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## Environment: Stockholm and Hamburg win first European Green Capital awards

*Stockholm and Hamburg were today named as the first winners of the new European Green Capital award. The Swedish capital will be European Green Capital in 2010 followed by Hamburg in 2011. The European Commission's new award scheme encourages cities to improve the quality of urban life by taking the environment systematically into account in urban planning. The awards were presented by European Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik at a ceremony in Brussels this afternoon.*

Commissioner Dimas said: "I congratulate Stockholm and Hamburg for their efforts to give priority to the environment and quality of life. Four out of five Europeans now live in urban areas, and that is where the environmental challenges facing our society are most apparent. With their measures to tackle air pollution, traffic and congestion levels, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste and waste water management, Stockholm and Hamburg can act as role models for the rest of Europe."

Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions, commented: "The European Green Capital Award is an innovative scheme which the Committee of the Regions is proud to be involved in. The CoR is focused on making environmental protection at the local level a key priority, and on promoting safe and healthy environments for urban residents."

### **Stockholm - winner 2010**

Stockholm, a fast-growing city of 800,000 inhabitants, has set itself the ambitious target of becoming fossil free by 2050. The city has an Integrated Management System that ensures environmental issues are included in the city's budget, operational planning, reporting and monitoring.

Some 95% of the population live less than 300 metres from green areas that improve the local quality of life, bringing recreation, water purification, noise reduction, and an enhancement of biodiversity and ecology. The city was commended for its extensive programme of future improvements to such areas, including the creation of more beaches for bathing.

An innovative integrated waste system means high recycling rates, especially of bio-waste, using underground vacuum controlled systems. A pioneering Congestion Charging system has reduced car use, increased use of Public Transport and reduced emissions, and the city can boast a 25% reduction in per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 1990, bringing the emissions to about half the national Swedish average.

### **Hamburg - winner 2011**

Hamburg, a city of 1.8 million people, is a city that matches environmental policy commitment with appropriate funding. Air quality is very



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good, numerous awareness raising programmes are in place, and the city has introduced extremely ambitious climate protection goals such as reducing its CO2 emissions by 40% by 2020 and by 80% by the year 2050.

Measures introduced include a cost-efficiency benchmark for energy-saving measures in public buildings, with programmes for lighting, boilers and refrigerator replacement. Over 200,000 conventional lamps in more than 400 public buildings have been replaced, and in recent years €18 million has been spent replacing more than 600 boiler systems with modern condensing boilers. CO2 emissions per person have been reduced by about 15% compared to 1990, with annual energy savings of some 46,000 MWh.

Almost 100% of Hamburg's citizens have public transport within 300 meters. There is also a systematic structure of green spaces which are easily accessible to citizens.

Hamburg was also commended for its communication strategy, and its proposal to launch a 'train of ideas' where other cities 'own' a wagon and promote their green ideas, achievements and future plans.

### **The European Green Capital Award**

The annual award is a new initiative presented to a city in the vanguard of environmentally friendly urban living. The award panel use 10 environmental indicators, with cities being judged on their record in achieving high environmental standards, their commitment to ongoing and ambitious goals for further environmental improvement and sustainable development, and the extent to which they can act as a role model to inspire other cities and promote best practice in other European cities.

Some 35 cities applied for the 2010 and 2011 awards. Eight finalists were shortlisted: Amsterdam, Bristol, Copenhagen, Freiburg im Breisgau, Hamburg, Münster, Oslo and Stockholm. Cities may reapply for the award.

The jury choosing the winners is made up of representatives from the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, the European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E), the Union of Capitals of the European Union and the Committee of the Regions.

Applications for the 2012 award will open in September 2009.

### **Further details**

Read more about the European Green Capital Award on [www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu)

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