

15th July 2008

Philips continues dumping e-waste – one step forward, two steps back.

Philips announced that the company will start pilot projects for voluntary product recycling in 2008 in India and early 2009 in Brazil and Argentina. This is positive news, but it is an unacceptably small step forward. Philips was asked by Greenpeace to change `walk its green talk´ on two points –to provide national free and easy take-back for its products at their end of their life, globally, and to stop resisting taking full financial responsibility for its own end of life products (1).

Martin Hojsik, Greenpeace Campaigner said “It is good to see Philips taking a baby step in its responsibility for its own –waste in India, Brazil and Argentina. But this is far from enough. The pilot projects that Philips has announced are no where near the requested commitment to roll-out a full take-back system in all countries where its products are sold.”

Pilot projects could be an important part of the measures identified to reinforce the commitment but they are not a commitment in themselves. Other companies, like Sony have made this commitment and they have shown already that it is possible to set up nationwide collection systems.

Furthermore Philips continues to `dodge´ the issue as far as taking full economic responsibility for its own waste (2). By avoiding taking a clear position on this issue we assume that Philips plans to continue to pass the costs for collecting and treating its own waste products onto consumers and other producers in the future. This is completely unacceptable, if other producers can assume individual producer responsibility there is no reason Philips cannot (3).

While we can agree with the aims to push for higher collection levels and to improve the information on the website for consumers, we would point out that Philips responsibility is to do this in countries where such activities are not already required by law. This is where the big environmental progress can be made.

Thus overall, the statement from Philips was really one step forward and two steps back. Philips is still failing to commit to global responsibility for the take-back of its own e-waste and is trying to pass of its financial duties to others, even in the EU where the law requires it to shift to taking individual responsibility. *“Greenpeace expects Philips to be the environmental leader but instead the company continues to simply dump their waste products in the environment globally and dump their financial responsibilities on consumers and other brands at home”* said Martin Hojsik.

End

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Notes

1) Extract of letter sent to CEO Mr. Gerard Kleisterle, 7th July 2008:

...On the 10th of June Greenpeace challenged Philips to become an environmental leader and move out of the red zone in the Greenpeace Electronics Ranking Guide and you accepted our challenge. More specifically we asked you, as a first step, to publicly commit, by the 15th of July, to setting up a take-back system for your end-of-life products globally and to re-evaluate your position on individual producer responsibility. You accepted our challenge, as outlined in the letter we handed you the same day (attached), and pledged to address the issues within Philips. We understood you committed to:

*a) Investigate the request to set up free and easy take-back for all your products **globally, starting with Thailand, India, Argentina and Russia**. We discussed the urgent need for clear pro-active engagement in ongoing legislative discussions (for example in India) and action on the ground, including **timelines and take-back program details** for the countries mentioned above,*

*b) **Reconsider your position** in the EU concerning individual producer responsibility (IPR). The position on article 8.213 you submitted to the WEEE Directive revision consultation process shows once again that Philips is lobbying actively against IPR. We therefore firmly ask you to publicly withdraw this position and take distance from the NVMP position established in April 2008.*

***This withdrawal needs to be made public** and to back up your commitment to IPR, you would need to clarify your position publicly e.g. on your website and in communications to Dutch and EU authorities, and show us that you are genuinely interested in exploring differentiation of your own costs in the recycling systems you are part of. In addition Philips needs to withdraw from the ARF coalition (aka Electronic Manufacturers' Coalition for Responsible Recycling) in the USA....*

2) Philips continues to make public statements on 'collective recycling systems' without clarifying whether they mean COLLECTIVE financing of all e-waste recycled in these systems, sharing out the costs of the recycling of their e-waste with other producers, or whether they accept to pay for the full costs of their own e-waste products recycling even whilst sharing the same collective infrastructure, recycling plants, collection points etc... which is Individual Producer Responsibility. We are asking Philips to take a clear position supporting financial individual producer responsibility, a key element of internalizing the end of life costs of its own products and part of creating incentives to design cleaner, more durable and more recyclable products.

3) <http://www.iprworks.org/statement.asp>

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