



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

ENVIRONMENT

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
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COM (2010) 6 final/2 - Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on incentives for EMAS registered organisations in the period 2004-2006

The Community Ecomanagement and audit scheme (EMAS) establishes a system under which organisations evaluate, manage and continuously improve their environmental performance. Organisations can benefit in many ways from implementing EMAS. More sustainable use of resources generate financial advantages, a better public image, a reduced risk of non-compliance with legal requirements relating to the environment; improved relations with environmental regulators and other stakeholders, and proper risk management, which in turn may prompt lenders and insurers to offer more advantageous financial terms.

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The working document accompanying this Communication contains detailed information provided by the Member States regarding the incentive measures and the indicators defined in this report as well as statistics regarding indicators and, where Member States have defined these as such, best practices because of the positive result of specific incentive measures. The main purpose of this report is to inform the European Parliament and the Council and to raise awareness of national authorities about different national practices.

The full communication can be found here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0006:FIN:EN:PDF>

Enforcement of European waste law - dedicated EU body needed

A European Commission study published on the 1st of February recommends setting up a dedicated European body to oversee the implementation and enforcement of EU waste law. The study is part of a series of steps being taken by the Commission to improve waste management and ensure it meets the standards set by EU legislation to protect citizens and the environment. Illegal dumping of waste continues on a significant scale, many landfill sites are sub standard and in some Member States basic waste infrastructure is still missing. Illegal waste shipments are also a concern. A second report published on the same day reveals that almost one fifth of waste shipments inspected as part of recent enforcement actions in Member States were illegal.



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Overseeing the safe and environmentally sound management of waste is one of the most serious environmental challenges facing the EU today. An estimated 2.6 billion tonnes of waste is generated in the EU each year – about 90 million tonnes of this is classified as hazardous.

The study recommends setting up a dedicated agency at EU level to tackle the underlying problems of poor implementation and enforcement of European waste legislation. The scale of the problem has grown in recent years following increases in waste generated and shipped in the enlarged EU. In 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging the Commission to report on the feasibility of establishing a "Community environmental inspection force".

The agency would carry out a number of tasks such as reviews of enforcement systems in Member States, coordinated controls and inspection activities. This would be combined with the creation of a specific European body responsible for direct inspections and controls of facilities and sites in serious cases of non-compliance. A European network of Member States would support the agency in a number of activities.

The recommendations are based on responses from Member State officials and stakeholders through questionnaires, interviews and informal workshops.

Further details: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm>

Commission decision objects to vast majority of Italy's request for more time to comply with EU air quality legislation

On the 1st of February, the European Commission adopted a decision concerning a second request from Italy for additional time to comply with EU legislation on air quality. The decision relates to a request for temporary exemptions in 12 additional zones or agglomerations from the EU's air quality standards for dangerous airborne particles known as PM 10 in the regions of Campania, Puglia and Sicilia. The Commission decision approved a time extension for PM 10 in one air quality zone in the region of Campania but objected to all other requests. Some 20 decisions have already been adopted in 2009 one of them on an earlier request from Italy for different zones or agglomerations. The vast majority of air quality zones in the EU did not satisfy the conditions for a time extension, or were already found to be in compliance with the limit values.

The Commission decision

The Commission has decided that in one air quality zone in Italy the notified exemption satisfies the conditions in the Directive. In the remaining zones the Commission considered that the conditions have not been met. In many cases, this is because insufficient data has been provided or because the measures outlined in the air quality plans submitted to the



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Commission do not demonstrate that the standards will be met when the exemption period expires.

The Commission's assessment also shows that in some cases exemptions will not be necessary since compliance with the limit values has already been achieved. This is the case in four of the twelve notified air quality zones.

Air quality legislation

EU air quality legislation sets binding limit values and/or indicative target values for the maximum permitted concentrations of certain pollutants in the air. Action to reduce pollution through an air quality plan is required where there is a risk of these standards being exceeded.

There are two binding air quality limit values for particulate matter (PM 10) based on daily (50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, not to be exceeded more than 35 times a calendar year) and annual (40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) average concentrations. These entered into force on 1 January 2005.

The 2008 air quality Directive allows Member States, under strict conditions, time extensions for meeting the air quality standards for PM 10 (until 11 June 2011) and NO 2 and benzene (until 2015 at the latest). During the extension period, limit values continue to apply plus a margin of tolerance.

The European Union notifies EU emission reduction targets following Copenhagen Accord

The Copenhagen Accord was the main outcome of the UN climate change conference held in Copenhagen from 7 to 19 December 2009. The 2 and a half page accord was negotiated on the final day of the conference by the leaders of some 28 developed and developing countries and the European Commission. These countries account for over 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Conference then took note of the Copenhagen accord. The secretariat of the UN climate change convention invited Parties to declare by 31 January whether they wish to be associated with the Copenhagen Accord. The Accord sets the same date for developed countries to submit their emission reduction targets, and for developing countries to submit their emissions mitigation actions.

EU notification

In the letter from the Commission and the Presidency of the Council, the EU reconfirms its commitment to a negotiating process to achieve the strategic objective of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above the pre-industrial level. The Copenhagen Accord recognises the scientific view that global warming should be kept below 2°C in order to



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prevent dangerous climate change, but it does not include any global emission reduction targets for respecting this limit.



The letter restates the EU's position that keeping below 2°C requires global emissions to peak by 2020 at the latest, to be reduced to at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2050 and to continue to decline thereafter. To this end, and in line with the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), developed countries as a group should reduce their emissions by 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020 and developing countries should achieve a substantial deviation below the currently predicted emissions growth rate, in the order of 15-30% by 2020, the letter continues.

EU emission targets

The letter states that the EU is committed to an independent economy-wide emissions reduction target of 20% by 2020, compared with 1990 levels, and that this cut could be increased to 30% under the conditions agreed by the European Council. These conditions are that, as part of a global and comprehensive agreement for the period beyond 2012, other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and developing countries contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities.

Next steps

Heads of State and Government will assess the post-Copenhagen situation at the Informal European Council on 11 February.