



KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE EMAS HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE

THE ROLE OF EMAS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONTEXT



Environment

High Level Conference on EMAS
Hosted by the European Central Bank
Frankfurt am Main
13 November 2015

About this brochure

The European Union Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a voluntary environmental management instrument, developed 20 years ago by the European Commission. It enables organisations to assess, manage and continuously improve their environmental performance.

On 13 November 2015, the European Commission organised an international conference in the context of the 20th anniversary of EMAS on the theme »20 years of premium environmental management – High Level Conference on EMAS: learning from front runners, promoting best practices, and exploiting the full potential of green growth«. The conference was held at the European Central Bank premises in Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

The purposes of this brochure are to summarise the discussions and key messages emerging from this high-profile event, and to ensure that the valuable learnings of the conference are recorded and can benefit a wider audience. Throughout the brochure, case studies focussing on individual presentations help to illustrate the points made.

The event highlighted best practice approaches to environmental management and recognised the accomplishments of leading EMAS organisations that were among the first to achieve EMAS registration in their respective countries. The conference also looked to the future, facilitating dialogue between policymakers, practitioners, environmental management experts and representatives from government and academia on the upcoming goals, challenges and potential growth of EMAS. Specific topics were discussed in detail within the context of three expert panel sessions on:

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Environmental management in a circular economy – demonstrated opportunities, benefits and challenges for the private sector
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—
EMAS as an instrument for making cities, municipalities and offices »greener« and »smarter«
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—
The crucial role of public bodies in promoting advanced environmental management, hand in hand with the private sector
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The key learnings from these sessions are included in this brochure.

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1 Foreword from the EU Commissioner for Environment

Karmenu Vella



Karmenu Vella,
European
Commissioner
for Environment,
Maritime Affairs
and Fisheries

And as this brochure shows, the advantages of EMAS go beyond the circular economy. Through its potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the scheme will help Europe achieve the goals set at COP 21 in Paris last November. By making environmental management actions more systematic, EMAS also has the potential to ease the implementation of many other environmental policies, such as clean air and biodiversity goals.

The positive effects are clear from the results of organisations that have joined the scheme. Below, you can read about green job creation, cost savings, and reduced carbon emissions, all underpinned by EMAS.

The Sectoral Reference Documents also provide inspiring best practices for greener and more sustainable business management.

If you represent an organisation that is considering EMAS registration, or if you are a policy maker thinking about how environmental management could be better supported in your country, then this brochure is for you. It's packed with useful information, and you can find out what makes EMAS so unique and how its added value can be further supported.

We can all learn from shared knowledge ...
Happy reading!



This was an inspiring conference, with EMAS-registered organisations, authorities and stakeholders all confirming that working with EMAS is more important than ever.

It also dovetailed nicely with the new Circular Economy Package, adopted by the European Commission in December last year, which identified EMAS as an instrument that can help speed the transition to a circular economy. EMAS has high potential here, especially in the light of its focus on resource efficiency and improved waste management.

It will help implement some of the proposals in the package, such as:

- *Moving to new recycling targets of 65% for municipal waste and 75% for packaging waste by 2030*
- *Stimulating optimal use of resources, including secondary raw material and water*
- *Promoting re-use and stimulating industrial symbiosis, where one industry's by-product is turned into raw material for another industry, by encouraging organisations to analyse their management and supply processes*
- *Monitoring progress toward a circular economy, including through the development of indicators to capture the main elements of a circular economy*

2 Message from the German Federal Minister for the Environment

Dr Barbara Hendricks



Dr Barbara
Hendricks, Federal
Minister for
Environment, Nature
Conservation,
Building and Nuclear
Safety, Germany

The world community decided on targets for global sustainable development at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development on 25 September 2015. This ›Agenda 2030‹ is an important step towards a fairer and more sustainable global development.

Cohesion between politics, economics and society, as well as between industrialised, emerging and developing countries is now required in equal measures. The German federal government has already taken a number of initiatives to meet this requirement. The spectrum of initiatives ranges from the development of our national sustainability strategy to mobilising private investments for innovative climate action outside Europe.

In many companies and organisations, sustainability reporting and the use of environmental management systems are still not the norm. What stands out in this, the 20th year of the existence of the European environmental management system, is that EMAS is more important than ever. This is because EMAS represents, on the one hand, concrete environmental action in the economy; on the other hand, it is an important building block for the implementation of the ambitious targets of the UN Summit.

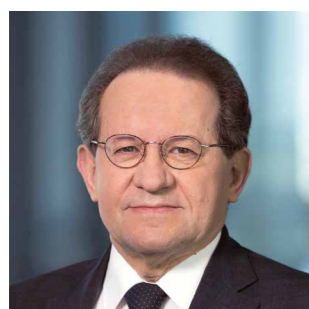
Since coming into existence, EMAS is proof that the economy and ecology complement each other and are really mutually dependent. It is an indispensable element for sustainable economic activity. To highlight just some of what I consider the important aspects, measures for environmental relief are accompanied by cost savings and greater competitiveness, with more legal certainty and higher employee satisfaction levels. What is more, no other voluntary instrument has allowed for so much public insight into companies' environmental policy, thereby creating transparency and trust.

Originally EMAS was designed only for manufacturing companies. Since 2001, it has been applicable to organisations of all types. This was a sensible and necessary extension. In this way, for example, public administrations can achieve a lot; for instance on the sustainable organisation of events, enforcement facilities for EMAS companies or through public procurement. In Germany, the procurement volume of the public sector is at least 300 billion euros per year. When energy-efficient products or services are procured, as the federal government has for their part undertaken to do, then savings are made in the long term, especially on energy costs. At the same time, companies are stimulated towards innovation and development. EMAS thus leads to continuous improvement, and is an essential part of any sustainable development strategy.

The European Central Bank, host of this conference, is itself EMAS-registered. In this way, like other EMAS administrations: it is a model, multiplier, and idea-giver for environmental services and sustainable economies and has the potential to steer the direction of EMAS. Thank you for your hospitality, I congratulate EMAS on its anniversary and wish the participants of the conference lots of ideas to put into practice for themselves.

3 Plenary Session Keynote speeches

Following the introduction, the High Level Conference included keynote speeches from the event organisers and the longest standing EMAS registered organisation, Viessmann Werke GmbH & Co. in Germany. The speakers gave insightful speeches before sharing their hopes and expectations on the day's event.



Vítor Constâncio,
Vice-President,
European Central
Bank

- Premium environmental management plays a key role in the fight against universal issues, such as climate change
- Public bodies play a crucial role in promoting advanced environmental management
- EMAS registered organisations act as multipliers of the EMAS concept

Mr Vítor Constâncio, Vice President of the European Central Bank (ECB), opened the event by welcoming all participants and naming the purpose of the conference: celebrating 20 years of voluntary dedication to environmental performance improvements and recognising the commitments of EMAS frontrunners.

