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EU Commission honours Federal Environment Agency for exemplary environmental management

Agency awarded EMAS certification in the category “public organisations”

The European Commission has given the EMAS prize 2009 for environmental management to the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). UBA has received first prize for its green public procurement. The jury was won over by the fact that since 2001, UBA has complied with high standards in its procurement of goods and services as well as in awarding contracts to suppliers, and places environmental protection at the centre of attention. “The prize is proof that we at UBA are doing the right thing and are sending a message to other public offices. Green procurement is ‘win-win’ in both ecological and economic terms”, said UBA Vice President Dr. Thomas Holzmann, who received the prize on 19 November in Stockholm.

It was back in 2001 that UBA became the first German public organisation to be EMAS-certified for its compliance with the high standards of the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). The Agency takes into account and systematically documents environmental considerations in all domains of its work. This includes ecological management of its facilities and mobility management as well as green procurement. At UBA the latter means that only recycled paper is used, green electricity is supplied, and staff computers meet the highest environmental standards. The UBA offices in Dessau-Roßlau themselves are among the most energy-efficient public offices in Germany on account of their exemplary energy scheme. In the award of contracts, UBA shows preference to suppliers with comparable eco-management in place. “The more institutions follow UBA’s example, the greater the opportunities for those businesses who assume responsibility for the environment, the climate and our very future”, said Dr. Thomas Holzmann.

The European Commission has regularly awarded organisations for exemplary performance in eco-management since 2005. The criteria for award of EMAS this year were based on supply chain including green procurement. A total of 32 EMAS- certified businesses and organisations from twelve Member countries were nominated in five categories. Public offices were most frequently represented, with eleven nominations. UBA received first prize in the category “public organisations” together with two other authorities in Great Britain and Austria.

For more on EMAS from UBA see: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-e/emas.htm>

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