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## Commission announces European EMAS Award winners

The European Commission has announced this year's winners of the European EMAS Awards. An EMAS Award is the most prestigious award in environmental management and is handed out only to top performing companies and public authorities. This year's winners are:

- Private micro-organisations: Belvas Organic Chocolate (Belgium)
- Private small organisations: Kneissler Brünieretechnik (Germany)
- Private medium-sized organisations: ebswien hauptkläranlage (Austria)
- Private large organisations: Eurobank EFG Bank (Greece)
- Public small organisations: Fritz-Erlor-Schule Pforzheim (Germany)
- Public large organisations: Municipality of Ravenna (Italy)

The theme for this year's EMAS Awards was: **“Stakeholder involvement, including employee involvement, leading to continuous improvement”**.

The six winning organisations not only displayed excellence in respecting and safeguarding the environment, but also in applying innovative solutions to involve different stakeholders. The EMAS Awards Ceremony took place in the ancient and beautiful Wieliczka Salt Mine, located near Cracow, Poland. The Salt Mine is included on the UNESCO world Heritage list.

The participants embarked on a journey below ground level to the Ceremony venue, the impressive Warszawa Chamber. Accompanied by a delicious four-course menu, the Ceremony consisted of the presentation of the EMAS Awards 2011 nominees and winners, as well as entertaining performances. Performances were given by the Polish Klezmer band “Chmielnikers”, the contact juggler Kamil Dzilinski who proved his dexterity with rings and crystal balls and soap bubble artist Jakub Bochenek. The dance group Sirrion also livened up the evening with an exciting performance.

This year's EMAS Awards Ceremony was opened with a video message by Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik. He emphasized that environmental degradation caused by unsustainable resource extraction and use is a virulent issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century demanding considerable efforts. Mr. Potočnik remarked that EMAS is a premium environmental management tool, which helps organisations achieve more efficient resource consumption and lower operating costs. It also makes a powerful contribution to the protection of the environment.

Bernard Błaszczyk, Undersecretary of State in the Polish Ministry of the Environment, also welcomed the Ceremony's audience. Poland has launched the "Green Presidency" project to promote saving natural resources and meeting environmental protection standards when organising events and meetings in the course of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Furthermore, Herbert Aichinger, Senior Advisor to the European Commission's DG Environment, highlighted some of the Commission's activities in the fields of resource efficiency and sustainable production, and congratulated all 36 nominees for their excellent work in stakeholder involvement.



EMAS Awards trophy

This year's EMAS awards jury consisted of eight professionals in environmental management and was chaired by Jeremy Wates, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau. At the ceremony, Wates gave the audience an impression of the jury's work and the selection of the six winners. Mr. Wates handed out the trophies designed by the German artist Floriana M. Ohldag. In her speech, Ohldag explained that the environmental impact of the trophy was minimized by using no chemical glues and depleting and processing materials sustainably.

The EMAS Awards 2011 ceremony ended with the short quiz to uncover the "Secrets of EMAS". All in all it was a very enjoyable and beautiful evening with a festive atmosphere.



EMAS Awards winners and nominees

Congratulations to all winners and nominees!

Further information on the winners is available on the official [EU EMAS Awards website](#) and on [Facebook](#).