Mr Constâncio then went on to provide an overview of the ECB's recent activities in the field of environmental management. Despite the many challenges the ECB has faced since the financial market turmoil of 2007, the institution has remained conscientious of its environmental commitments. In November 2014, they moved into their new premises in the East of Frankfurt, a building that features state-of-the-art technology to ensure very high standards of energy efficiency. Striving to enhance all operations, the *Green ECB team* is currently implementing measures to allow the building to run at its optimal capacity. In line with the requirements of EMAS, the *Green ECB team* has recorded these activities in its latest environmental statement.



— Vítor Constâncio:

»Organisations with environmental management systems set up according to EMAS requirements show their continuous commitment to improving their environmental performance.«

The ECB recognises the important role that EMAS plays in supporting the fight against climate change, by enabling both SMEs and large organisations to manage their environmental impact and keep the public informed of these efforts. The ECB also acknowledges **THE CRUCIAL ROLE THAT PUBLIC BODIES PLAY** in promoting advanced environmental management hand in hand with the private sector. Furthermore, Mr Constâncio highlighted the fact that **EMAS REGISTERED ORGANISATIONS ACT AS MULTIPLIERS** of the EMAS concept, influencing not only supplier networks but also employees' behaviour.

Finally, Mr Constâncio set EMAS in the wider context of the **COP21**, noting the ever-increasing importance of premium environmental management to **COMBAT UNIVERSAL ISSUES**, such as climate change. He described the High Level Conference as a means to providing organisations with a renewed foundation to improve collaboration, increase meaningful exchanges and share best practice.



Kestutis Sadauskas,
Director Green
Economy, European
Commission

- EMAS adds value to organisations' actions, involves people and ensures a high level of transparency
- Potential synergies to other policies need to be considered and exploited
- EMAS can support the new circular economy package

Following the speech of the Vice President of the ECB, Mr Kestutis Sadauskas, Director for Green Economy at the European Commission, gave an opening speech on behalf of Mr Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

Giving a brief account of the development of the scheme, Mr Sadauskas highlighted the unique role of EMAS as the most comprehensive benchmark in environmental management. Over the past two decades EMAS has spread into numerous sectors of the economy, with registrations in fields as different as banking, manufacturing, tourism, graphic design and waste water management.

He pointed to the need to reflect on the achievements of EMAS to date, while also looking to where the scheme can be taken in future. Mr Sadauskas highlighted the following benefits of EMAS:

- It **ADDS VALUE** in terms of decreasing costs, improving internal environmental management and stimulating innovative practices, be this for small or large, private or public organisations
- It delivers the understanding that **BUSINESSES ARE ABOUT PEOPLE**, making a point of involving them in the environmental management. This means that EMAS employees are more likely to be engaged and environmentally aware in their work
- It ensures a **HIGH LEVEL OF TRANSPARENCY** among participating organisations through its stringent reporting requirements. This can also translate into a streamlining of administrative controls for governments and regulators



— Kestutis Sadauskas:

»Looking to the future, EMAS needs to continue fulfilling its potential in acting as a springboard for organisations to achieving a circular economy.«

The Director for Green Economy then went on to introduce the **EMAS COMPENDIUM**, which was published by the European Commission in the lead up to the conference. This document contains an account of how certain Member States to date have recognised the synergies of EMAS with other policies and have included this scheme in their legislation. Mr Sadauskas noted the great potential for further integrating EMAS reporting features into other national environmental policies and legislation of Member States across the EU.

Furthermore, Mr Sadauskas drew the connection to the upcoming **CIRCULAR ECONOMY PACKAGE** of the European Commission, announced on 2 December 2015. He emphasised that EMAS has already been a precursor, helping to stimulate sustainable growth. Looking to the future, it needs to be ensured that EMAS continues to fulfil its potential in acting as a springboard for organisations to engage with the circular economy.

Mr Sadauskas then called on all participants to reflect on the success factors of EMAS shared at the conference and to take these reflections back to their networks. In this way they are able to help EMAS spread throughout Europe and beyond, aiding organisations to find their way to a circular economy, ensuring that the EU and its citizens get maximum value from resources, while strengthening the EU's competitive position on the world stage.

 [Read the full speech here.](#)



Gunther Adler, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany

- *Green economic and environmental management measures can largely be traced back to the commitment of employees*
- *EMAS will help fulfil future EU legislation on Corporate Social Responsibility reporting*
- *Greater support and commitment for EMAS are needed*

Next, Ms Annette Schmidt-Räntsch of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety gave a speech on behalf of State Secretary Mr Gunther Adler.

She started the speech by calling on all participants to contribute to the sustainability of »our common home«, making reference to an appeal made by Pope Francis. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the **2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**, linking the concept of sustainability with economic, ecological and social development. Taking responsibility at national level, the German federal government has a managed approach to the environment, stemming from its Sustainability Strategy 2002, which is updated every four years.

In Germany, clean-tech and resource efficiency are worth € 334 billion. Green economic and environmental management measures can largely be traced back to the ideas and commitment of employees. Nationwide, there are almost **800,000 EMPLOYEES** working in Germany's over 1,900 EMAS registered sites. The government also has a significant role to play in greening public procurement, with total procurement expenditures worth € 300 billion per year.

Regarding public buildings, sustainability targets exist and the indicators make reference to EMAS. The Federal Ministry for Environment as well as the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development are EMAS registered. On a wider scale, sustainability targets exist for all public buildings, and the data collected are based on the key performance indicators of EMAS. In the coming years, eight buildings per year are to undergo all optimisation measures according to EMAS, while a registration with EMAS is then up to the building administrators themselves.

Finally, Ms Schmidt-Räntsch discussed further benefits that EMAS provides in terms of compliance to legislation. With new **EU LEGISLATION ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) REPORTING** coming into force in 2017, EMAS registered organisations will already be compliant, putting them in a very good position. EMAS provides a true cornerstone for reporting.

She concluded by stating the need for **GREATER SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT** for EMAS due to it being a voluntary scheme and believed the discussions in the framework of the conference to be highly beneficial for the future of EMAS.

[Read the full contribution here \(in German\).](#)



Manfred Greis, Chief Representative at Viessmann Werke GmbH & Co. KG

- *A standardised environmental management system has been rolled out throughout the entire company*
- *The greatest added value of EMAS is its legal certainty, as well as reduced permit fees and tax advantages*
- *Public bodies play a role in boosting EMAS*



— Manfred Greis, Viessmann:

»With the help of EMAS, the company has successfully demonstrated the achievement of Germany's energy and climate goals for 2050 already today with the technology available on the market.«

As a fourth keynote speaker, Mr Manfred Greis of the first and longest registered EMAS organisation, Viessmann Werke GmbH & Co. KG, a global manufacturer of ovens, furnaces and cooling systems, gave a speech on the organisation's experience with EMAS over the past two decades. With their **FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT IN 1994**, Viessmann performed and documented the eco-audit for the first time, achieving full compliance with the EU environmental legislation. In the following years, a standardised environmental management system was developed for the entire Viessmann Group and gradually rolled out to all the production sites. The company currently has four EMAS registrations with a total of fourteen member companies.

