

Brussels, 22 September 2009

Flower power: Commission rewards EU companies for spreading the environmental message

The European Commission will present the first EU Ecolabel Communication Award at a ceremony in Brussels tomorrow. The award recognises outstanding achievement in increasing public awareness of the EU Ecolabel – the European Union's label for environmentally-friendly products and services. The fast-growing label can now be found on almost 20,000 products and tourist accommodation services throughout the European Union and beyond.

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "The EU Ecolabel is a label of excellence that EU citizens can trust. When they see the Flower logo they can be sure that the product or service they are choosing is kind to the environment. Organisations whose products and services carry the EU Ecolabel are proving their commitment to the environment and I congratulate them on their efforts to spread this message to their customers."

The EU Ecolabel

The EU Ecolabel – the only pan-European environmental label – is a voluntary scheme launched in 1992 to encourage the production and consumption of green products and services across the European Union.

Today, nearly 20,000 products and services carry the label's signature Flower logo. These include cleaning products, appliances, paper products, textiles, home and garden products and lubricants. They also include tourist accommodation services.

These products and services can be found in all EU Member States as well as in a wide range of countries throughout the world, including India, New Zealand, Canada and China.

All products bearing the EU Ecolabel have been checked by independent bodies for compliance with strict ecological and performance criteria. The label takes into account the main environmental impacts of a product as well as environmental performance throughout its life cycle. Authorities in every EU Member State, as well as in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, are responsible for managing the EU Ecolabel.

The scheme is currently being revised to widen the number of products and services covered and focus on those with the highest potential for improvement. The revised scheme will also simplify procedures for companies applying for the label as well as reducing fees.

The EU Ecolabel Communication Award

The EU Ecolabel Communication Award will be presented for the first time on 23 September 2009. This new initiative aims to recognise exceptional promotional activities to increase public awareness of the EU Ecolabel. It is intended to encourage and inspire other EU Ecolabel holders to actively take advantage of the potential of the label in their marketing activities. The award will be made annually.

Various criteria including quality, creativity and relevance of activities, as well as the effective use of the logo, have been assessed by a jury made up of environmental and communication experts and representatives from the European Commission.

The award drew applications from 18 companies in 10 EU countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK) and one from Switzerland. Entries in the service provider category were received from a number of hotels as well as a Swiss scout centre, while in the producer/retailer category, applications for the award came from manufacturers of products ranging from soaps and paint to cleaning products and floor coverings.

The award ceremony starts at 6pm at the Chateau de La Hulpe, 111 Chaussée de Bruxelles, La Hulpe. For further details contact ecolabel@biois.com.

Further information on the EU Ecolabel is available at www.ecolabel.eu