



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **EU Urban: Green City Awards go to Oslo, Leuven and Växjö**

Today, the Norwegian city of Oslo has won the **European Green Capital Award for 2019**. The title of **European Green Leaf 2018** goes jointly to the Belgian city of Leuven and the Swedish city of Växjö. These prestigious titles were awarded by the EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, at an awards ceremony in Essen, Germany, the current European Green Capital.

Commissioner Vella said: *"I am delighted to be awarding the tenth European Green Capital Award and the fourth and fifth European Green Leaf Awards. More than two thirds of Europeans live in our cities and towns. The European Green Capital award shows us that cities can grow in size while keeping their green hearts beating. Good urban planning grows each time one city inspires another - that is the secret of the green capital award."*

The jury was particularly impressed by the holistic approach demonstrated by Oslo covering topics ranging from biodiversity, public transport, social integration and citizen health accompanied by the theme 'City for everyone, putting people first'.

Oslo was commended for working systematically to re-open waterways with 3,000 waterways re-opened so far. The jury appreciated Oslo's active approach to connecting with their citizens particularly with the use of technology and innovation in citizen participation such as text message invitations to public consultations and politician speed-dating. The jury also appreciated Oslo's objective to address common challenges such as reclaiming space for citizens over cars by working with other cities.

Leuven has placed a strong focus on climate change, introducing a number of actions to achieve its goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. One example of this is the reinvestment of gains made from energy efficiency into new measures for green energy. Public participation features strongly in its climate and energy projects.

Växjö has demonstrated strong leadership in sustainable development, making a commitment in 1996 to be fossil fuel free. It was also the first Swedish city to use biomass for district heating and one of the first to start implementing Agenda 2030.

Today, the Commission also launched a test version of their new Green City Tool, for cities that are unlikely to apply for the Green Capital or Green Leaf Awards, but who none-the-less are interested in assessing and benchmarking their environmental performance. The Commission are looking for cities or other interested stakeholders to test the beta-version of the tool and provide feedback ahead of the full launch later in the year. To test the Green City Tool and send feedback please go here:

Environment

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/tool.htm>

## **Background**

The European Green Capital Award (EGCA) and the European Green Leaf Award (EGLA) saw a very high number of applicants this year, with 28 cities across Europe competing for the Awards. The five EGCA finalists of Ghent (Belgium), Lahti (Finland), Lisbon (Portugal), Oslo (Norway) and Tallinn (Estonia) and three EGLA finalists of Ludwigsburg (Germany), Leuven (Belgium) and Växjö (Sweden) were chosen by an international panel of experts.

The European Green Capital Award and the European Green Leaf Award recognise a city's commitment to a better urban environment. Cities with populations over 100,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply for the European Green Capital Award. The European Green Leaf is open to cities of between 20,000 and up to 100,000 inhabitants. Both competitions are open to EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Winners demonstrate well-established records of high environmental standards and a commitment to setting ambitious goals for future environmental progress, underpinned by the practical application of sustainable development. The schemes have a particular focus on green growth and job creation. Winners act as ambassadors to inspire other cities and to promote best practices in pursuit of sustainable urban development.

Ten cities have now won the European Green Capital Award: Stockholm (2010), Hamburg (2011), Vitoria-Gasteiz (2012), Nantes (2013), Copenhagen (2014), Bristol (2015), Ljubljana (2016), Essen (2017), Nijmegen (2018) and Oslo (2019).

Five cities have now won a European Green Leaf award. In 2015 – the first year of the competition – Mollèt del Valles (Spain) and Torres Vedras (Portugal) received the award, followed by Galway (2017). The European Green Leaf Award 2018 goes to the cities of Leuven and Växjö.

The winning cities' application forms will be published in full on the European Green Capital website.

## **For more information:**

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

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

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