

Fridges too can save the planet

Pubblicato: Mercoledì 16 Dicembre 2009

Can a fridge save the world? Maybe not, but it certainly can help. For this, Whirlpool Europe, who have always given a lot of importance to the environment in their advertising, are personally present at the Earth Summit in Copenhagen.

In particular, Whirlpool will be present to promote the *Smart Green Grid Initiative*, a group of companies that have come together to promote and to spread smart grid technology. The smart grid is an electricity system, that does not just provide energy, but that communicates with homes and individual household appliances. By communicating with homes, the system's manager will be able to distribute energy more correctly, possibly moving energy surpluses from one area to another, or rewarding consumers that consume less, with lower prices.

The American President, Barack Obama, who has invested billions of dollars in the smart grid, also has great faith in this innovation. However, here, in Europe, standards still have to be found, and the presence in Copenhagen will also serve this purpose.

"Consumers must be able to choose if and when they want their devices to interface with the system, and when they should remain independent," said Bracken Darrell, the president of Whirlpool Europe. "Providing economic incentives, by means of varied time band pricing, will be the most important single element in changing consumption habits. The great advantage of the Smart Appliances we are developing is that they will give the consumer the power to grant significant benefits to the system, without compromising efficiency or quality of the results, in any way."

By 2010, it will be necessary to identify an open standard for the smart grid, but in order to achieve this, an agreement will have to be reached between industry representatives, system managers and energy producers. Whirlpool are going to emphasise the importance of collaboration between the industrial side, the authorities, the legislator, the non-governmental organisations and other institutional and private bodies, in stopping climate change effectively. For their part, the company have undertaken, by 2015, to produce only household appliances that interface with the smart grid.

Redazione VareseNews
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