



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***EU rewards organisations that make eco-innovation pay***

The 2015 EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) Awards

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**Barcelona, 21 May 2015**

The European Commission has awarded six organisations using the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for exceptional performance on eco-innovation. The 10<sup>th</sup> EMAS Awards ceremony was held in Barcelona last night. EMAS is a voluntary EU programme that businesses use to improve their environmental – and financial – performance.

The awards recognize EMAS-registered companies that stand out amongst their peers for their commitment to eco-innovation. This can be through investment in research (new or improved products, services and processes), engagement with employees, customers and local communities, and actions that deliver benefits beyond a company's core business. These are companies that move and motivate others and have the potential to transform entire sectors.

*“The EMAS Award winners demonstrate what the circular economy is all about,”* said Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. *“I salute their vision, commitment and results. They should serve as an example to others looking to do business in a sustainable, low-carbon economy of the future.”*

The European Commission is currently developing new proposals to stimulate the circular economy in Europe. The EMAS Award winners demonstrate that integrating environmental thinking into an organisation's core strategy can be a source of innovation, income and competitiveness. The six winners were selected from 22 nominees by an independent expert jury.

#### **Private sector winners and their achievements**

**Large organisations:** **Comexi Group Industries S.A.U. (Spain)** is a family company whose strategic commitment to eco-innovation led them to develop a new printing machine called COMEXI OFFSET-CI8. This fully eliminates the use of solvent-based inks in the printing process – thus ending the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). It also consumes 40% less energy. Comexi could transform the entire printing sector, especially because it has an outstanding level of engagement with other actors in the supply chain.

**Medium-sized organisations:** [Metallbau Haslinger GmbH \(Germany\)](#) produces steel constructions and overhead cranes. It is on the way to becoming carbon neutral, despite its energy-intensive processes. Heat for space heating and powder coating is generated from wood chips, the electricity for fabrication comes from solar energy, and transport is partly through electric vehicles. Adjusting operations to match the availability of solar power requires impressive commitment from employees and management.

**Small organisations:** The [Seehotel Wiesler GmbH \(Germany\)](#) is a nature and wellness hotel on Lake Titisee in the southern Black Forest in Baden-Württemberg. For a small business, the extent of its activities and promotion is exceptional. Seehotel has developed a model for eco-tourism that has motivated 32 other hotels (plus a further 12 due this year) to join EMAS. Together, they constitute the “Nature Park Inns and Hotels Schwarzwald” group, co-founded by Seehotel’s owner Mr Wiesler.

**Micro-organisations:** [La Page Original \(Spain\)](#) is a graphic design and visual communication studio with just three employees. It stands out for incorporating environmental criteria into all of its projects and therefore greening the buying behavior of its customers.

### **Public sector winners and their achievements**

**Large organisations:** [Landeskrankenanstalten – Betriebsgesellschaft \(KABEG\) \(Austria\)](#) owns and manages the five biggest public hospitals in southern Austria. It has radically reduced its environmental impact by cutting back on water consumption, switching to 100% green energy (including in-house solar power), more energy-efficient processes and buildings, and on-site electromobility. KABEG is impressive for the sheer range of its actions across all five sites, plus two research projects that take the benefits of eco-innovation beyond its core business.

**Small organisations:** The [Regional Centre for Water and Wastewater Management Co. \(RCGW S.A.\) \(Poland\)](#) is a European leader in the production and use of renewable energy in the water and wastewater sector. It produces 50% more energy than it needs every month from biogas. RCGW stands out amongst its peers for investment in innovative research and engagement with local communities. This is an outward-looking company with very professional, advanced green management.

### **Honorary mentions**

In addition to this year’s six winners, two organisations have been given special recognition for their efforts on eco-innovation.

**Medium-sized organisations:** [Schulverein St Ursula \(Austria\)](#), a school in Vienna, received an honorary mention for its engagement with students on environmental issues.

**Large organisations:** [Schaeffler Technologies AG & Co. KG \(Germany\)](#), a global automotive and industrial supplier, received an honorary mention for its front-runner approach to implementing EMAS at global level: a total of 53 registered sites and the first EMAS registrations in China.

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. In 2005 the European Commission introduced the EMAS awards to recognise examples of excellence in environmental management among the wide range of registered organisations.

The theme of the 2015 Awards is “Effective eco-innovations supporting improvements in environmental performance”. This year, 22 organisations from 9 European countries received nominations. The winners in each of the six categories were selected by a jury of experts chaired by Tanja Bisgaard, an independent expert who has worked with organisations including UNEP, Nordic Innovation and the Danish government. The awards ceremony took place in Barcelona, Spain, on 20 May in the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> European Forum on Eco-Innovation.

To celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EMAS this year, the European Commission is organising A High Level Conference on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November. This essential event will take place on the premises of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt and will take stock of what the scheme has achieved so far and how it could be improved, also in the line with the EU’s new circular economy drive.

#### **For more information**

EMAS: [www.emas.eu](http://www.emas.eu)

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

EMAS Regulation: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:342:0001:0045:en:PDF>

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