



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT

The Director-General

Brussels,
ENV A3 CF/LJ/

HE Mr Ioannis Ghikas
Ambassador - Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Representation of GREECE
Rue J. de Lalaing, 19-21
1040 Brussels
i.ghikas@rp-grece.be

Subject: Closing of the European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE)

Dear Mr Ghikas,

With the active support of EU Member States, the ‘European Business Awards for the Environment’ (EBAE) has been organised since 1987 to celebrate the success of companies at the forefront of eco-innovation as well as to serve as inspiration for other companies and innovators. Thanks to the EBAE many companies have been recognised for their voluntary contribution and commitment to a greener and cleaner economy.

With the adoption of the European Green Deal, the EU has put forward a clear roadmap with the ambition to become the world’s first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal is now the new growth strategy for Europe.

Already last year many initiatives have been adopted, such as the new Circular economy action plan (March 2020), the Biodiversity strategy (May 2020), the Chemical strategy for sustainability and the 8th environment Action Programme (both in October 2020).

Since the last EBAE Awards Ceremony in November 2020, the Commission has continued to translate the **European Green Deal ambition** into an array of new policy initiatives – and notably:

- After the renewed Circular Economy Action Plan and the Biodiversity strategy, a new Zero-Pollution Action Plan was released on 12 May 2021, and more blueprints are under preparation for Sustainable Products, Waste, Forests, etc.;
- To accelerate the Green Recovery, the National Recovery and Resilience Plans are currently being endorsed by the Commission services, with at least 37% of expenses earmarked for climate-related projects;

- The EU taxonomy will provide a new framework for sustainable finance and green investments, to that end, a first batch of criteria related to climate change was issued in April 2021
- The “Fit for 55” package, just released on 14 July 2021, aims at delivering the EU’s 2030 climate target on the way to climate neutrality

All these work strands are **profoundly transformative**. They demonstrate the success of the vision that has powered EBAE for three decades, while at the same time they invite to reconsider the way the business community can be engaged in this transformative process.

After an in-depth assessment of the EBAE, the conclusion was reached not to relaunch a new cycle for this outreach instrument. The main reason is that time has come for scaling-up, with a new enhanced approach to business and the environment. Therefore, while Member States remain free to carry on - or not - with their respective national competitions, **the organisation of the EU phase of the competition will not take place anymore**. The services of the EBAE Secretariat are also phased out permanently as of 18 July 2021. An advance notification of this decision was communicated by my services to the EBAE national coordinators during the exceptional Steering Committee convened on 13 July 2021.

In this moment of final closing of the EBAE, we should also acknowledge the significant legacy of this instrument. In particular, I would like to sincerely express the gratitude of DG Environment towards the structure and person in charge of the National coordination in your country, for their contributions to past successes of the Awards:

Hellenic Association of Environmental Protection Companies – Pasepp
Mr Antonis Papadakis

We trust that they will continue their mission of facilitating the green transition of businesses, simply under new modalities. To that end, and as agreed during the last Committee, a common hymn sheet (see annex) was prepared to their attention to help steer SMEs and businesses towards new opportunities offered by the Green Deal.

Yours sincerely,

e-signed
Florika FINK- HOOIJER

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