With the help of EMAS, they have been able to increase energy efficiency by more than 20 percent, and the share of renewable energy by up to 60 percent. Consumption of fossil fuels has been reduced by 70 percent and CO₂ emissions by 80 percent. In this regard they note that the company has already successfully demonstrated the **ACHIEVEMENT OF GERMANY'S ENERGY AND CLIMATE GOALS FOR 2050** today with the technology available on the market, showing true frontrunner spirit.



Werner Studener, Director General Administration and Environmental Coordinator, European Central Bank

Viessmann believe that they can only remain competitive and provide job security to their employees in future if economic, ecological and social aspects are addressed on an equal footing.

Mr Greis then went on to talk about specific benefits of EMAS. In the company's opinion, the greatest added value is the **LEGAL CERTAINTY** the scheme provides for management due to the regular inspections, ensuring that the company is litigation-proof. More recently, they also welcome the **REDUCED PERMIT FEES AND TAX ADVANTAGES** in Germany with regard to energy and electricity taxes. They believe the recognition of EMAS as an energy audit in accordance with the EU Energy Efficiency Directive is an added value that might encourage organisations to participate in the scheme in future, also noting that adequate incentives are needed to counterbalance the stringent requirements that the introduction of the scheme entails. Finally, Mr Greis emphasised the **ROLE OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES** in boosting awareness of EMAS among customers or by preferentially awarding contracts to EMAS registered organisations themselves.

[Read the full contribution here.](#)

The morning session was concluded by a presentation from Mr Werner Studener, Director General in Administration and Environmental Coordinator at the ECB, focussing mainly on EMAS in relation to the **GREEN ECB INITIATIVE**. He pointed out that EMAS has not only provided the ECB but also many other European institutions with a sound platform from which to develop and improve an organisation's environmental management system.

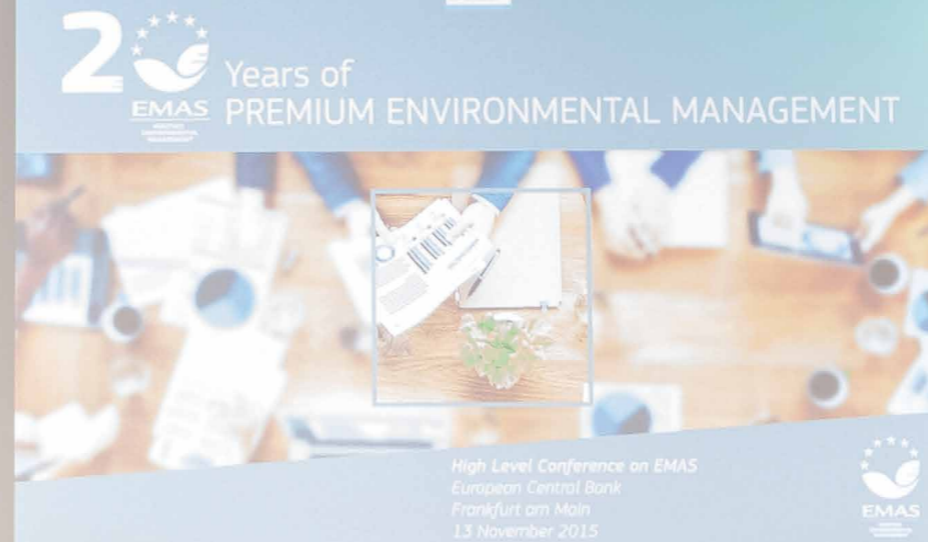
The ECB itself has constantly improved its environmental management system under the *Green ECB initiative*. Over the years, their environmental management system has evolved from being primarily focussed on technical infrastructure issues to now incorporating a wide-ranging scope that focuses on **COMMUNICATIONS, STAFF ENGAGEMENT** and **INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION**.

Furthermore, they have also developed their own **SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT GUIDELINES**. Another key success is the establishment of a strong network of environmental representatives, whose members act as ambassadors for the initiative among staff members and work on the implementation of the environmental management system within the different business areas. Mr Studener pointed out that through the guidance of EMAS, the ECB now has the ability to **POSITIVELY IMPACT BEHAVIOUR** in the office, in employees' homes and within supplier networks.

[See the Green ECB video and more information on the initiative here.](#)

4 EMAS 20 year celebration

20 years of premium environmental management: this is the theme of this High Level Conference and an achievement that would not have been possible without the initial organisations. These participants represented their pioneering EMAS-registered organisations at the conference.



From left (including year of registration): Rainis Uiga (Keskkonnaamet/2013), Carl-Johan Björkman (Hr Björkmans Entrémattor AB/1999), Ergo Pärn (Keskkonnaministeerium/2015), Dr. Michael Schemmer (Bombardier Transportation GmbH/1995), Florian Schmidt (HiPP-Werk/1995), Kestutis Sadauskas (European Commission, Directorate General for Environment), Werner Studener (European Central Bank), Sami Lundgren (UPM-Kymmene Corporation/1995), Ernst Holzapfel (Sedus Stoll AG/1995), Rickard Olsson (Villeroy & Boch Gustavsberg AB/1998), Denise Ann Buhagiar Bartolo (ST Microelectronics Malta/2004), Stina Nordmand Rasmussen (Vraa Dampvaskeri A/S/1998), Manfred Greis (Viessmann Werke GmbH & Co/1995), Jerry Dwyer (Lee Strand Cooperative Creamery Ltd/2000), Renato di Stefano (ST Microelectronics Italy/1998), Sandro Antonio Scaravaggi (Comitato Ambiente Intersocietario di Filago/1999), Janus Kwapisz (Dolina Nidy Sp. z o.o./2007)

Not present in this picture: Niki Siouta & John Bournazos (AKTOR/2005), David Sylvain (Eco Conseil Méditerranée/2011), Manuel Carlos Moreira Carvalho (Bosch Car Multimedia Portugal/2003), Konstantinis Keridis (Chistoforos Keridis SA/2005), Dr. Grigoris Zarotiadis (Papapangiotou AVEEA-DROMEAS/2006), Katalin Herner (KÖVET Egyesület a Fenntartható Gazdálkodásért/2006), Olavi Tammemae & Tonis Meriste (Eesti Energia AS Iru Elektriijaam/2006)



— HiPP-Werk, Germany:

»EMAS helps us to make our performance better. As a pioneer concerning sustainability in food production HiPP has developed a kind of reference standard – and EMAS helped us go this way.«



— UPM-Kymmene, Finland:

»It is about transparency and one system around the world – EMAS is global.«



Eco-Conseil Méditerranée: David Sylvain

EMAS has gone through some interesting, challenging and significant 20 years with these organisations that voluntarily commit themselves to the EU's environmental management system. Looking back on an extraordinary time of cooperation and strive for excellence, honour and congratulations go to the present EMAS national pioneers, who received a certificate at the conference or mailed to their postal address when they were not able to participate. Each of them was among the first ten organisations to register with EMAS in their home country; some have even been part of EMAS since it first came into existence 20 years ago. Altogether, there are 206 organisations across the 28 Member States.

