Domestic Lighting and Energy Efficiency: the Assoluce
(the Italian Association of Lighting Manufacturers of
Federlengo-Arredo) Position

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Before going on with what I have to say, I
would like to thank Mr. Bertoldi for having invited me here to speak to you.
My thanks are especially sincere because I particularly appreciate Mr. Bertoldi’s
invitation, as he well knows how my positions and those of the body I have the
honour of chairing, ASSOLUCE, are quite different from the prevailing opinions
in the majority of European bodies dealing with the subjects of this conference. At
times, we have strongly disagreed and today I will illustrate the main reasons for
this.

First of all, a few words about ASSOLUCE. It is one of the two Italian
associations grouping together manufacturers of lighting appliances, in particular
those manufacturing products considered "decorative", that is, those products
which are more directly oriented for use in the home. There are just under a
hundred member companies but they are all manufacturers of lighting appliances,
whilst the other association (ASSIL) also has manufacturers of components for
lighting and light bulbs (a few large multinationals) alongside manufacturers of
lighting appliances.

The lighting sector in Italy is, by production value, second in Europe
manufacturer (2.5 billion Euro), but the first in terms of exports. The Italian
sector of decorative lighting products is the worldwide leader, with a share of
20% of world exports: I believe that this role as a leader comes from the fact that
Italy is the only country in the world where all typologies of lighting appliances
are produced. Manufacturers of all dimensions, from craftsmen to highly
industrialized firms, produce every type of light possible: from wrought iron lamps
and those with glass blown by the masters of the art in Murano or Tuscany,
traditional, technical and decorative lamps up to those of the great Italian design.

This wealth and organization of production, in the modern world, can only be
found in Italy; in particular, in no other country is there a similar wealth of firms
with a high organizational and technical level that produce decorative and design
lighting appliances. The members of ASSOLUCE also include the only two
lighting appliance companies that have been awarded the prestigious ECDP
(European Community Design Prize) by the European Community.
I mentioned earlier our disagreement on the currently prevailing opinions in Europe on energy saving in the home. I will now try and illustrate the reasons for this.

The first can be found in the very title of this conference, "Energy efficiency in household appliances and lighting": the distinction made between "lighting" and "appliances" clearly indicates the realization that "lighting" has different characteristics from all other "appliances" which use electricity in the home. Let us try and understand which elements lead us to consider "lighting" as something particular in the use of electricity in the home.

First of all, the characteristics of production.

The other household appliance manufacturing sectors (refrigerators, TVs, VCRs, ovens, cookers, water-heaters, air-conditions, stereos etc.) are characterized by a relatively small number of manufacturing firms, all with an industrial organization, of medium/large dimensions (over 300 employees), whilst the lighting sector in Europe has 8,000 manufacturers, with only about ten of these having more than 300 employees and, probably not more than thirty have 100 employees.

Today, many speakers have mentioned "voluntary agreements" as ideal ways and tools to reach sectorial agreements for the reduction of energy consumption and the consequent improvement in efficiency. How can we think of making "voluntary agreements" in a context with 8,000 subjects? Admitting this impossibility must not by any means lead to tools being imposed from above as suitable which, as well as being contrary to the logic of the free market, would never be accepted by the market itself in any case.

In the second place, the characteristics of the product. Unlike lighting appliances, other household appliances work from a limited power range. Televisions, refrigerators and ovens absorb powers that have by now been fairly well identified by technological development and consequently their performance standards can be defined and manufacturers can reach voluntary agreements for their improvement.

On the other hand, lighting appliances for the home use quite a wide wattage range (from 1 Watt up to 300 Watt). In addition, all the parts of the illuminating body, as a whole, are required to carry out its specific function. In the illuminating body, unlike other household appliances which have their "engine" and technology inside a casing, the external and visible part, contributes to the function of giving light or allowing its use. In this situation of differentiated power and a variety of solutions, the definition of standards of efficiency is rather more problematic.

For both these first two reasons (manufacturing characteristics and product characteristics) we have been fighting for some time now against any hypothesis, which is actually supported by many, of classifying illuminating appliances, considering only the exclusive parameter of energy efficiency.