



## European Commission Press Release

Brussels, 18 June 2015

### **Mollet del Vallès wins inaugural European Green Leaf 2015**

The Spanish city of Mollet del Vallès has won a European Green Leaf in the first year of the new European competition which recognises a city's commitment to better environmental outcomes. The scheme has a particular focus on efforts that generate green growth and new jobs.

The title was presented by Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, at a ceremony held in Bristol, the current European Green Capital. Mollet del Vallès was singled out for its urban mobility plan, local air quality action plan and water management measures, and for its efforts in waste management and green economy.

Commissioner Vella said: *“Given the very high standard of our applicants and of the shortlisted cities, it is a credit to the efforts of Mollet del Vallès that it is one of the first to win a European Green Leaf. They are proof that good urban mobility is not just for big cities. I hope that these inaugural European Green Leaf cities will act as role models and inspire many others to pursue better environmental stewardship in the future.”*

The 2015 European Green Leaf (EGL) is a European Commission initiative which targets cities with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. Each year, an EGL will be awarded to a maximum of three cities which demonstrate a good environmental record and a commitment to green growth, and which actively seek to develop citizens' environmental awareness. Winners should be able to act as 'Green Ambassadors' to inspire other cities.

The jury was particularly impressed by Mollet Del Vallès' urban mobility plan, which favours pedestrian mobility, public transport and includes round table discussions with all stakeholders to boost public engagement during the plan's preparation. To further encourage this engagement and help identify issues associated with particular routes, users were taken on typical commuter trips and asked to give feedback on the various strengths and weaknesses. Bus usage in the municipality has increased by 25% in the last 5 years.

Mollet Del Vallès' local air quality action plan, which has recently been adopted with the aim of reducing air pollution, is equally impressive. A permanent monitoring station has been in place since 2007 and has recorded a decreasing trend for airborne particulates, reflecting the city's integrated efforts to increase sustainable transport methods and reduce pollution. A 'Cleaner Air' awareness raising campaign conducted throughout 2013 highlighted these efforts.

In addition to Mollet des Vallès, Torres Vedras in Portugal was also awarded a European Green Leaf for 2015.

## **Background**

Europe is now an essentially urban society, with more than two thirds of European citizens living in towns and cities. Many environmental challenges facing our society originate from urban areas, but it is these same urban areas that catalyse the commitment and innovation needed to find solutions.

The EU's 7th Environment Action Programme (7th EAP) entitled "Living well, within the limits of our planet" underpins and guides the work of creating an ever-better environment for European citizens and provides the basis for the EU environment policy development up to 2020. The 7th EAP includes the specific policy objective, "to enhance the sustainability of EU cities". It foresees that the EU promotes and expands existing initiatives that support innovation and best practices in cities, enabling better networking and encouraging leaders to show how they are progressing towards sustainable urban development.

Launched in 2008, the European Green Capital Award (EGCA) has achieved increasing renown. Following its success, many smaller cities also seek EU recognition for their efforts and commitment in the areas of sustainability and environment. In response, the European Commission launched the new European Green Leaf (EGL) initiative.

The jury comprises representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Environment Agency, ICLEI – the Local Governments for Sustainability, the Covenant of Mayors Office and the European Environmental Bureau.

### **For more information:**

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeangreenleaf>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/EuropeanGreenCapitalAward](http://www.facebook.com/EuropeanGreenCapitalAward)

Twitter: [@EU\\_GreenCapital](https://twitter.com/EU_GreenCapital)

LinkedIn: [European Green Capital Award](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-green-capital-award)

The full EGL 2015 Expert Panel Technical Assessment Report can be read online [here](#).