These distinguished organisations are forward-thinking in terms of their impact on the environment and their surroundings and do not stop at implementing only the measures that are required by law. Being part of EMAS for such a long time and also being among the first to register in their country demonstrates their awareness of the benefits that EMAS can offer to their business; be this in terms of support in legal compliance, finding new ways to be resource efficient or improving their public visibility. EMAS can help with all of these aspects.



— Eco-Conseil Méditerranée, France:

»For everyday life implementation – we have to focus on energy cost savings, transport and green purchasing – EMAS helps us to focus, control and monitor these things.«



AKTOR: Niki Siouta & John Bournazos



Bosch Car Multimedia Portugal, Lda.: Manuel Carlos Moreira Carvalho & Competent Body of Portugal, Gorete Sampaio



— Bosch Car Multimedia, Portugal:

»EMAS is very important for improving resource efficiency and energy efficiency – it makes us very transparent, and this is important for the company and for our people. It's a big influence on our suppliers and networks – they can see what we're doing and they are learning too.«

5

Individual sessions

During the individual sessions experts discussed key topics in the context of EMAS. Session I focused on the role of EMAS in achieving a transition to a circular economy, Session II discussed the potential of EMAS in the particular context of greening cities and municipalities, and Session III examined the role of public bodies in making EMAS a success, hand in hand with the private sector.

5.1 PANEL SESSION I

Environmental management in a circular economy – demonstrated opportunities, benefits and challenges for the private sector

This session focussed on examining the potential of EMAS in supporting a transition to a circular economy. A keynote speech by Jocelyn Blériot of the Ellen MacArthur foundation on key circular economy concepts was followed by examples on the ground of companies already making use of EMAS to achieve greater circularity: GlaxoSmithKline and NNOF. The global reach of EMAS was demonstrated in two further presentations by UPM Kymmene and China's Administrative Centre for Agenda 21.

The first panel session focused on EMAS's role in a circular economy, a key topic for the European Commission, which presented its **NEW CIRCULAR ECONOMY ROADMAP** on 2 December 2015. In a world where demand and competition for finite and sometimes scarce resources will continue to increase, and where pressure on resources and growing amounts of waste are causing greater environmental degradation and fragility, Europe can benefit economically and environmentally from making better use of those resources. We need a circular economy in which the reuse, repair, refurbishment and recycling of existing materials and products takes centre stage. As emerged from the first panel session, **EMAS CAN PLAY A CENTRAL FACILITATING ROLE** in this transition. As key benefits of EMAS with regard to a circular economy, the panellists highlighted the following strengths of the management system: it allows **DEEP MONITORING**, true **PRODUCTION AND OPERATING COST REDUCTIONS**, **CREDIBLE COMMUNICATION THROUGH VALIDATED ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENTS**, **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT VIA STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**, and **LEGAL COMPLIANCE** with a potential for further collaboration with authorities and agencies.

Under the moderation of IEMA's Mr Martin Baxter, the session's speakers shared experiences on how EMAS has helped their organisations develop business models that have started them on the path to a circular economy. In his keynote speech, Mr Jocelyn Blériot of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation illustrated how **EMAS CAN BE USED AS DRIVER FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY** by encouraging organisations to develop techniques which make better use of resources in the production phase and retain physical goods longer and more efficiently in productive use, avoiding structural waste. He suggested the implementation of circularity indicators for EMAS noting that »when you start measuring the impact of what you do, it triggers a different way to look at what you do and do it in another way«. He observed that the scheme leads to environmental and financial gains at the same time as providing an important stepping stone for companies to a **MORE RESOURCE-EFFICIENT WAY OF THINKING**. He highlighted the enabling role of EMAS in achieving resource efficiency, but also the use of entirely different resources and alternative production methods through a new way of thinking. Mr Blériot then drew the link to wider geopolitics, noting the benefits of a **REDUCED RESOURCE DEPENDENCY** of the EU on third countries.

Ms Ana Ferrón Laguía of GlaxoSmithKline and Ms Anne Lennaerts of Your Mover Logistics/NNOF then gave specific examples of how EMAS has led their organisations to use resources more efficiently or even to **DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS MODELS**, develop practices that will make a transition to a circular economy easier and to **CREDIBLY COMMUNICATE THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS**. These examples carried lessons for organisations of all types and sizes, from small to large, family-owned to multinational, service to industry. Mr Jordi Bosacoma of Menzolit Vitroplast was scheduled to provide an additional example, but was unable to attend the conference due to illness (see Case Study 1 for a summary of his contribution).

The session also shed light on the benefits and challenges of environmental management in the **GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN**, presenting lessons learned from both Europe and China. Mr Sami Lundgren of UPM Kymmene, a Finnish company with EMAS registered sites throughout Europe, in China and Uruguay, emphasised how **EMAS'S TRANSPARENCY, CREDIBILITY AND FOCUS ON CONTINUAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS PROVIDE KEY ADVANTAGES EVEN IN A GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN**. For UPM, EMAS is an enabler to publicly communicate and **DEMONSTRATE A UNIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE COMPANY**. Ms Qin Yuan of China's Administrative Centre for Agenda 21 shared her experience with the *SWITCH ASIA EMAS* Global project, illustrating both the challenges and the benefits involved with implementing EMAS in the Chinese business setting. She noted that while incentives in China currently cannot balance the cost of a systemic implementation of EMAS (including verification by EU accredited verifiers, based in Europe), specific EMAS elements are successfully being implemented via a so-called »modular approach«. Both presentations demonstrated the important role EMAS can play in encouraging the **TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY BEYOND EUROPE'S BORDERS**.

In the discussion that followed, speakers solidified their concept of EMAS as a tool to shape a circular economy. Touching on **EMAS'S UNIQUE SELLING POINTS** in the global value chain, panellists highlighted differences between EMAS and ISO 14001, such as the **STRINGENT REPORTING** and the resulting **HEIGHTENED CREDIBILITY** of communication under EMAS. They also noted the need to push towards more ambitious environmental goals, the realisation of which through EMAS can also improve cost and organisational efficiency. Thanks to its comprehensive methodology, its credibility and its **HIGH LEVEL OF COLLABORATION WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES**, EMAS presents a first step in realising a future in which both organisational culture and consumption patterns must adjust to new concepts of resource use. This will open the door for organisations to both innovate and realise new, previously unappreciated benefits.

