Brussels, 16 November 2016

Record number of European cities apply for green awards

As many as 28 European cities, large and small, from all across Europe have announced their candidacy for the 2019 European Green Capital and the 2018 European Green Leaf Awards. The following cities have entered the competition:

European Green Capital:

Arad, Romania	Lisbon, Portugal
Bologna, Italy	Oslo, Norway
Florence, Italy	Pécs, Hungary
Funchal, Portugal	Seville, Spain
Ghent, Belgium	Strasbourg, France
Kamëz, Albania	Tallinn, Estonia
Lahti, Finland	Wroclaw, Poland

European Green Leaf:

Alytus, Lithuania	Kukes, Albania
Barreiro, Portugal	Leuven, Belgium
Fundão, Portugal	Lorca, Spain
Gabrovo, Bulgaria	Ludwigsburg, Germany
Girona, Spain	Oliveira Do Hospital, Portugal
Grottaglie, Italy	Tauragė, Lithuania
Jonava, Lithuania	Vaxjo, Sweden

EU Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Commissioner, Karmenu Vella said:

"*I am delighted to see a record number of entries for this year's competitions. More and more cities are realising that investing in making our cities greener means investing in people's wellbeing, in jobs and in a healthy environment. Cities are the places where Europe's growth potential is greatest. And where most Europeans see environment policy in action. These applicant cities are showing us the kind of urban commitment and innovation which will help them, and others, prosper well into the future.*"

The **European Green Capital and European Green Leaf Awards** showcase what is possible when a city commits to sustainable development.

The **European Green Capital Award**, now in its tenth year, pays tribute to European cities where innovative urban environmental management and initiatives have taken hold; it recognises cutting-edge, environmentally-friendly urban living. European Green Capital Award winners set higher standards in sustainable urban development, listening to what their citizens want and pioneering innovative solutions to attract investment.

An expert panel will assess each entry on the basis of 12 indicators covering climate change mitigation and adaptation; local transport; green urban areas incorporating sustainable land use; ambient air quality; nature and biodiversity; quality of the acoustic environment; waste production and management; water management; waste-water treatment; eco-innovation and sustainable employment; energy performance and integrated environmental management.

2017 also sees the third cycle of the **European Green Leaf Award**, which seeks to recognise the progress made by Europe's smaller cities and towns in their commitment to improving the quality of life for their citizens and exhibiting good environmental practice.

Green Leaf applications will be assessed on the basis of six topic areas, including climate change and energy performance, mobility, biodiversity and land use, quality of air and the acoustic environment, waste management and circular economy, water and wastewater management. Following the technical evaluation, a number of cities will be shortlisted for the EGCA 2019 and for the EGL 2018 titles.

The winners will be announced at an Award Ceremony in Essen, Germany, the European Green Capital for 2017 in June next year.

Background

To date, eight 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 and Bristol, UK in 2015. Ljubljana, Slovenia currently holds the title (for 2016) and will pass it to Essen, Germany for 2017, and to Nijmegen in the Netherlands in 2018.

As for the European Green Leaf, the joint winners of the inaugural 2015 Award were Mollet del Vallès, Spain and Torres Vedras, Portugal. The title of 2017 European Green Leaf has been awarded to the city of Galway in Ireland.

For more information:

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

Facebook: 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