



Brussels, 22 May 2008

## ENVIRONMENT: COMMISSION LAUNCHES EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL AWARD

*The European Commission is launching a new annual European Green Capital Award, to be given each year to a city that is leading the way with environmentally friendly urban living. The launch event will be held at 1800 on 22 May 2008 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, where Commissioner Dimas will sign a Declaration establishing the award scheme together with Paddy Bourke, the Lord Mayor of Dublin and President of the Union of Capital Cities of the European Union. Cities may then apply via an online application form to be selected as the European Green Capital for 2010 and 2011. Mr Jüri Ratas, former Mayor of Tallinn and current Vice-President of the Estonian Parliament, who laid the ground for the award in May 2006, will also be present, along with other mayors. Any European city with a population of more than 200,000 can apply, and a jury will select the winning cities for 2010 and 2011 later on this year. The award is intended to help European cities become more attractive and healthy places – “fit for life”. The launch of the award also coincides with World Biodiversity Day.*



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

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: “I hope that this award will act as a powerful incentive for local governments and authorities to improve living conditions for Europe’s city-dwellers. Many cities are already committed to improving protection of their environment: I am confident that this award will encourage many more to follow suit.”

### **Environmentally friendly frontrunners**

Starting in 2010, one European city will be selected as the European Green Capital of the year. The award will be given to a city that has a consistent record of achieving high environmental standards, is permanently committed to ambitious action, further environmental improvement and sustainable development, and can act as a role model to inspire other cities and promote best practices in all other European cities.

### **Urban Europe**

The European Green Capital Award has been conceived as an initiative to promote and reward these efforts. The award shows that a city wants to – and does! – solve environmental problems so as to improve the quality of life of its citizens, and reduce the burden it imposes on the global environment as a whole. It provides an incentive for cities to inspire each other and share best practices, while at the same time engaging in friendly competition.



### **Green cities of tomorrow**

The award scheme is open to the 27 EU Member States, candidate countries (Turkey, FYROM and Croatia) and European Economic Area countries.

All EU cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants can apply for the European Green Capital Award via an online application form. Entries will be assessed on the basis of ten environmental criteria including climate change, transport, air, waste and water. The deadline for applications for both the 2010 and 2011 titles is 1 October 2008, with jury selection leading to a decision later this year.

The jury is composed 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.

### **22 May 2008 - World Biodiversity Day**

The inauguration of the European Green Capital Award coincides with World Biodiversity Day this year and two of the indicators that will be used to assess the cities' performance are linked to biodiversity: availability of local public green areas and sustainable land use.

### **Background**

The European Green Capital Award is the outcome of an initiative taken by cities with a green vision. The concept was originally conceived at a meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, held on 15 May 2006, at the initiative of Mr Jüri Ratas, a former mayor of Tallinn, where 15 European cities and the Association of Estonian cities signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of such an Award. Currently, more than 40 cities, including 21 EU capitals, support it.

### **For more information:**

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

Commission website on the urban environment:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/home_en.htm)

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