



An initiative of the  
European Commission



*Green cities - fit for life*

# WILL YOUR CITY BE THE EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL IN 2017?



Frederiksholms Canal, Copenhagen

# FOREWORD



The European Green Capital Award is an award that looks to the future. Europe's urban populations are set to increase in the coming years, and environmental sustainability

measures need to constantly evolve to keep ahead of the changing impacts that modern living has on the environment.

Now in its 8th year, its successes continue to grow. The award is recognised as a mark of environmental best practices, rewarding the efforts of cities and towns that are building a sustainable future for citizens.

We have learned much from the winners of the past. Stockholm, with a network of Green Capital ambassadors, developed study visit programmes, welcomed 120 international delegations, and provided numerous opportunities for local businesses. Hamburg took a Train of Ideas packed with exciting green ideas on a tour across the continent. Vitoria-Gasteiz's green belt impressed visitors from around the globe, and the city gained international media coverage worth 15 million euros. Nantes organised international conferences in a year of meetings and dialogue.

This year, Copenhagen is inviting Europeans to define a common agenda for green policies looking to the future and paving the way for a greener continent, and in 2015, Bristol's many achievements - including 98% of new business developments taking place on brownfield sites in the last decade - are sure to impress.

Cities play a crucial role as engines of the economy, as places of connectivity, creativity and innovation, and as centres of services for

their surrounding areas. Their density means they offer huge potential for saving resources and moving towards a more circular economy.

A circular economy is one where almost nothing is wasted, where the re-use and remanufacturing of products has become standard practice, and where sustainability is built into everything we produce. In 2014 the European Commission will set out new proposals enabling Europe to unlock the potential of the circular economy and help the EU to use resources more efficiently. This will entail change in the way we think about urban design and innovation, and how we manage our waste and use less energy too.

I am delighted to now launch our call for entries for the 2017 European Green Capital Award. We have also this year introduced a Green Leaf category for cities with smaller populations which are not eligible to enter the Green Capital Award, in order to recognise their commitment to a better environment.

All of the European Green Capital Award winners to date continue to take their role as models to inspire other cities very seriously, seeking new ways to improve and progress, long after their designated year.

I encourage cities to enter 2017 competition - not just to have a chance of winning, but also to benefit from the process itself, which provides local authorities with a valuable opportunity to take stock of where they are, and help them plan for a sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janez Potočnik". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Janez Potočnik  
European Commissioner for the Environment

# MAKE YOUR CITY FIT FOR LIFE

The race for the 2017 European Green Capital title has begun! Clean air, good waste management, high recycling rates, water conservation measures, parks, pollution-free environments, high quality urban living and sustainable ideas are all aspects of what makes a European Green Capital “Fit for life”. Each year a European city is appointed the European Green Capital by a panel of environmental experts and a jury. In 2010 Stockholm was the first ever European city to hold the title.

The award is given to a European city that has demonstrated a well-established record of achieving high environmental standards and is committed to ongoing and ambitious goals for future environmental improvement and sustainable development. The European Green Capital should also be able to act as a role model to inspire and promote best practices to other European cities.

## **The race for environmental recognition**

The idea for a European Green Capital Award was originally conceived at a meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, held in May 2006, on the initiative of the former City Mayor, Mr. Jüri Ratas. Now, for the eighth European Green Capital designation in 2017, cities from all over Europe are getting ready to take part in the race for environmental recognition.



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Taking a ride through the Red Square, a public park in Superkilen, Nørrebro in Copenhagen

## **Objectives - cities as role models**

Urban areas are the source of many of today's environmental challenges – not surprisingly, since more than two thirds of Europeans live in towns and cities. Local governments and authorities can provide the commitment and innovation needed to tackle and resolve many of these problems.

Consequently, the aim of the initiative is to recognise and reward local efforts to improve the environment, the green economy and the quality of life in cities. The Award is given each year to a city, not necessarily a capital, which is leading the way in environmentally friendly urban living and which can thus act as a role-model to inspire other cities. Cities differ enormously and sharing concrete examples of what a European Green Capital can look like is essential if further progress is to be made.

# APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM CITIES TO BECOME EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL 2017



## Healthy urban living

The European Green Capital Award is given to a city that has improved its urban living environment as a whole through concrete activities such as:

- Co-operation and partnership between authorities, citizens, business and other stakeholders aimed at developing and improving urban living conditions.
- Implementation of sustainable mobility solutions.
- Introduction and expansion of parks and recreational areas.
- A modern approach to waste management.
- Innovative solutions to noise pollution.
- An integrated approach to urban management ensuring positive long-term effects.

## Winning cities

2016: title to be awarded in June 2014

2015: Bristol

2014: Copenhagen

2013: Nantes

2012: Vitoria-Gasteiz

2011: Hamburg

2010: Stockholm

## Who can apply?

- The European Green Capital Award is open to EU Member States and Candidate Countries (FYROM, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey); Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
- All cities from the countries listed above that have more than 100,000 inhabitants can apply for the award (in countries where there is no city with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the largest city is eligible to apply).
- In this context, a 'city' is understood to be an urban area, excluding metropolitan areas, larger urban zones and conurbations, and is understood as an administrative unit governed by a city council or another form of democratically elected body.
- Past winners may not apply for a period of ten years after they held the European Green Capital title.

## How to apply

- Applications can be made online at [www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu).
- Read more about terms and conditions at [www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu).

