The 7th European Business Summit (EBS) in Brussels on 26 and 27 March 2009 focused on ways of sustaining Europe’s ambitions in terms of financing, staffing and greening industry. Some 2,500 business leaders, policymakers and academics from 50 countries shared their views in the face of the current economic crisis. Key conclusions included the need for better regulation of financial markets, investment in research, innovation and knowledge to keep Europe competitive, and the importance of avoiding protectionism.

“Doing nothing to stop climate change will in the end cost our economies far more than taking action now,” said European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas in a special session on climate change in the run up to Copenhagen.

“Delay will only make the task ahead of us more difficult and more costly. Moreover, we must tackle the economic crisis and the climate crisis together: this is part of the solution.”

“Massive innovation in and deployment of clean technologies is imperative. This is without any doubt an enormous challenge – but also an enormous opportunity for the businesses that will develop and market the low-carbon solutions the world needs. European businesses are well placed to lead this clean industrial revolution – and to reap the rewards.”

Dr Werner Schnappauf, Director General of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), emphasised German industry’s commitment to a low-carbon economy and the EU 2020 emission targets. “With existing technology we could already cut CO2 emissions by 30% by 2020,” he said. “We don’t need to invest in new technologies but in deploying what we already have.”

Action is needed on a global scale to tackle climate change, he added. “The economic crisis must not displace the climate crisis. We must tackle the two crises at the same time. And Europe must set the pace in climate-change negotiations.”

http://www.ebsummit.eu/
FOCUS ON 2008 EBAE MANAGEMENT CATEGORY RUNNERS UP

Encouraging sustainable development in agricultural enterprises

Agricultural collective Terr’Avenir started as a regional initiative in 2002, combining sustainable farming with economic performance. The objective was to obtain ISO 14001 environmental-management certification for its members in Picardy in the north-west of France while sharing the costs; the first certificates were obtained in 2005.

All members of the voluntary collective are committed to reducing the environmental impact of their agricultural operations. This involves actions such as 100% sorting and recycling of industrial waste, using less than 1% of toxic phytosanitary products on their land and improving biodiversity. Other activities include installing solar panels, biomethanisation, oil presses for fuel and micro-irrigation systems.

The collective has growing rapidly from the original 18 members in 2002 to over 120 now in Picardy, Upper Normandy and Nord Pas de Calais, involving some 350 people and 25 000 ha of land. Terr’Avenir has set its sights on doubling this number and extending the geographical coverage including into neighbouring Belgium.

“At a time when taking the environment into account is still seen by many as a constraint, we think that it represents a great opportunity for the rural community by the promotion of balanced development favourable to competitiveness and employment,” says Guy Vanlerberghe, president of Terr’Avenir Picardie.

http://www.terr-avenir.com

Cutting certification costs

Several European countries have developed agricultural environmental-management programmes. But a major brake on such voluntary actions has been the cost of certification, which has to be renewed every three years. Terr’Avenir was the first French association to be certified to this standard. Annual audits are carried on a statistical basis. Each farmer involved is audited once every three years. The cost of the annual audits is shared by all the farmers involved.

Print house integrates environmental and quality management

Green Print is an environmentally-friendly printing service developed in co-operation between Estonian print house Triip – now part of Ecoprint – and the Estonian Fund of Nature. Materials are printed using 100% natural printing inks and environmentally-friendly printing paper with environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient technological solutions. Green Print is increasingly popular in Estonia; in 2007, Green Print already accounted for 23% of Triip’s turnover.

The company is firmly committed to reducing the environmental impact of its operations and makes continuous investments in modern and environmentally-effective technologies. Printing is carried out using green energy on premises built from environmentally-friendly materials. The plant is heated in the winter with residual heat from the production process. Other environmentally-sustainable measures include rain-water recuperation for humidity regulation, three wind turbines for power and solar collection to heat water.

Triip won the Estonian Ministry of the Environment’s national environmental contest in the environmental management and product categories in 2007 and 2008. It was the first Estonian company to reach the final of the EBAE in 2008 with its management systems, which include annual environmental statements using ecological footprint and CO2 emission methods.

http://www.ecoprint.ee

No compromise on print quality

Use of rapeseed- and soy-bean-based natural inks with pine-resin binders and either recycled or FSC-certified paper results in the same print quality as with traditional materials. This is achieved by adjusting pre-press and printing press settings for the specific paper as well as ensuring design and image processing take into account the tint of the recycled paper and other recommendations by the paper manufacturer and the printing house.

http://www.ecoprint.ee
New national coordinator – Belgium

Business & Society Belgium (B&S) will be the national coordinator of the Belgian Business Awards for the Environment as of 2009, with the support of the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB), the previous national coordinator. Applications can be submitted from 30 March until 15 August. The national winners of the first, second and third prizes will be announced during an Award Ceremony in December 2009. The jury consists of representatives from academic institutions, research centres, environmental administration, business and the media.

B&S is the Belgian business network for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and supports 50 companies from various sectors in implementing CSR in their businesses. The network has existed since 1997, growing steadily over the years. As a learning network, various issues such as mobility, CO₂ emissions, diversity and reporting are discussed to further the uptake of CSR. In addition to providing a platform for the exchange of best practices and experiences among companies, B&S engages with various stakeholders and invites them to discuss CSR topics with its member companies.

Full information on the Belgian Business Awards as well as entry forms can be found on the new B&S website or contact Caroline Gods – email: caroline.godts@businessandsociety.be; phone: +32 2 515 09 37.

http://www.businessandsociety.be

Encouraging sustainable development – Denmark

The Society of Danish Engineers (IDA) has been the national organiser of the Danish environmental award scheme since 1987 and, in 1994, Denmark hosted the European Award scheme. IDA took on the role of national organiser as it is keen to promote and encourage technological advances that work towards sustainable development.

The Danish scheme is organised on a two-year cycle and covers four categories: clean technology, good environmental management, eco-products and international partnerships on environment. The call for projects is made on the web, through the jurymember network and by advertising in the IDA weekly newspaper.

Candidates for the Danish awards are double checked – by a national jury and by the local authorities. The national jury is appointed by the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Trade & Industry, the Confederation of Danish Industries, the Danish Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature, the Economic Council of the Labour Movement and the Society of Danish Engineers.

http://www.ida.dk

Marking World Environmental Day – Croatia

The Croatian Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction presents national awards for achievements in the field of the environment. These go to people, organisations and companies that contribute to the protection of the environment and to meeting the goals of sustainable development in the Republic of Croatia.

Award categories vary from year to year, and can include actions such as preventing environmental pollution; best practices in production processes with respect to the environment; environmental development and research; environmental protection training and education; individual contributions to environmental protection or international co-operation in the field of environmental protection; and contributions by associations to environmental-protection promotion.

Candidates that meet the criteria are selected by a commission of experts and scientist from the relevant fields. The prize ceremony is traditionally held on 5 June to mark UN World Environment Day.

http://www.mzopu.hr

The Croatian national business award for the environment
**Web portal simplifies cross-border business**

The ‘Your Europe – Business’ portal gives SMEs easy access to information on doing business in other EU Member States, including business-support services in a chosen country. It also offers direct access to e-government services and online administrative procedures. All information is available in English and in the official language of any chosen country. Further languages will be added.