

Earth Hour 2020: the Committees switch off their lights



□The European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions will take part in the worldwide Earth Hour initiative over the last weekend of March. The lights in their buildings will be switched off from 10 p.m. on Friday 27 March to 6 a.m. on Monday 30 March.

For the 12th consecutive year, the Committees are responding to the call of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) by symbolically demonstrating their commitment to a global decrease in energy consumption. Their action will highlight the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and draw attention to climate change more broadly.

The [WWF](#) is one of the world's largest grassroots movements for the environment, this year celebrating its 13th anniversary (see [video](#)). The [Earth Hour](#) initiative they launched in 2007 encourages everybody to turn off their lights and unplug electronic devices on Saturday 28 March between 8.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. Today, more than 180 countries and millions of people have taken part in the initiative, which is intended to prompt debate and collective action to protect our natural environment.

Most of the European institutions' commitment already go far "beyond the hour" by implementing the environmental management systems EMAS and/or ISO 14001, which continuously reduces their environmental impact throughout the year. Moreover, they exchange best practices striving for environmental excellence through inter-institutional environmental management groups (GIME and Greening Network), in line with the EU Green Deal towards a climate neutral Europe by 2050.

For their part, the Committees have been EMAS and ISO 14 001-registered since 2011. Since 2009 they have reduced their gas and electricity consumption by 49% and 30% respectively. They obtain all their energy from renewable sources, and have installed 150m² of photovoltaic panels and 1 800m² of green roofs. Through these concrete energy saving actions, the Committees themselves implement the environmental practices they recommend in the political context.□

For more information, read the Committees' [Environmental Statement](#). You can also check the [EMAS in EU Institutions webpage](#) including EMAS stories and best practices.