



PRESS RELEASE

Organisations active in printing, tourism and education sectors lead in Europe's transition to circular economy

- The 2017 European EMAS Awards rewards companies and public institutions that have demonstrated environmental excellence
- The winners include a small printing company in UK, a hotel in Belgium, and a university in Germany. Their initiatives are innovative, ambitious and... circular.

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Valletta, 8 May 2017 The European Commission has rewarded three organisations using the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for their initiatives aiming at fostering a more circular economy, a priority set by the European Commission. EMAS is a voluntary EU scheme that businesses use to evaluate and improve their environmental performance and increase resource efficiency.

The 11th EMAS Awards ceremony was held in Valletta, Malta. Under the theme of "Contributing to making the European economy more circular", the Awards recognized organisations that stand out amongst their peers for the ambition of their actions and impacts across the whole value chain. Through sustainable purchasing, waste prevention, reuse and recycling, they decreased their resource consumption and involved their suppliers, employees and clients. Their individual results show the resource savings that could be achieved worldwide, across multiple sectors and by all size and type of organisations.

"Many of these results are proof not just of the efficacy of EMAS, but also of the reality of the circular economy" said EU Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Karmenu Vella. "What began as a theoretical concept is fast becoming an effective business model. Organisations that have integrated EMAS into their operations are showing how circular approaches can bring benefits for all."

A jury of Circular Economy experts chaired by Hans Bruyninckx, Executive Director of the European Environmental Agency, selected the winners from among 20 nominees in 11 European countries.

Winner in the category Small and Medium Private Organisations

[Seacourt Ltd \(United Kingdom\)](#) is one of the world's leading environmental printing companies. Since 2009, the family-owned business with only 20 employees has achieved zero waste to landfill - everything

they print either ends up as a finished printed product or is recycled, making them the first zero-waste printing company in the world. The jury also recognized Seacourt's development of new technology for the printing sector - an innovative printing process called LightTouch that eliminates the use of chemicals. *"We have been EMAS registered since 1999 and in that time our business has transformed from a resource- intensive, polluting manufacturer to the most sustainable printing company"* said Gareth Dinnage, Seacourt's managing director.

Winner in the category Large Organisations

[**Martin's Hotels \(Belgium\)**](#) is a hotel operator with an innovative sustainability strategy called "tomorrow needs today". The company has integrated sustainability into areas from purchasing to waste management and has reduced energy consumption even while welcoming more guests. Martin's Hotels also strives to use resources in a circular way by leasing products and reusing furniture. The company's extensive efforts to involve suppliers, employees and customers was decisive in winning the EMAS Award. *"Winning the award provides encouragement to our employees, who are very involved"* said sustainability manager Gaëlle Mourlon Beernaert.

Winner in the category Public Organisations

[**Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde \(Germany\)**](#) has been committed to sustainable research and teaching for over 180 years. Among their many initiatives, the university uses solar energy and heat from wood pellets from the local Eberwalde forest, uses only energy efficient devices and then donates them for reuse, and implements sustainable catering guidelines. Because HNEE trains young people to take on roles in the future circular economy, the jury's decision to award them is both a recognition of their efforts and of the importance of "walking the talk". According to sustainability manager Kerstin Kräusche, *"the students take us seriously because of the transparency and commitment to continuous improvement that EMAS provides."*

Honourable mentions

In addition to this year's three winners, the jury gave five other nominees special recognition for their efforts on circular economy.

Small and Medium Private Organisations:

[**PMC Holding – Nnof, Your Mover Logistics \(Belgium\)**](#), a group of companies offering complete services to improve office spaces (design, move of furniture, repair and maintenance, etc.), received an honorable mention for its application of the circular economy principles throughout the whole value chain, and for their commitment to train future movers and designers to reflect sustainability.

[**Acqua & Sole s.r.l. \(Italy\)**](#), a company using waste and by-products generated during food production and consumption to produce nutrients necessary for agriculture was recognized for its contribution to Circular Economy.

Large organisations:

WIEGEL Verwaltung GmbH & Co KG (Germany), a company using hot-dip galvanising and powder coating to protect steel permanently against rust, was recognized for their significant efforts to decrease environmental pollution in a heavy industrial sector.

Public organisations:

The European Parliament (EU, registered in France), received an honorary mention for living its own message as the public institution which passed the circular economy package into law. They have implemented a sustainable buildings and waste management policy that includes donations, a systematic green public procurement approach, and awareness-raising activities and training.

The Comune di Tavarnelle Val Di Pesa (Italy), a small municipality of 7,000 inhabitants, received an honorary mention for its commitment to circular economy despite its limited resources. Their initiatives span many levels, from the operation of a biomass power plant that uses waste collected on riverbanks to the organisation of markets where citizens can trade used items.

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

For more information

EMAS Awards website:

<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>

EMAS Helpdesk:

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