



Brussels, 3 June 2015

## **Launch of the 2018 European Green Capital Award and the European Green Leaf 2016**

The Commission has launched the search for the 2018 European Green Capital. The award is given to a European city that has demonstrated a well-established record of achieving high environmental standards and is committed to ongoing and ambitious goals for future sustainable development. Cities across Europe with more than 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply for the title.

In addition, smaller cities with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 can apply for the European Green Leaf 2016. It recognises towns and cities that demonstrate a strong environmental record, with a particular emphasis on efforts that engage citizens' in environmental awareness, generate green growth and new jobs. The competition ran as a pilot in 2015 and was well received. For 2016 the eligibility threshold has been lowered from 50,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.

European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella said: *"It gives me great pleasure to launch the competitions for the ninth European Green Capital and the second European Green Leaf. I would like to encourage cities and towns to apply and to use this as an opportunity to not only highlight their environmental achievements but to also plan a sustainable future for their citizens"*.

*"It is vital that cities and towns continue to learn from and inspire one another to create solutions for environmental challenges. The European Green Capital and European Green Leaf initiatives provide a valuable platform for this"*.

Entries for the European Green Capital Award will be assessed on the basis of 12 environmental 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; wastewater treatment; eco-innovation and sustainable employment; energy performance; and integrated environmental management. Cities applying for European Green Leaf will be assessed on the following 6 indicators: Climate change & energy performance, Mobility, Biodiversity & land use, Quality of air & the acoustic environment, Waste & green economy, Water management.

Both competitions are open to EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland and for both, cities can apply online at <http://ec.europa.eu/europeangreencapital>. The deadline for applications for the 2018

EGCA title and the 2016 European Green Leaf is 19 October 2015. A European jury supported by a panel of renowned experts across the different environmental fields will assess the applications.

The winners of both competitions will be announced at an award ceremony in Ljubljana – next year's European Green Capital - in June 2016.

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

The European Green Capital Award is the outcome of an initiative taken by cities with a green vision. The concept was originally conceived in Estonia in 2006, on the initiative of Mr Jüri Ratas, former Mayor of Tallinn. Cities across Europe with more than 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply for the title.

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 2017 title will be awarded in June 2015.

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 new pilot European Green Leaf (EGL) initiative. It ran as a pilot project for 2015 and since it was well received, will run again for 2016 and will be open to towns and cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

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/europeangreencapital>

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/EuropeanGreenCapitalAward)