



Labnet: Better measurements for a better environment

European network of laboratories LABNET actively works to reduce CO2 emission and to improve energy savings

Central heating boilers account for about 20% of the total EU energy consumption. Several million boilers are sold on a yearly basis in the EU. Needless to say a variation of even a few percent in the efficiency will have an enormous impact on the total energy consumption in the EU, and therefore, allows an important reduction of CO2 emissions.

Therefore, we need to promote the best appliances and ensure that the boilers are well installed in order to achieve the optimum efficiency of all appliances.

The Commission has been supporting the LABNET network of laboratories - co-ordinated by Danish Gas Technology Centre (DGC) - through the programme GROWTH (G6RT-CT-2001). The network has the ambition to contribute to a better society by improving the environmental impact of heating.

This can be achieved by the following:

- 1) Improving the EFFICIENCY measurement situation in the EU so that the directive and standards can be applied without controversy. The correct application of the present regulations should allow an improvement of the appliances on the market.
- 2) Developing a measurement and calculation method to determine the electricity consumption, the emissions and any other boiler characteristics that are important for the consumer and that have a positive impact on the environment.
- 3) Developing a calculation method that can be used by the installers to guarantee the optimum compatibility between the boiler and the installation (Software BOILSIM, <http://www.boilsim.com/>). This is especially important as the efficiency of boilers depends greatly on the installation.

At present, we are a long way from a solution. The support of the Commission is needed to strengthen the collaboration between laboratories from Member States and to develop the measurement methods and protocols required.

In addition, members such as DGC are actively working on developing labelling and information tools, which are aimed at informing the consumers and the installers (www.boilerinfo.com). An EU standard scheme involving labelling will soon be introduced in Denmark for the first time.

All these actions would not be possible without the work of LABNET, which is building the tools needed for introduction of the regulation, labels or information that will guarantee future energy savings and CO2 reduction.

Today LABNET has 24 partners (see links at <http://labnet.dgc.dk/>), and the network is still growing. Laboratories from new member states are also welcome to join the group where the experience of each partner is shared for the benefit of all. LABNET has already obtained substantial results in solving problems for the application of the Boiler Directive (92/42). As a result it is expected that the more efficient products will be introduced into the market.

Not only does this result in energy savings and CO2 reduction; it also contributes to a sustainable future of our society.