



Brussels, 8th April 2015

Essen, 's-Hertogenbosch, Nijmegen and Umeå shortlisted for European Green Capital Award 2017

Essen (Germany), 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands), Nijmegen (Netherlands) and Umeå (Sweden) are the four finalists of the European Green Capital Award 2017. The Award is presented to one European city with over 100,000 inhabitants every year, commending its achievements in environmental sustainability.

EU Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr. Karmenu Vella said: *"Urban spaces can become transforming, healthy spaces. The European Green Capital Award is a way for cities to inspire this transformation. It is encouraging to see the calibre of these applications. The Award showcases the local efforts to improve the urban environment and promote sustainable growth. I would like to wish the cities the very best of luck as they advance to the next stage of the competition and I look forward to meeting the representatives in Bristol."*

Essen (Germany), 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands), Nijmegen (Netherlands) and Umeå (Sweden) have been shortlisted from 12 entries across Europe. An international and independent panel of experts assessed each applicant on the basis of the following indicators:

- Climate change: mitigation and adaptation
- Local transport
- Green urban areas incorporating sustainable land use
- Nature and biodiversity
- Ambient air quality
- Quality of the acoustic environment
- Waste production and management
- Water management
- Waste water treatment
- Eco-innovation and sustainable employment

- Energy performance
- Integrated environmental management

Bristol, the current European Green Capital, will host the Jury deliberations on 17 June 2015, where the four shortlisted cities will present their future goals, their citizens' communication activities, and their readiness to act as a role model. Following the deliberations the European Green Capital 2017 will be announced the next day, 18 June, at an official Award ceremony in Bristol.

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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, on the initiative of Mr Jüri Ratas, 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.

Seven 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 in 2011, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain in 2012, Nantes, France in 2013 and Copenhagen, Denmark in 2014. Bristol, UK currently holds the title for 2015 and will pass it to Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2016.

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.

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 also these urban areas that bring together the commitment and innovation needed to resolve them.

For more information:

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

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