

Boosting Regulations-Legislation Reliefs regarding Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001-EMAS) in the framework of BRAVER

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ABSTRACT

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) defining a list of requirements that can help organizations to improve their environmental performance. There are 23 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union, representing 99% of all businesses and providing around 90 million jobs in the single market. SMEs are the backbone of the European economy and their contribution is essential for pursuing the goals of “Europe 2020,” the EU’s strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Zorpas, 2010; Eurobarometer survey, 2012). SMEs, although not a consistent group, have significantly diverse social characteristics compared to larger organizations in respect of social and environmental management (Bramme et al., 2012). Generally, SMEs have relatively informal organizational structures, are often managed by owners (family companies), and as a result personal choices and attitudes can greatly affect socially responsible behaviour among them. At the same time they provide limited attention to what we call “environmental performance” and “environmental responsibility”. There is an increasing pressure on firms, from a number of different sources, to engage in environmental management initiatives. Among the most important ones is the global market; for example several Tour Operators requires from their clients (hospitality industry) to implement EMS as they “sell” the hotel as eco destination to the tourist. Furthermore hospitality industry requires from their suppliers to identify that their services/products are “greener” etc. Government regulation was the major initial environmental pressure. However, community and market have become the determined factors as they play more active roles in environmental protection in developed countries. The EMS has several Objectives, which are: (i) Encouraging SMEs to develop an environmental management system in their production processes, (ii) Assisting SMEs to apply concepts of EMSs in their actual operations in order to reduce pollution and comply with regulations while saving costs and increasing productivity, (iii) Developing environmental awareness among SMEs entrepreneurs, (iv) Laying a solid foundation upon which SMEs could base a further step towards international standards such as ISO 14001 or EMAS (Zorpas, 2010). The most common well known standards are ISO 14001, and EMAS which both of them are in a voluntary base. Beside the National Legislation in Cyprus (N.761/2001) there is no any relief document which introduced EMAS Regulation (EC) N. 1221/2009.

The most popular implemented EMS is considered to be ISO 14001 with more than 300000 enterprises/organizations worldwide (represented in 170 countries); followed by EMAS which by the end of 2014, in Europe, were 3341 registered organizations. Within Europe (Figure 1), Germany, Italy and Spain are the leading countries with 1200, 1015, 943 certified organization respectively since 2015 (Eurostat, 2015) In many other countries like Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, and Slovenia, there is no any specific regulation about EMAS implementation and as a result there are 21, 41, 20, 2 organizations certified with EMAS respectively.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the existing EMAS regulation and regulatory reliefs in countries like Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Cyprus (and Greece) which are participated in LIFE project entitle Boosting Regulatory Advantages Vis a vis Emass Registration (LIFE 15/ENV/IT/000509) which is co-funded from the European Commission. Since now the results indicated that in Cyprus and Slovenia there is lack of legal framework boosting EMAS implementation.

Moreover the limited available funding sources, the absence of environmental culture, the typical structures of the enterprises, the absence of motivation, the absence of low taxes policy and more, are consider to be the main reasons for the limited implementation of EMS (including ISO 14001 and EMAS)

Key words: EMAS legislation, ISO 14001 legislation, BRAVER

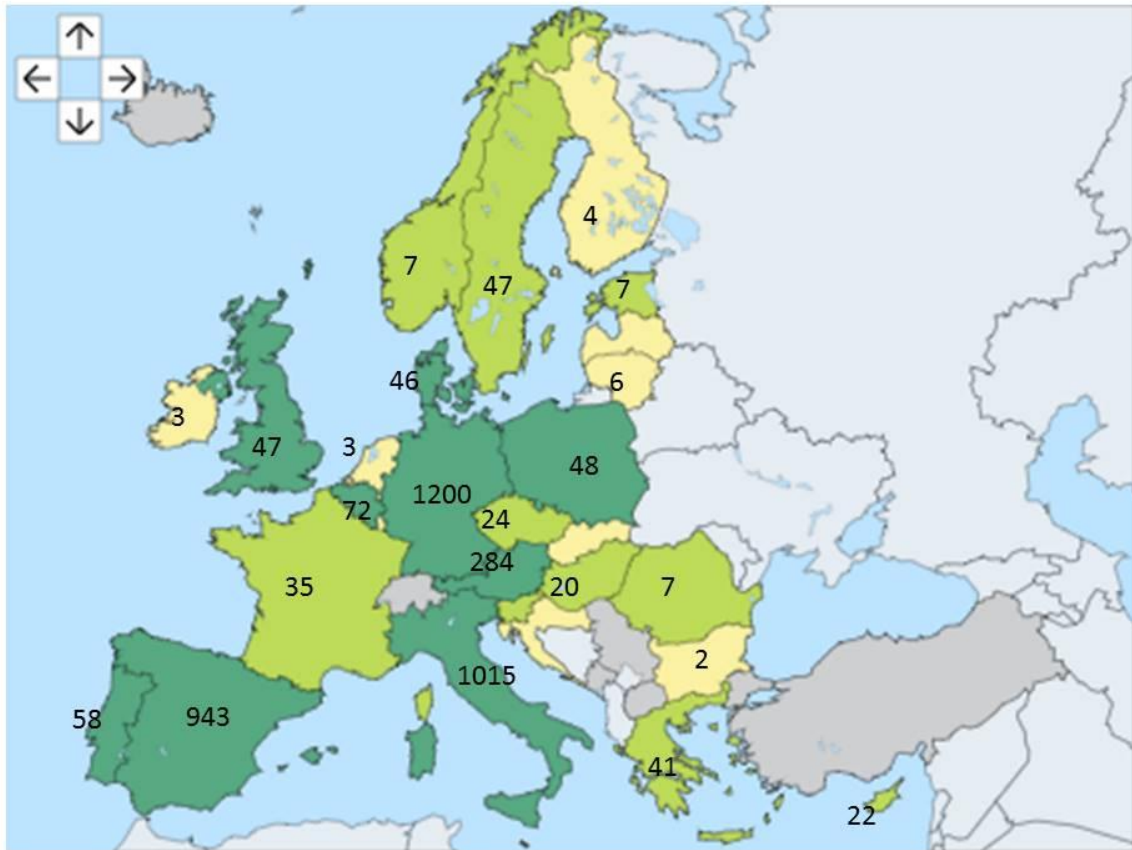


Figure 1: Organization's and sites with eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) registration (2015)

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