

Flower Month 2009: inspiring initiatives among various Member States

During the Flower Month held from mid-September to mid-October, various Competent Bodies organised interesting and inspiring events and activities. Here is a summary of the awareness and promotional campaigns held in Austria, Hungary and Spain.

Austria

For the sixth year in a row the Austrian "Sustainable Weeks" took place during the Flower Month. "Sustainable weeks" is a joint initiative between different ministries, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, several Austrian Provinces and the Austrian retail trade.

Using the label "Das bringt's. Nachhaltig", which translates roughly as "getting there the sustainable way", many retailers, including all major food chains, hardware suppliers and drugstores, were promoting healthy, energy efficient, regional and/or fair trade products, including many ecolabelled goods. Brochures targeting themes such as construction, textiles or personal care products were available in participating stores, guiding consumers through the choices and the different labels. During those four weeks, consumers were thus encouraged to focus on ecolabelled products. The organisers also produced a related quiz, which will be online until the end of the year. Prizes for quiz-winners are all sustainable; the first prize is a weekend trip to an ecolabelled hotel in Austria. For more information about the event, please visit the following website (in German): www.nachhaltigewochen.at.

Hungary

The Hungarian Competent Body recently launched a multi-faceted media campaign to increase public awareness of the EU Ecolabel and the Hungarian national environmental label. The campaign is financed by the "Environment and Energy Operational Programme" of the New Hungary Development Plan (NHDP), with the assistance of EU funding. In September, a press conference in the presence of Imre Szabó, the Hungarian Minister of Environment and Water, marked the kick-off of the campaign.

The campaign will run until April 2010 and is very ambitious. At the outset, a survey will be conducted to evaluate the current level of public awareness on both the national and the European label. Another survey to evaluate the progress made will be circulated at the end of the media campaign. The public will be reached through various communication channels, using articles and advertisements in local and regional newspapers, television and radio stations. The Hungarian Ecolabelling Organisation homepage www.kornyezetbarat-termek.hu will be redesigned, providing Hungarians with comprehensive information on the EU and Hungarian ecolabel schemes. The website will be available in Hungarian and English. Furthermore, a 60 page brochure on environmental labelling will be printed and distributed to Hungary's municipalities.

"Our experience showed low public awareness of the ecolabels, and an unclear picture about environmental labelling. Better knowledge of ecolabels may improve the environmental consciousness of the Hungarian consumers, and increase the need for labelled products. The increase of consumption of ecolabelled products will have environmental benefits in the long term", comments Zsafia Wagner of the Hungarian Ecolabel Organisation.



Filming of a table with ecolabelled products

Spain

In August the Dirección General de Planificación, in collaboration with the Murcian Council, initiated the Energy against Climate Change event. Young people from countries across Europe, including Italy, Germany, Slovenia, Finland and Spain, gathered in the Centro Educativo del Medio Ambiente de la CAM (CEMACAM) in Murcia. The 35 participants exchanged views and debated Climate Change. They worked together to suggest new ideas about personal commitment to the environment to youth associations and teaching centres.

The Spanish Competent Body specifically contributed to a responsible consumption workshop. A session called "Let's go shopping! European Ecolabel" showed the participants how to find and identify ecolabelled products in supermarkets, shopping centres and other types of stores with the help of games and a printed catalogue. Some of the participants were appointed as "eco-leaders", empowered with the task of increasing awareness of environmental issues among their friends and family.

This project was financed by the European Commission Young Program.

For more information about the programme, please visit the following website (in Spanish): [www.carm.es/neweb2/servlet/integra.servlets.ControlPublico?IDCONTENIDO=14790&IDTIPO=100&RASTRO=c511\\$m4634](http://www.carm.es/neweb2/servlet/integra.servlets.ControlPublico?IDCONTENIDO=14790&IDTIPO=100&RASTRO=c511$m4634)



Young participants at a workshop