



Werner & Mertz promotes liberal use of EMAS seal

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Werner & Mertz of Mainz, which is known for its Frosch, Erdal and tana brands, advocates more liberal use of the EMAS logo. CEO **Reinhard Schneider** clarified the company's interest and intentions during a panel discussion at Werner & Mertz headquarters with former Foreign Minister and Green politician Joschka Fischer and Rolf-Jan Hove of the European Commission Directorate-General Environment. EMAS (European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) is the world's most demanding system for sustainable environmental management. For many years Werner & Mertz has voluntarily submitted to the stringent annual audits carried out by independent verifiers. The company's Mainz site has been EMAS registered for 10 years and its production facilities in Hallein in Austria for eight years.

Schneider said, "EMAS encourages imitation, particularly among small and medium enterprises. We hope that environmental statements and sustainability reports will find imitators among mid-size companies. It is often so that family-run businesses are in a better position than big concerns to pursue long-term and integral goals. Furthermore, we see a very positive effect on domestic employment as mid-size companies generally prefer to remain local. Therefore, EMAS holds out economic opportunity too." The systematic environmental management at Werner & Mertz measures the consumption of raw materials and energy and tracks the amount of waste generated. "This is how we develop ways to reduce pollution and exploit the potential to increase our protection of the environment," said Schneider.

The EU grants the EMAS seal as proof of the ecological direction of EMAS-registered institutions. Schneider criticized the strict limitations on the use of the logo. "The European Parliament does not allow the EMAS logo to be printed on products and their packaging because it is an award for the environmental performance of the site and not for products. But consumers want to know if products are made on sites with a sustainable orientation." With EMAS his company can prove that the sustainability philosophy is faithfully practiced at Werner & Mertz. EMAS could contribute substantially to deepening the consumers' trust in the company's products.

Joschka Fischer underscored the advantages that a more liberal use of the EMAS logo could bring. "EMAS has to be recognized as a credible tool. To counter the accusation of 'green-washing', we need public discourse." Moreover, the relatively high bureaucratic and costly burden on businesses should be offset by a corresponding benefit.

Rolf-Jan Hove pointed out the valuable contribution that EMAS can make to a "greener" economy. "EMAS has become a part of the instrument mix to promote resource efficiency worldwide and is appreciated by companies as a program for better resource management." Efficient resource management decreases not only companies' manufacturing costs, but also creates greater economy. As an example he cited the European Commission, which, with EMAS, reduced by more than half the carbon dioxide emissions, water and energy consumption per person in its offices between 2005 and 2010. "That's good not just for the environment. It also resulted in a savings of about 600,000 euro," said Hove.



Rhineland-Palatinate Minister of Economic Affairs **Eveline Lemke** said, “Werner & Mertz has been voluntarily certified by the European Union’s EMAS for the past 10 years and has worked systematically with EMAS on the improvement of its production with regard to environmental and climate protection. This performance is rewarded with consumers’ trust and is thus instrumental in creating a brand.

“This involves minimizing use of energy and raw materials, of emissions, waste water and waste. EMAS saves costs and contributes to climate protection. With this system the Mainz-based manufacturer reduced electricity and fuel consumption in terms of filling quantity by more than one-third between 2004 and 2010. EMAS is a management system and steering instrument in that it involves employees, administrative processes, planning and purchasing. The goal is clear: improvement with sustainability and quality in mind. That’s what Werner & Mertz stands for along with its ambitious products that are made even more transparent and credible by independent EMAS audits.”

The German EMAS Advisory Board is an independent body of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment which is actively involved in the proliferation, promotion and development of EMAS. Its chairman, **Dr. Michael Schemmer**, also spoke in favor of expanding the use of the EMAS logo to products. “EMAS should not be positioned only as a premium system for ecological management and audit, but rather as a standard instrument for validation of environmental performance and goal achievement. And that means in the product area too.” Use of the logo on products could increase public awareness of EMAS and encourage more companies to submit to environmental management audits. Right now the spread of EMAS is stagnant.

Additional information about EMAS as PDF:

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