The key opportunities for future improvements of the scheme were pointed out as being increased collaboration with controlling authorities in the context of legal compliance; a closer cooperation with local verifiers/ auditors on a global level, use of a more simplified language in environmental statements, a bigger role of EMAS in the field of products, and the integration of a holistic life cycle approach.



Speakers in Panel Session I

1. **MODERATOR:** Martin Baxter (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Chief Policy Advisor)
2. **RAPPORTEUR:** Sébastien Paquot (European Commission, DG Environment, EMAS Policy Officer)
3. Jocelyn Blériot (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Executive Lead Communications and Policy)
4. Ana Ferrón Laguia (GlaxoSmithKline, Environment, Health, Safety and Sales Manager)
5. Anne Lenaerts (Your Mover Logistics/ NNOF, HR & CSR & Corporate Communications Manager)
6. Jordi Bosacoma (Menzolit Vitroplast, Sales & Safety, Health and Environment Manager)
7. Sami Lundgren (UPM-Kymmene Corporation, Director Ecolabels and Reporting)
8. Qin Yuan (Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21, Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, Representative of SWITCH ASIA EMAS Global project)

 [See their full contribution here.](#)

Case Study 1 – Jordi Bosacoma (Menzolit Vitroplast)

Producing glass fibre reinforced composite materials Menzolit Vitroplast have applied circular economy concepts to their resource management for the past 15 years, reducing waste production by 50 percent and gasoil consumption by 40 percent. Yet, their EMAS induced path to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly company does not end here – they are seeking to establish new objectives and targets, such as the standardisation of wood pallet dimensions, the substitution of wood by cardboard for raw materials packaging and the internal reuse of drums. While Menzolit Vitroplast have **IMPROVED BOTH THEIR PROFITS AND SUSTAINABILITY**, gaining customers' trust on recycled materials and finding new applications for their waste remain challenges in fully unlocking their potential of a circular economy. Along with specific R&D, the external factors of reducing paper work and promoting EMAS's implementation and network could further support the organisation's development.

»EMAS registered companies could be the leaders of circular economy due to their knowledge, positive results and supportive network, such as Club EMAS Catalonia.«

Case Study 2 – Qin Yuan (China's Agenda 21)

The year 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the EU; EMAS is one example of the benefits reaped from this cooperation. In China, certain elements specific to EMAS are already being implemented via a so-called »**MODULAR APPROACH**«. With the help of the Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21, participating organisations are developing environmental statements which include Key Performance Indicators. As a result, the participating organisations are achieving an **UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC REPORTING**. This demonstrates a case where one of the key benefits of EMAS has successfully been transferred and implemented in another context, beyond the EU and beyond the scheme itself.



— Jocelyn Blériot, Ellen MacArthur Foundation:

»You must look at what you do carefully, in order to be able to do it differently and continuously improve. By requiring the scrutiny of internal management processes, EMAS can provide the necessary stepping stone.«

5.2 PANEL SESSION II

EMAS as an instrument for making cities, municipalities and offices »greener« and »smarter«

In this session the role of EMAS in helping another type of stakeholder become »greener« and »smarter« was examined. In his keynote speech, Mr Teubner of ICLEI highlighted how cities, municipalities and offices represent different management systems compared to the traditional company or organisation. Furthermore, the role Sectoral Reference Documents was illustrated by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. The session was completed by first-hand examples of EMAS's use by a winner of the European Green Capital award, a former EMAS Award winner, and other municipalities.

Panel session II was moderated by Mr Ludwig Karg of B.A.U.M. Group and focused on the opportunities and challenges of applying EMAS in the context of urban areas, municipalities and regions. In the face of unprecedented urbanisation, the transformation towards sustainable, »green« and »smart« urban areas has become a topic of crucial significance. Digitalisation and the use of new technologies present excellent tools for municipalities to reduce paper waste and to think of new ways to reduce CO₂ emissions or improve recycling. The cities and regions of the future have become »green« and »smart« by **COMBINING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES**, a combination that EMAS facilitates by promoting resource and energy efficiency and thus the transition to a low carbon economy.



— Wolfgang Teubner, ICLEI Regional Director Europe:

»It's important to have a clear strategy and framework of where you are headed to. We believe there should be strategies and goals, and then a management system to manage that change. This could be EMAS.«

This winning formula has been applied by the EMAS registered City Council of Bristol (UK), the 2015 European Green Capital. In his presentation, Mr Steve Ransom of **CITY COUNCIL OF BRISTOL (UK)** explained how the **GREEN CAPITAL INITIATIVE** can effectively be seen as the **»EMAS FOR CITIES«**, expanding the essential reporting and environmental management requirements generated through EMAS to a scope far beyond that of a single organisation. He pointed out the challenges of political and financial support, control and influence, as well as the need for city-wide support in order for the initiative to be a success.

This observation built on the keynote speech given by Mr Wolfgang Teubner, European Director of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. Mr Teubner illustrated how EMAS can unlock the potential of cities and municipalities for sustainable development, especially by involving citizens and visitors and encouraging the adoption for environmental management best practices. He revealed the specific benefits of an EMAS implementation on political decision-making and the optimisation potential in terms of flexibility and inspiration when using an approach that has both standardised and customised elements. **THE SCHEME CAN ACT AS A USEFUL INSTRUMENT TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURE A CITY'S CONTINUITY AND PROGRESS ON THIS PATH BY OFFERING SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES.** In Mr Teubner's opinion the next 20 years for EMAS could incorporate closer linkages to other frameworks and processes, including a more specific adjustment to urban development.

Through **EMAS SECTORAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (SRDs)**, cities, municipalities and regions are offered a **BENCHMARK** by the European Commission in their endeavour to succeed in achieving best environmental management practices. In his presentation, Mr Paolo Canfora of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre provided insight on how the SRDs on public administration, waste management, and tourism can all contribute to municipalities' efforts toward continuous environmental improvement.

Representatives of an EMAS registered municipality, a biosphere reserve, and a regional development agency spoke about their respective experiences in using EMAS to **RESOLVE ISSUES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** while **MAINTAINING THE ECONOMIC INTEGRITY** of their areas. The municipality of Tavarnelle Val di Pesa in Italy has achieved impressive milestones in waste reduction and water efficiency in the past five years. EMAS has also allowed Tavarnelle to create **GREATER INCENTIVES FOR CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS** to improve environmental practices. The Biosphere Reserve Swabian Alb has succeeded in encouraging organisations within its area to adopt EMAS as a means of harmonising their economic needs with environmental ones and has started setting up »green meetings« to get local stakeholders involved in environmental management. In Hungary's Lake Balaton region, EMAS has inspired the development of **INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS** that have helped preserve the lake's ecosystem as it plays a role for maintaining biodiversity. On its way to becoming a zero emission region, the Development Coordination Agency focuses on participative approaches as well as EMAS training programmes.

