



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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**Environment: Bristol becomes European Green Capital 2015;
Commission launches European Green Leaf**

Today in Copenhagen, Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime affairs and Fisheries, officially handed the European Green Capital title to Bristol for 2015. He also launched European Green Leaf 2015, a new competition for smaller cities.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Commissioner Vella said: "Citizens of Bristol should be very proud, and I congratulate them on winning the title of European Green Capital 2015. Bristol offers inspiration to other European cities that also want to evolve towards a greener future. I wish Mayor Ferguson and his team the best of luck for the coming year."

Commissioner Vella also launched the European Green Leaf, a competition for smaller European cities which show a strong commitment to green growth and a better environment. "Size isn't everything – especially when it comes to the environment. The Green Leaf is aimed at cities with 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and more than 450 European cities can now apply. So many stories to share – make sure we hear them!" he said.

What impressed the Jury

Bristol's green credentials include:

- Almost a fifth of residents walk to work
- Over the last ten years, homes have become 25 % more energy efficient
- The city's low-carbon economy employs around 9,000 people
- 34 % of the city is made up of green and blue open spaces
- Over 90 % of the population live within 300m of parklands or waterways
- In 2014 it was named 'best place to live in the UK' by The Sunday Times

Bristol's theme

Bristol plans to emphasise the importance of finding shared solutions to environmental challenges, with a programme focused on Learning, Innovation and Leadership. Bristol follows on from Copenhagen, the 2014 European Green Capital. Copenhagen created a network of cities that have been shortlisted for the European Green Capital Award, with view to enabling progressive green cities to share knowledge and drive the environmental agenda forward together.

European Green Leaf 2015

Recent years have seen a growing demand for recognition from smaller cities that demonstrate a commitment to environmental progress. The Commission is responding

with the European Green Leaf, which will run as a pilot competition for 2015. The new award will enable cities with 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants to demonstrate their achievements in generating green growth and a better environment, singling out up to three cities that show evidence of such commitment. As with the European Green Capital Award, the selection process will be overseen by an independent panel of experts. The competition is open for applications until 31 March 2015.

Background

Every year a European Green Capital Award goes to one city that excels in environmentally friendly urban living. Competing cities are assessed against 12 environmental criteria, with a jury evaluating their commitment to on-going environmental improvement and sustainable development, communication, and their capacity to act as a role model. Winning the competition raises a city's profile, enhances its reputation, and makes it an attractive destination for people to visit, work and live in. Seven cities have now been awarded the title: Stockholm first won in 2010, followed by Hamburg (2011), Vitoria-Gasteiz (2012), Nantes (2013), and Copenhagen (2014). Bristol will pass the title to Ljubljana in 2016.

For more information:

Website: www.europeangreencapital.eu

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