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NEWS RELEASE

Circular Economy: New chapter for European green products and organisations

Today the Commission has adopted a report presenting the conclusions of the extensive evaluation of the EU Ecolabel Scheme and the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). The Fitness Check of the functioning and performance of these two voluntary schemes found that implementation must improve to reach full potential as circular economy tools.

The EU Ecolabel is a voluntary label promoting environmental excellence by serving as a credible and trustworthy reference for consumers. It is aiming to recognise the top 10-20% best performing products. EMAS is a voluntary management scheme for companies and other organisations to improve environmental performance. It spans all economic and service sectors and is applicable worldwide. The Commission itself has so far saved €74 million by using EMAS in its own buildings. The Commission confirms its commitment to work with the Member States for a more focused, effective implementation of both schemes. Clear follow-up actions are included in the report to boost the uptake of the schemes.

Environment Commissioner **Karmenu Vella** said: "*The EU Ecolabel is a green brand you can trust. The scheme has just been rechecked and is fit for purpose. Environmentally minded consumers can look forward to another 25 years of quality green choices.*"

To make the EU Ecolabel scheme more effective and boost uptake, the Commission will make it more focused. This comprises a new strategic approach by bundling closely related product groups, e.g. paper-related products such as Newsprint and Tissue paper when they come up for renewal, to reinforce communication, to reduce administrative costs, and to improve consistency between the EU Ecolabel and national/regional labels. A number of product groups with limited uptake will be discontinued: flushing toilets and urinals, sanitary tapware and imaging equipment.

For EMAS, the Commission wants to increase the added value of the scheme and the benefits delivered to registered organisations and authorities. This includes additional opportunities for EMAS registered organisations to cut administrative burden by providing greater regulatory relief, replicating measures used by the Member States with a significant number of EMAS registrations, and a better integration of EMAS into the Green Action Plan for SMEs.

The Fitness Check identified the commitment and support of Member States for EMAS as a decisive success factor. The Commission will now seek confirmation from the Member States that they are committed to continue the scheme and to implement the proposed measures.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emas_publications/policy/fitness_check_en.htm

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