Farewell to incandescence?

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In the wake of a recent IEA workshop a flurry of new policy initiatives are under way around the world to phase-out inefficient incandescent lamps.

On 26th February the IEA, in partnership with the European Commission, CEN[1] and IEEA[2], staged a landmark workshop on CFL[3] Quality and Strategies to Phase-out Incandescent Lighting. The workshop brought together the world's leading European, north American and Chinese lamp manufacturers and many of the world's energy regulators to consider whether it was now time to begin to phase-out conventional low-efficiency incandescent lighting in favour of higher-efficiency alternatives such as CFLs. Significantly, since the weeks immediately preceding the workshop there have been an extraordinary number of new policy initiatives targeting the phase-out of inefficient incandescent lighting.

In 2006, as one of the first products delivered in response to its mandate from the G8, the IEA published *Light's Labour's Lost: Policies for Energy-Efficient Lighting* and submitted broad-based recommendations on new energy efficient lighting policies for consideration at the G8 summit in St Petersburg. This has been followed by a process to develop more targeted recommendations which led to the announcement of the February workshop.

Clearly, both industry and government had been considering these issues because, in December 2006, Philips Lighting announced that they supported a global phase-out of inefficient incandescent lamps in favour of energy-efficient alternatives over a 10-year period. In the week before the February workshop, the Government of Australia announced its intention to phase out inefficient incandescent lighting by 2011. Environment and Water Resources Minister Malcolm Turnball, MP, cited IEA analysis showing that a global switch to CFLs by 2030 would save the energy equivalent of more than five years of Australia's current electricity consumption. At the subsequent IEA workshop other leading lamp manufacturers joined Philips in supporting the common objective of moving toward the phase-out of inefficient incandescent lamps provided the time-frames and levels were appropriate and the process was suitably managed. The workshop also heard about new bills proposing to phase out incandescent lighting that had been submitted in California, as well as more direct actions being taken in some Caribbean countries. On 9th March, just after the IEA meeting, the European Council of Ministers called on the European Commission to establish a regulation addressing incandescent lighting by 2009 under the terms of the Eco-design of End-Use Products Directive. On 28th March, a cross-party group of European parliamentarians urged

[1] European Committee for Standardization
[2] Intelligent Energy Executive Agency
[3] Compact fluoerescent lamps

governments and the European Commission to quickly introduce new energy efficiency standards for lighting and to introduce market surveillance measures to prevent existing standards from being flouted by importers. Meanwhile, on 12th March, the United Kingdom government announced that they planned to complete the phase-out of inefficient GLS[4] incandescent lamps by 2011, in advance of the probable provisions of the European Union Directive.

In the United States, politicians in five states have also developed draft legislation to phase out or reduce reliance on incandescent lighting, while a new United States federal government rule-making on energy performance standards addressing screw-based lamps is scheduled to be issued in 2009. North of the border at the Canadian provincial level there are also fresh initiatives under way to phase out low-performance incandescent lighting. And new policies are also under development outside the OECD, with the Government of Thailand announcing a similar intention and the Global Environment Facility considering the development of a worldwide initiative to support the phase-out of inefficient incandescent lighting. So is this to be the long-awaited farewell to a technology that has been in common use since 1879 but has been superseded in the efficiency and cost-effectiveness stakes? There is still much uncertainty about how far and how fast this may happen but the prospect is not as dim as it once was.

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[4] General lighting service