

Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS): voluntary participation by organisations

2008/0154(COD) - 30/06/2017

The Commission presents a report on the review of implementation of Regulation (EC) No 122/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) and Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the EU Ecolabel.

EMAS (established in 1995) and the **EU Ecolabel** (created in 1992) are integrated parts of the product policy framework regarding sustainable consumption and production.

In 2013, the Commission committed to undertaking **a fitness check** (evaluation study and stakeholder consultation) of the EU Ecolabel and EMAS examining the two schemes in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and their EU value added.

1) Evaluation of the two systems: the fitness check confirms the **useful role** of the schemes as voluntary instruments for businesses that facilitate transition to a circular economy and provide information on environmental performance of products and organisations to consumers and in business-to-business transactions.

However, it identifies **clear limitations of the two instruments** given their voluntary nature and the limited level of uptake for a number of product groups and the low awareness of the two schemes.

The limited use of the instruments reduces their overall efficacy:

the uptake of EMAS and the EU Ecolabel is not sufficient to achieve significant changes in overall consumption and production patterns;

for EMAS additional barriers are a: lack of integration into public policy in the form of incentives and relief from other regulatory requirements and the existence of a globally recognized and less demanding environmental management system (ISO 14001).

A full quantitative cost/benefit assessment has not been possible. However, 79% of the EU Ecolabel stakeholders found that the EU Ecolabel was a valuable tool and 95 % wanted to keep it either as it is or with changes. At the same time more than 70 % of all EMAS organisations surveyed found that they had improved or significantly improved performance on energy efficiency, use of materials, water consumption and waste production.

Since the schemes have not achieved major uptake across **Europe it is difficult to demonstrate full EU added value.**

2) Improving the effectiveness of the systems: the Commission considers it necessary to adopt a more focused approach to maximize impacts on the ground.

EMAS scheme: in 2017, the Commission will seek **confirmation of Member States' commitment** to the continuation of the scheme and the implementation of measures supporting a better take-up.

Depending on the support of Member States, the Commission will develop actions to further increase the added value of the scheme, these actions being based on:

additional opportunities to use EMAS as a tool for decreasing administrative burden and regulatory relief;

using the compliance required by EMAS to facilitate the implementation of environmental policies under energy, emissions to air, biodiversity, water or waste management;

EMAS's better integration into the implementation of the green action plan for SMEs;

taking into account the evolution of ISO Standard 14001 in 2015 and interaction between the revised standard and EMAS;

the replication of the measures implemented by Member States that achieved a significant number of EMAS registrations and recognized as best practices;

ensure efficient reporting channels from organisations to authorities so that EMAS verified environmental performance might be used to facilitate the implementation of other environmental policies.