Following on these examples of EMAS successes, the discussion highlighted the importance of promoting EMAS both in cities and on a regional basis. Challenges were also emphasised, including the **NEED TO ADAPT EMAS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS** to the specific needs of cities and communes, which differ substantially from those of large companies. Panellists suggested that if such adaptations were made, EMAS could be the **IDEAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CITIES**, helping them structure and systematize their management processes on the path to greater sustainability. One example given was that EMAS could be used by individual municipalities to **IMPLEMENT THE COVENANT OF MAYORS** and to help iron out existing hurdles. Consensus emerged that although EMAS may in some cases need to become more flexible to adapt to the specific needs of urban systems, EMAS's **TRANSPARENCY AND STRUCTURED APPROACH** make it an excellent tool for environmental management in the green cities, municipalities and regions of the future.



— Serena Losi, Tavarnelle:

»EMAS can show transparency in communications and structure change in a systematic way. It is seen by municipalities as a management tool – it's not seen as a certification system.«



Speakers in Panel Session II

1. **MODERATOR:** Ludwig Karg (B.A.U.M. Group, Founding Director)
2. **RAPPORTEUR:** Jan Dictus (GOJA Consulting for Environment and Sustainable Development, Founder)
3. Wolfgang Teubner (ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Regional Director Europe)
4. Paolo Canfora (European Commission, Joint Research Center, Scientific Officer)
5. Steve Ransom (Bristol City Council, United Kingdom, Environmental Programme Manager)
6. Petra Bernert (Office of Biosphere Reserve Swabian Jura, Germany, Head)
7. Zita Egerszegi (Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency, Balaton Region, Hungary, Environmental Director)
8. Serena Losi (Municipality of Tavarnelle Val di Pesa, Italy)



[See their full contribution here.](#)

Case Study 3 – Paolo Canfora (JRC, European Commission)

EMAS **SRDs** provide guidance on best environmental management practices, environmental management indicators and benchmarks of excellence for eleven priority sectors. The development process involves three stakeholder-based phases: desk research for the background collection of information, information exchange within the forum of a technical working group and a legislative process including the Member State representatives of the EMAS Committee. While the actual implementation remains voluntary, the detailed information provided in the SRDs **SUPPORTS THE PRACTICAL PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**, by focusing on all relevant aspects and highlighting the benefits to be gained in each specific sector covered. In this regard, municipalities can for example benefit from **DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES** collated in the SRDs on public administration, waste management, and tourism.

 [Click here for a full list of the sectors covered and for further information.](#)

Case Study 4 – Steve Ransom (Bristol City Council – Green Capital Awards)

Bristol, the European Green Capital of 2015, is a brilliant example of how to benefit from an EMAS implementation, thereby achieving an outstanding international recognition. By reaching the **LOWEST CO₂ EMISSIONS AND HIGHEST CYCLING RATES OF ANY LARGE UK CITY** and with a vast amount of green space including over 80 designated wildlife sites, Bristol has followed a long and ambitious path of continuous community commitment to pursue its Green Strategy. EMAS registered since 2004, large-scale investments with large private sector organisations and effective partnerships such as with the Covenant of Mayors have contributed to an enhanced environmental performance of Bristol City. Crucial challenges on the way to the Green Capital Award included engaging in a political cross-party consensus, developing a strategy to overcome the lack of control over the majority of urban emissions, raising funds for planned activities and improvements, as well as the need for city-wide support. The implementation of EMAS as the environmental management system laid the foundation with its **DETAILED EXTERNAL AUDITING AND REPORTING**.



— Petra Bernert, Office of Biosphere Reserve Swabian Jura, Germany:

»EMAS is process oriented – it therefore is focused on continuous improvement, guaranteeing excellence.«

5.3 PANEL SESSION III

The crucial role of public bodies in promoting advanced environmental management, hand in hand with the private sector

This session was introduced by a keynote speech from Professor Fabio Iraldo on research conducted about the benefits of policy incentives to support EMAS. Examples from Poland, Germany and Spain demonstrated existing successful initiatives by policy-makers, while presentations from Club EMAS Catalonia, EMAS Club Europe, and the University of Gothenburg highlighted the crucial bridging role of such networks between registered organisations and policy-makers.

The third panel session focussed on how a **STRONG COMMITMENT FROM POLICY MAKERS AND REGULATORS IS NEEDED** to unlock the full potential of EMAS as a voluntary instrument in a circular economy. As was made evident in this panel session, moderated by Ms Leida Rijnhout of the European Environmental Bureau, EMAS's requirement for legal compliance and strict reporting standards can provide governments and regulators with **A MEANS OF STREAMLINING ADMINISTRATION AND SAVING TIME AND RESOURCES**. In his keynote speech, Professor Fabio Iraldo of Bocconi University in Milan presented some of the evidence for the benefits of policy incentives. These measures involve not only more classic approaches such as tax rebates for EMAS organisations, but also **REGULATORY RELIEF** through less frequent inspections. This administrative relief in particular also provides the opportunity for governments and regulators to save resources on inspections. In addition, research shows that it is a much more effective support than financial grants on the initial registration fees to encourage an uptake of EMAS registrations and to secure long-term commitment to the scheme.



— Fabio Iraldo, Bocconi University:

»EMAS's requirement for legal compliance and strict reporting standards can provide governments and regulators with a means of streamlining administration and saving time and resources.«

Following Professor Iraldo's presentation, representatives of the German Federal Ministry for Environment and the respective Catalan and Polish General Directorates for Environmental Quality and Protection gave examples of how cooperation between public bodies and private organisations has worked in their Member States. Ms Annette Schmidt-Räntsch of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment highlighted the role of energy efficiency as one of the main pillars for the German energy transition, illustrating how EMAS is publicly promoted by means of an **EXEMPTION OF REGISTERED ORGANISATIONS** from a newly obligatory energy audit, as prescribed by the Energy Efficiency Directive. She demonstrated the potential for a reduction of taxes and installation fees, illustrating the ministry's status as a role model in terms of providing incentives and regulatory relief. Catalonia's Ms Maria José Sarrias described her General Directorate's cooperation with the Catalan Tourist Board, attracting hotels and other cultural organisations to implement more sustainable practices through EMAS by providing **GRANTS, SPECIAL FEES AND BENEFITS**, as well as organising **AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS**. Finally, Mr Maciej Krzyczkowski told participants how a **TARGETED PROMOTION CAMPAIGN** involving regulatory relief and dialogues with the waste industry has led to EMAS's highly successful uptake in the Polish waste sector.

