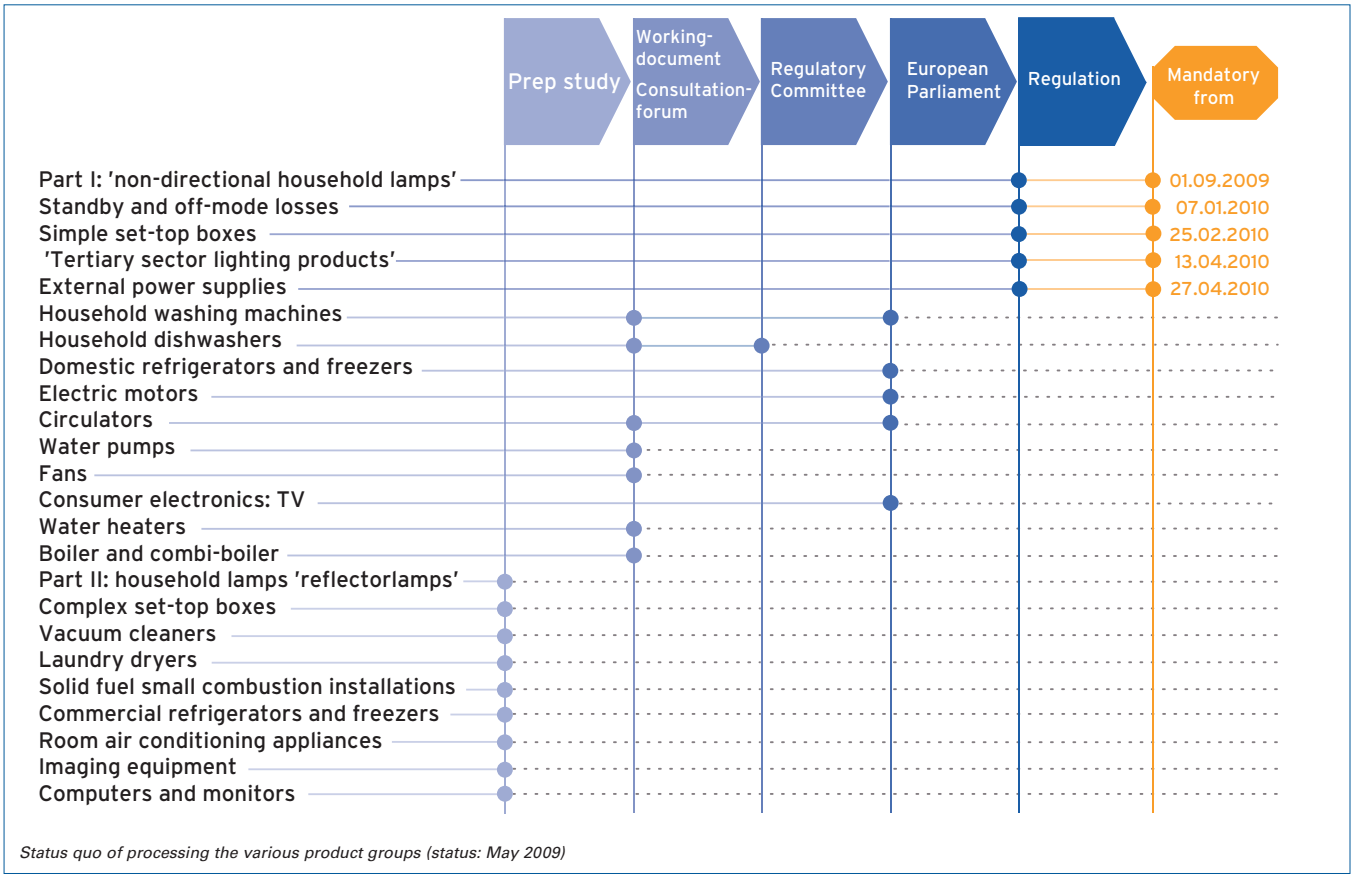
by Dr. Norbert Reintjes, Ökopol GmbH/EuP Consultant EBV Elektronik | May 2009

Commission Regulation (EC) no. 107/2009 was published in the Official Journal of the EU on 5 February 2009, and implements Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for simple set-top boxes. It places requirements on the environmentally-friendly design of set-top boxes, and from 25 February 2010 onwards, only devices that satisfy the energy-consumption values specified in the Regulation may be brought into circulation throughout the EU.

For many decades, analogue signals formed the basis for communication between the broadcasting station and the television. This changed with the development of digital transmission techniques using satellites and cable. Set-top boxes act as the link between new, digital transmission and analogue televisions. Analogue terrestrial television transmission is already on its way out. According to estimates, all European broadcasters will be using digital transmission technology exclusively by 2015.

Anyone who buys a television today can do without the external box as the devices are already capable of processing digital signals. In the mean time however, many consumers will add a set-top box to their old television. As a result, the number of simple set-top boxes (SSTB) on the EU market will double from 28 million in 2008 to 56 million in 2014 according to a study.

The regulation defines a simple set-top box (SSTB) as a stand-alone device, the primary function of which – regardless of the interfaces used – is to convert free-to-air digital broadcast signals in standard definition (SD) or high definition (HD)




*Status quo of processing the various product groups (status: May 2009)*

into analogue radio signals for radios and televisions. Unlike complex set-top boxes, SSTBs do not have any access control (e.g. for the use of Pay-TV channels). Nor do they offer any recording function on removable media.

The requirements limit the maximum energy consumption of the SSTBs both in standby as well as active mode. From 25 February 2010 onwards, 1 watt in standby will be the highest limit. This figure will fall to 0.5 watts in February 2012. An upper limit of 5 watts applies in operating mode. The provision of specific functions allows higher consumption. Not only will the presence of a standby mode become compulsory, the devices must also switch automatically into this mode.

A study performed prior to the creation of the directive assumes that the SSTBs currently on the market consume between 7 and 25 watts in operating mode (depending on the device's equipment) and around 6 watts in standby mode. The study also underlines the fact that it is possible to reduce energy consumption in a manner that is comparatively easy from a technical perspective and inexpensive for the end customer. Without this measure, annual power consumption of SSTBs in the EU is estimated at 6 TWh in 2010 and 14 TWh in 2014. The EU Commission estimates to reduce power consumption by 9 TWh, i.e. by over 60%, by means of this Regulation. This is the second regulation implementing the EuP or Ecodesign directive. Binding minimum requirements for external power supply units as well as for industrial lighting products and domestic lighting have already been adopted. Further Regulations will follow in 2009.

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| Decree | 107/2009/EC |
| Date of publication | 5th February 2009 |
| Came into force on | 25th February 2009 |
| Valid | 25th February 2010 |
| Scope | Simple set-top boxes |
| Area of applicability | Power consumption in standby and active operating mode |

In a series of articles supported by EBV Elektronik, there appeared a detailed description of the ecodesign guideline as well as a description of the regulation on the standby and off-mode consumption of electrical and electronic domestic and office equipment .

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