



Ezine No 5 - Jan 2012

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the 5th issue of the European Green Capital Award's Ezine. We at the European Green Capital Award Secretariat would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! We have a very exciting year ahead with our new European Green Capital Vitoria-Gasteiz.

COMMISSIONER POTOČNIK HANDS OVER THE EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL TITLE TO VITORIA-GASTEIZ, 2012 WINNING CITY

On 15 December, 2011, the European Commission officially handed over the 'European Green Capital' title from Hamburg, Germany to Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

Commissioner Potočnik said: "Hamburg has been an exemplary European Green Capital, especially impressive with its Green Train of Ideas tour spreading the important message about sustainable urban development across 18 European cities. I wish Vitoria-Gasteiz well in its endeavours during its year as European Green Capital 2012. I look forward to seeing and hearing about their initiatives throughout the year so that other European cities can learn from their example and be motivated to improve water consumption, urban planning and green infrastructure, for example, as well as the many other elements that make a city green and fit for life."



Janez Potočnik, EU Environment Commissioner; Linda Persson, Stockholm Green Capital 2010 Project Manager; Ronan Dantec, French Senator from Nantes (EGC 2013); Holger Lange, State Secretary for Environment of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (EGC 2010); and Javier Maroto Aranzabal, Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz (EGC2012). All took part in the ceremony which was

held in the European Parliament during the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions.

Building on the achievements of Stockholm in 2010, Hamburg in 2011 and, we hope, Vitoria-Gasteiz in 2012, the CoR is ready to work together with the European Commission to establish a community that will allow the experience of the European Green Capitals to be more widely shared.

The European Green Capital Award recognises and rewards cities that are at the forefront of environmentally-friendly urban living and which can act as role-models to inspire other cities. Europe needs this kind of inspiration as cities strive to overcome increasingly persistent environmental problems. Vitoria-Gasteiz, capital of the Basque country in northern Spain, is the third European city to gain the prestigious title of European Green Capital since the initiative was launched in 2010, following in the footsteps of Stockholm and Hamburg.

[Read More](#)

To view a video of the handover event click [here](#)

For more information on Vitoria-Gasteiz, the European Green Capital 2012 click [here](#)

THE 2012 WINNER: VITORIA-GASTEIZ- "WHERE GREEN IS CAPITAL"

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new European Green Capital, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

The medieval city of Vitoria-Gasteiz dates back to 1181. It is the capital of the historical territory of Alava, and home to 76% of its population and most of its industries and services. Vitoria-Gasteiz is a medium-sized city: the municipality comprises the urban area, with a population of over 235,000.



Virgen Blanca, Vitoria-Gasteiz

Vitoria-Gasteiz is one of Europe's greenest cities, in more than one sense. Vitoria-Gasteiz is the living result of over 30 years of commitment to sustainability. With its good practices in urban planning, green spaces, recycling, mobility and water consumption, the city has become an example for Europe. It has over 10 million square metres of parks and green spaces, and its

flagship Green Belt project has attracted international recognition. Its green credentials are all the more remarkable in a city that has experienced major population growth over recent decades. Rigorous strategic urban planning, strong citizen involvement, and the balanced management of the environment have enabled the city to harmonise with the natural landscape, forging its cultural identity and making it a model for urban sustainability. What makes it an ideal European role model is that it represents the average, medium-sized city in which 84% of Europeans live.

Vitoria-Gasteiz will be having its opening ceremony on the 7th February; we will keep you posted of the details of this event with the participation of the Spanish Queen!

For more information on events in Vitoria-Gasteiz click [here](#)

Green Facts and Figures:

- All residents have access to public open and green space within 300m
- 613 hectares of Green Belt
- 479m² of forest per capita (covering one-third of the municipal area)
- 210 organic farming plots
- 130 000 trees in city streets
- Two tram lines and 90km of bicycle lanes
- Half of all journeys are made on foot
- 1st Environmental Action Plan adopted in 2002

For more information on Vitoria-Gasteiz, the European Green Capital 2012 click [here](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

7	February	Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain	Opening Ceremony
20-21	March	Bremen, Germany	CARE-North Conference
31	March	Worldwide	Earth Hour
12-15	May	Bonn, Germany	Resilient Cities Conference
22-25	May	Brussels, Belgium	Green Week
20-22	June	Rio, Brazil	Rio +20 Summit

CONTACT US

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