



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

### **Environment: Commission recognises eco-innovative solutions**

Brussels, 18 November 2011 – The European Commission has announced this year's winners of the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme Awards. The six winning organisations not only showed excellence in respecting and safeguarding the environment, but also in applying innovative solutions to involve different stakeholders. The awards were handed out last night in Krakow, Poland.

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: *"The environmental challenges we face today concern all of us and require joint action. I congratulate the winners – and all the nominees – on their commitment to improving the environment. I hope that their innovative solutions and successful involvement of different actors will inspire others to follow suit."*

This year's winners, selected from among 36 entries, are: Belvas Organic Chocolate (Belgium), ebswien hauptkläranlage (Austria), Eurobank EFG Bank (Greece), Fritz-Erler-Schule Pforzheim (Germany), Kneissler Brüniertechnik (Germany) and the Municipality of Ravenna (Italy).

#### **The 2011 winners and their achievements**

##### **- Organisations from the private sector**

###### **Micro-organisations: Belvas Organic Chocolate (Belgium)**

The Belvas waste management process incorporates separation of organic waste and its use in biomethanisation plants. A unique energy retrieval system is used to melt chocolate. Belvas organises site visits to showcase practical examples of environmental protection in an "ecological factory". Discussions about promoting existing environmental norms and sustainable consumption are held during factory visits and "think tank" sessions with stakeholders.

###### **Small organisations: Kneissler Brüniertechnik (Germany)**

This family business offering chemical surface treatment services involves employees in environmental management and rewards useful suggestions, such as the adoption of new waste management activities, leading to reductions of up to 90% in one production process. Suppliers are expected to meet high environmental standards: chemicals are only purchased from EMAS or ISO 14001 registered/certified suppliers. Kneissler works with an environmental organisation to assess its impact on biodiversity and its dependency on ecosystem services.

### **Medium-sized organisations: ebswien hauptkläranlage (Austria)**

This Viennese wastewater treatment plant works with internal and external stakeholders. Employee ambassadors inform the public during plant tours and open days, emphasising water and waste education for children. The plant also influences suppliers' actions: one supplier was asked to switch from road to rail delivery, avoiding 135 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### **Large-organisations: Eurobank EFG Bank (Greece)**

This financial institution contributes to the integration of sustainable principles in banking practices through its membership of the Global Steering Committee, and as Chair of the European Task Force of the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative. Environmental Officers have been appointed in every branch and in key business units.

#### **- Organisations from the public sector**

### **Small organisations: Fritz-Erler-Schule Pforzheim (Germany)**

This school integrates environmental management into its core teaching activities. Teachers, students and suppliers, including the school's bakery and facility management work together to improve the school's environmental performance. The school reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 35% between 1998 and 2009. Environmental management activities are communicated via a website with an idea exchange platform.

### **Large organisations: Municipality of Ravenna (Italy)**

The Municipality of Ravenna established participatory structures to involve employees and external stakeholders. 100 EMAS "champions" in the Ravenna Municipality buildings use real-time information sharing to improve environmental performance. Green procurement, focusing on the purchase of recycled paper, school furniture made of certified materials and other items, is key. Daily water consumption per inhabitant was reduced by 6% between 2008 and 2010 in a district as a result of strong community involvement. The municipality also carried out waste collection projects involving around 13,000 students and families, doubling the previous level of participation.

## **Background**

The European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a management tool for organisations aiming to improve their environmental and financial performance and communicate their environmental achievements. EMAS leads to enhanced performance, credibility and transparency of registered organisations. Since 1995 more than 4,400 organisations across Europe have registered with EMAS.

In 2005 the European Commission decided to reward the excellent work of EMAS registered organisations by introducing the EMAS Awards. The EMAS Awards recognise outstanding achievements in one particular environmental management aspect each year.

The theme of the 2011 EMAS Awards is "Stakeholder involvement, including employee involvement, leading to continuous improvement". This year, 36 bodies from 15 European countries were nominated. Six winners were selected by a jury of stakeholders and environment experts. Award winners were announced at a ceremony that took place in the Wieliczka Salt Mine - Krakow, Poland.

**Further information:**

The EMAS Awards website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emasawards/index.htm>

EMAS Regulation:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009R1221:EN:NOT>

Contacts :

[Joe Hennon](#) (+32 2 295 35 93)

[Monica Westeren](#) (+32 2 299 18 30)