# GREEN CAPITALS KEEP ON WINNING

Being a European Green Capital brings many benefits long after the designated year ends, including:-

- Increase in tourism.
- Positive international media coverage worth millions of euro.
- Increase in international profile, networking and new alliances.
- New jobs - a Green Capital is more attractive to foreign investors.
- More emphasis on environmental projects through sponsorship and grants.
- Pride among citizens.
- Momentum to continue improving environmental sustainability.
- The European Green Capital Network.



Watch the 'European Green Capital Award in 90 seconds' video on our YouTube channel.

## Winning Cities:

### Nantes 2013

To raise citizen awareness, the Call for Citizens Project, aimed to promote citizens' initiatives in favour of sustainable development, was launched in July 2012. Over 200 projects were submitted by non-profit associations or citizen collectives, of which 85 were selected and received funding up to a maximum limit of €5,000 each.

### Vitoria-Gasteiz 2012

The city has been able to reach agreements with other institutions and generate external funding, including millions of euro in sponsorship for new environmental projects like 250,000 more trees in the Green Belt and flood prevention works from now until 2020.

### Hamburg 2011

Hamburg generated phenomenal national and international media coverage, mostly linked to the Train of Ideas - a travelling environmental exhibition. 800 media reports reached over 270 million people in six months including potential tourists and investors. There has already been a 57% increase in the number of Renewable Energy sector jobs from 2008 to 2012.

### Stockholm 2010

Stockholm welcomed media from all over the world as well as 120 delegations on professional study tours and close to 360 delegates to its European Green Capital Conference, to share its learnings and motivate change.

# COPENHAGEN: 2014 EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL

## Sharing Copenhagen - sharing sustainable solutions and experiences in 2014

Situated on the Øresund Strait on the eastern coast of Zealand, Copenhagen is Denmark's capital city with a population of over 540,000 inhabitants. It is surrounded by water, with many parks and green spaces. An integrated public transport network and the bicycle paths that line most streets make it easy for residents to choose environmentally friendly ways to get around.

Copenhagen is working to become a "green, smart and carbon-neutral city" by 2025 - an ambitious target that makes the city a role model for other European cities.

Copenhagen is already renowned as an eco-friendly and green city, thanks to far-sighted municipal planning, support from national legislation and involving local people in decision-making.

## Green facts & figures

- Twice voted the world's most liveable city by Monocle magazine (2008 and 2013)
- 55% of Copenhageners cycle to work or school/college
- District heating serves 98% of households
- 90% of building waste is reused
- 24% cut in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2012
- 96% of residents live within 15 minutes' walk of a recreational area
- In 2008, transport experts named the city's urban train system as 'The Best Metro in the World'



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A couple light a candle at the Ceremony of Light at the Grand Opening of Sharing Copenhagen in January 2014

## 2014 Programme Highlights

Activities focus on five main themes:

- The City of the Future (January-April)
- Resource Efficiency (May-July)
- The Blue and Green City (July-September)
- Green Mobility (September)
- Climate (October-December).

The programme is tailored to attract six specific target groups: cities, businesses, citizens, knowledge institutions, youth and children.

In 2014, Copenhagen has established and hosts a new city network with membership limited to cities that have been shortlisted for the European Green Capital Award. The idea is to enable the most progressive green cities in Europe to share knowledge and shape the environmental agenda together. The first meeting took place in January and the second one will take place in association with the EGCA award ceremony, in June 2014.

# SELECTION PROCESS



The selection of a city to be designated the European Green Capital for 2017 will be assessed on the basis of twelve indicator areas:

- Climate Change: mitigation and adaptation
- Local transport
- Green urban areas incorporating sustainable land use
- Nature and biodiversity
- Ambient air quality
- Quality of the acoustic environment
- Waste production and management
- Water management
- Waste water treatment
- Eco innovation and sustainable employment
- Energy performance
- Integrated environmental management.

## **Information to be provided by the applicant cities**

The 2017 Award Application Form has five sections per indicator:

- A. Describe the present situation.
- B. Describe the measures implemented over the last five to ten years.
- C. Describe the short and long term objectives for the future and proposed approach to achieve these.
- D. List how the above information can be documented; add links where possible.
- E. Provide one exemplary practice that has been implemented in each indicator area.

Detailed instructions on how to apply, including a guidance note can be found on [www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu).

## **Two-tier evaluation process**

A panel of internationally acknowledged Experts will assess the information supplied by each city. This will include qualitative evaluations and a peer review of each application based on the 12 indicator areas. Following these evaluations a number of cities will be shortlisted for the 2017 title.

The shortlisted cities will be invited to present their vision, strategies and capacity to act as a role model to the Jury.

The European Green Capital 2017 will be announced at an award ceremony in Bristol in June 2015.

**The 2017 European Green Capital competition opens on 4th June 2014. The closing date is 20th October 2014.**

# EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITALS TO DATE



## KEY DATES IN 2014/2015

### Wednesday 4 June 2014

Launch of call for applications to become the European Green Capital for 2017

### Friday 5 September 2014

European Green Capital 2017 Application Workshop in European Commission Office, Brussels

### Monday 20 October 2014

Deadline for eligible cities to submit their application at [www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu)

### November 2014 - March 2015

Expert panel assessment of all applications including clarifications where needed

### April 2015

Announcement of shortlisted cities

### June 2015

Presentation of shortlisted cities to the Jury and announcement of the 2017 winner at the European Green Capital award ceremony in Bristol

### European Green Capital Secretariat

The application process and the work of the expert panel and the jury are facilitated by the European Green Capital Secretariat, currently run by RPS Group, an environmental and communications consultancy based in Ireland. The secretariat also assists with PR activities related to the award scheme through the European Green Capital Award website, Facebook and Twitter pages, and through various communication channels such as brochures and press releases.

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[www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu)

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