On the topic of these top-down approaches from government authorities, the **EMAS COMPENDIUM ON PROMOTION AND POLICY SUPPORT IN THE MEMBER STATES** provides further input. The Compendium reflects the efforts to date of Member States in recognising the achievements of registered organisations. Compiled from the examples in the 2010-2015 Tour de Table reports of the EMAS Committee Meetings, the Compendium presents Member States' initiatives in four categories: legal, financial, informational and promotional instruments. As a key message, this document notes that policy support for EMAS can bring advantages not only for participating organisations but also for governments and regulators.

After hearing about top-down examples from government organisations, representatives of **EMAS CLUBS** described their bottom-up initiatives for promoting and improving EMAS. Such institutions do not only serve as a **TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION CHANNEL** between public bodies and EMAS registered organisations. They can also provide very practical and effective ideas to support EMAS, since they are in direct contact with EMAS registered organisations and provide and participate in platforms for dialogue between these organisations. They create numerous opportunities for networking and foster the development of a community of companies willing to »go the extra mile«.

The University of Gothenburg in Sweden, represented by Mr Eddi Omrcen, reports on key indicators according to EMAS in their Sustainability Report and Annual Report. Mr Omrcen also noted the crucial role that universities can play as role models for sustainability, having a strong impact on society due to their unique position in educating the next generation. He concluded by pointing out that there is potential for **EMAS TO PLAY AN EVEN GREATER ROLE IF IT WERE FURTHER ADAPTED TO THE VARIOUS TYPES OF USERS**, such as making the key performances indicators (KPIs) more flexible and relevant to different organisation types.

In the discussion, agreement emerged on the importance of raising awareness of EMAS's usefulness not only for registered organisations but also for government bodies and regulators. **REGULATORS SHOULD BE MADE MORE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS OF EMAS**, particularly with regard to legal compliance and reporting. If **COOPERATION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL VERIFIERS** is increased and the added value of EMAS is reflected in national and local procedures, this can lead to **SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE BENEFITS** for regulators in terms of saving resources on activities, such as monitoring.

Equally, regulatory relief and financial incentives bring real benefits to organisations, who in turn should also be involved in spreading awareness of these rewards and other benefits of EMAS. Here, close cooperation between the government, the private sector and organisations such as universities and EMAS Clubs becomes essential to spreading awareness about EMAS benefits. Ultimately, panellists agreed that **TRUST AND COOPERATION** are important but are not the only part of the equation – organisations and public bodies should continue to encourage each other to consider better environmental management through EMAS as a goal on the road to a more sustainable, circular economy.



Speakers in Panel Session III

1. **MODERATOR:** Leida Rijnhout (European Environmental Bureau, Global Policies and Sustainability Director)
2. **RAPPORTEUR:** Daniel Weiss (adelphi/EMAS Helpdesk, Senior Project Manager)
3. Prof Fabio Iraldo (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna Pisa & Bocconi University Milan)
4. Annette Schmidt-Räntsch (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Germany)
5. Maria José Sarrias (Directorate-General for Environmental Quality, Catalan Government)
6. Maciej Krzyczkowski (General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Poland)
7. Maria Passalacqua (Club EMAS Catalonia, Director)
8. Matthias Friebel (EMAS Club Europe, Co-Founder)
9. Eddi Omrcen (University of Gothenburg, Environmental Manager)

 [See their full contribution here.](#)

Case Study 5 – Annette Schmidt-Räntsch (German Federal Ministry for Environment)

The German implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive recognises **EMAS AS A VALID ALTERNATIVE TO AN ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**. Furthermore, EMAS organisations receive reductions of financial burdens, such as taxes and installation fees. These are just a few examples of how Germany recognises the quality of EMAS which also allows for a decrease in administrative burdens in terms of reduced needs for supervision. Further policy measures in Germany aimed at promoting EMAS include the running of **SMALL CONSULTATION GROUPS** on the topic and the development of **SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR SMES**. Public bodies act as a role model to achieve a 20 percent reduction in primary energy consumption by 2020 and to halve this value by 2050. As EMAS contains **MORE STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS THAN ISO 14001** regarding legal compliance, along with binding external reporting and conformity statements of environmental verifiers, in Germany EMAS organisations are seen to contribute substantially to climate and resource protection.

Case Study 6 – Maria Passalacqua (EMAS Club Catalonia)

As a bottom-up multi-sector association, Club EMAS Catalonia views itself as **BRIDGE BETWEEN EMAS REGISTERED ORGANISATIONS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS**. The Club helps the two groups to better understand each other and identify common actions to be developed together. Founded in 2006, it has been promoting EMAS based on a business-to-business approach with entrepreneurs sharing their EMAS success stories in the group. While collaborating with public authorities, Club EMAS acts as a lobby initiative to support its members by passing on feedback in order to improve regulations. In Catalonia, EMAS registered organisations receive the benefits of a reduced fee (by 50 percent) on environmental licensing procedures, periodical exemptions from controls and a lower frequency of site inspections under the Industrial Emissions Directive. Provincial EMAS Awards go to the best practicing organisations in Catalonia.



— Eddi Omrcen, University of Gothenburg:

»An environmental management system is a driving force for strategic actions through its systematic approach.«

6 Overall key learnings and messages

The EMAS High Level Conference ended with a report from the parallel sessions by the rapporteurs and conclusions on EMAS from the day's discussions and learnings.

PANEL SESSION I

The outcomes from panel session I reveal that **EMAS CAN HELP SUPPORT A TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR AND GREENER ECONOMY**, not only by providing approaches to resource-savings, but also by changing actors' way of thinking. This is particularly important, since resource efficiency alone is not enough; to truly advance in the direction of a circular economy, economic actors need to find real alternatives. With the help of EMAS, some organisations are already **CHANGING THEIR CORPORATE CULTURE AND THEIR EMPLOYEES' WAY OF THINKING**. Some have changed their entire business model, inspired by the fact that implementing EMAS helped managers learn more about the processes of their own company. What is more, EMAS can also act as an enabler to **PUBLICLY COMMUNICATE AND DEMONSTRATE A UNIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM** throughout the entire company, such as in the case of Viessmann Werke or UPM Kymmene. Hence, benefits to businesses include resource efficiency, cost savings, improved credibility, real value creation and better internal management, as well as the opportunity to change internal structures and processes.

But moving towards a circular economy does not only provide benefits at organisation-level. Also at a **GEOPOLITICAL LEVEL**, a transition to a circular economy, supported by EMAS, can provide important benefits. Using fewer resources or entirely alternative resources can lead to **LESS DEPENDENCY FOR THE EU ON IMPORTS** from third countries. Equally, the benefits of EMAS have already spread beyond the EU's borders and beyond the scheme itself. UPM has used EMAS to implement a unified management system throughout its organisation, including its sites in Uruguay and China. Other organisations based in China are implementing EMAS-specific elements that have proven beneficial via a so-called »EMAS modular approach«. This demonstrates the importance of EMAS as a testing ground for **MEASURES THAT GO BEYOND MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT** and have proven to deliver real benefits.

