



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Commission launches financial incentive for green cities

Today, the European Commission has launched the competition for the 2020 European Green Capital and 2019 European Green Leaf Awards.

For the first time, in order to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the European Green Capital competition and to encourage more cities to apply, the Commission will award a financial incentive of 350.000 € to the winning city of the 2020 European Green Capital title (cities having more than 100,000 inhabitants) and of 75.000 € to the winner of the European Green Leaf 2019 -title (cities of smaller size, above 20.000 inhabitants)<sup>1</sup>.

Winning Green Capital and Green Leaf cities have enjoyed increased levels of tourism, positive international media coverage, increased international profiles, networks and alliance opportunities, foreign investment, public financial support emphasis on environmental projects and momentum to continue improving their environmental sustainability.

EU Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr Karmenu Vella said *"The European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards are becoming increasingly important as we strive to manage our cities and towns against the challenges of population growth, pressure on resources and our responsibilities to manage climate change. With more than two thirds of Europeans now living in our towns and cities we must continue to innovate and find new and better environmentally sustainable solutions to manage how we live, how we travel, how we eat and to develop 'green' jobs. European Green Capitals and Green Leafs provide vital inspiration and motivation to help other cities find solutions, on both a European and a global stage."*

Both the European Green Capital and European Green Leaf Awards are open to cities in EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. For both awards, cities can seek more information and apply through the European Green Capital Award website. The deadline for applications for the 2020 European Green Capital and 2019 European Green Leaf Awards is 18 October 2017.

## Background

The European Green Capital Award is presented to a city that is at the forefront of environmentally friendly urban living. A panel of independent experts assesses the performance of the competing cities against 12 environmental criteria. A jury then evaluates their commitment to ongoing environmental improvement and sustainable development, as well as their skills in communication,

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to the approval of the EU 2018 Budget and approval by the College of the 2018 Financing Decision for the EU LIFE Programme



and the extent to which they could act as a role model, spreading the European Green Capital and European Green Leaf model further. In addition to providing inspiration to other cities, the winner benefits from an increased profile, which serves to enhance the city's reputation and makes it attractive as a destination for people to visit, work and live in.

To date, nine cities have been awarded the title of European Green Capital since its inception in 2010. Stockholm, Sweden won the inaugural title, followed by Hamburg, Germany (2011); Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2012); Nantes, France (2013); Copenhagen, Denmark (2014); Bristol, UK (2015); Ljubljana, Slovenia (2016); Essen, Germany (2017); and Nijmegen, Netherlands (2018). The 2019 European Green Capital will be announced at an awards ceremony in Essen on 2 June 2017.

Following the success of the European Green Capital Award, many smaller cities seek EU recognition for their efforts and commitment in the areas of sustainability & environment. In response, the European Commission has launched the European Green Leaf (EGL) initiative. The competition ran again in 2016 with Galway, Ireland, becoming the third Green Leaf after two were awarded in 2015.

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

## **For more information:**

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital>

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

Twitter: @EU\_GreenCapital

LinkedIn: European Green Capital Award

EU policy on Urban Environment : [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/index_en.htm)