PANEL SESSION II

Panel session II showed that the cities and regions of the future have become »green« and »smart« by combining environmental management with digitisation and the use of new technologies. Concrete examples have shown how EMAS facilitates this combination, by **PROVIDING TOOLS FOR ANALYSING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND BY PROMOTING RESOURCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND THUS THE TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY**. In the face of unprecedented urbanisation, this transformation towards sustainable, »green« and »smart« urban areas has become a topic of crucial significance, and effective environmental management systems are needed for cities. The case of Bristol City has already shown the potential for EMAS in fulfilling these needs; since the European Green Capital initiative requires elements such as a reporting based on indicators, it was described as »EMAS for cities« within discussions held at the High Level Conference. There are numerous synergies provided by EMAS, which make fulfilling the requirements of the Green Capital initiative easier.

Furthermore, EMAS is being used in certain cases to demonstrate **UNIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**, not only throughout a (large) organisation, but also **ACROSS AN ENTIRE REGION**. In both situations the key reporting and environmental management requirements are expanded to a scope far beyond that of a single organisation, and EMAS provides the necessary building blocks to do so. Hence, in the process of urban areas transforming their activities to be »greener« and »smarter«, EMAS can be used to **MAKE THE ACTIONS OF CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES MORE SYSTEMATIC AND COORDINATED**. Here, there is potential for the **SRDS TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE**, if they are developed accordingly. Examples have also shown that participative approaches and EMAS training programs help enhance the benefits of EMAS.

PANEL SESSION III

In panel session III the contributions and discussions highlighted that EMAS's **REQUIREMENT FOR LEGAL COMPLIANCE** and its **STRICT REPORTING STANDARDS** can lead to benefits for both registered organisations and regulatory authorities, if EMAS is adequately supported by policy-makers. For this to take place, there is still a great need to **FURTHER ENHANCE COOPERATION AND TRUST** between regulatory authorities and the actors of the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme. If such cooperation is successful, registered organisations can reap benefits such as **TAX REBATES** or a **REDUCED NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS** with regard to legislative requirements from other environmental policies with synergies to the EMAS requirements. On the other side, the benefits for policy-makers include **ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF** due to reduced resources spent on inspections and a facilitated implementation of other environmental policies. Along with providing benefits to EMAS registered organisations it is highly important to complement this with **TARGETED PROMOTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING**, to ensure that the benefits are known to organisations. As examples show, if done correctly, this can achieve a lot in making the scheme more widely known and popular.

Finally, the important role of EMAS Clubs but also of registered organisations themselves in enabling these benefits was discussed. EMAS Clubs have a strong connecting role by serving as a **TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION CHANNEL BETWEEN REGISTERED ORGANISATIONS AND POLICY-MAKERS**. They provide platforms for discussions and networking and can therefore ensure that the real needs and concerns of registered organisations are heard, while also facilitating trust-creation. Together with the organisations themselves they create a community of organisations willing to »go the extra mile«, setting a benchmark and acting as multipliers for the scheme.



Conference participants had the chance to exchange thoughts on EMAS. The day offered many notable contributions by experts and food for thought which was carried over into the breaks.

Conclusions from the High Level Conference on EMAS

Mr Sadauskas, Director for Green Economy at the European Commission, then provided the closing remarks of the day, summarising what became evident about the EU's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme.

EMAS IS A KEY

Mr Sadauskas perceived that for many organisations EMAS could be the key to an easier engagement in the new circular economy model. All EMAS key principles are made to support organisations in achieving the change to a circular economy: controlling their environmental impact, managing resources, involving collaborators and streamlining processes toward greater environmental efficiency.



Kestutis Sadauskas,
Director Green
Economy, European
Commission

EMAS IS AN INCUBATOR

The Director noted that the scheme will not replace the willingness to do well, but it does enable an organisation to do its best. EMAS helps all kinds of entities organise their efforts so that they can achieve their most ambitious goals. The example of Bristol City Council and many other organisations having used EMAS to reach impressive achievements like the Green Capital Award, clearly illustrates this.

EMAS IS AN ECOSYSTEM

Mr Sadauskas pointed out that experiences in different Member States prove that EMAS is a living ecosystem built on the interactions between its three main players: Organisations, desiring to improve their environmental progress and have this progress recognised; Environmental verifiers and Accreditation Bodies, who through their independence and expertise are responsible for validating environmental performance and compliance; And finally, public authorities that need to recognise and support, but also encourage best performers. Those three actors must work together to create an area of trust in order to unlock the full potential of EMAS. Mr Sadauskas then expressed his hopes for the actors concerned to have found inspiration in panel session III of the High Level Conference, creating many such trustful relationships and boosting the potential of EMAS in future.

 [Read the full speech here.](#)

EMAS IS A JOURNEY

The Commission representative compared the scheme to a journey starting when one organisation or manager realises that he or she could benefit from the scheme in order to reach more ambitious objectives, stating that this journey only ends when all possible ambitions have been achieved. He noted the fact that organisations remain registered after 20 years proves that the ambition to do better, to do more for the environment and for an organisation, can be endless.

EMAS IS EVERYWHERE

The Director for Green Economy noted the wide applicability of the scheme but also pointed out that EMAS could be more equally spread out, encouraging all listeners to take inspiration from the conference to let EMAS flourish in many new places, driving new organisations, private or public, to register.

EMAS IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT

Mr Sadauskas highlighted the need to be ambitious, to set high targets at organisation, Member State and EU level. He noted the importance of dialogue and exchange of best practices and smart ideas to empower a more sustainable and more circular economy that will create jobs and at the same time preserve precious resources and the environment.

Useful links

Conference-related

CONFERENCE WEBSITE

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/20years_conference/index_en.htm

SPEECHES

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/20years_conference/speeches_en.htm

PRESENTATIONS

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/20years_conference/presentations_en.htm

PICTURES OF THE EVENT

https://www.flickr.com/photos/eu_environment/sets/72157660580931377/with/22693683568/

VIDEO RECORDINGS

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/20years_conference/videos_en.htm

Useful publications and material on EMAS

EMAS COMPENDIUM

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/pdf/EMAS-Compendium.2015.Online.pdf>

EMAS VIDEO AND #EMASPERFORMERS

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/emasperformers_en.htm

DRAFT REPORT ON BEST ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SECTOR

<http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/documents/PublicAdminBEMP.pdf>

REPORT ON BEST ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

<http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/documents/TourismBEMP.pdf>

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SECTORAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

<http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/>



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