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PRESS RELEASE

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Nijmegen becomes European Green Capital for 2018

Nijmegen was rewarded for its efforts to become 'fit for life' and the ability to lead by example in a number of key environmental areas.

Tomorrow the city of Nijmegen in the Netherlands will officially become the European Green Capital for 2018. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, will hand over the title for 2018 from Essen to Nijmegen.

With more than two thirds of Europeans living in towns or cities, addressing environmental challenges is of utmost importance for the health and wellbeing of citizens. The European Green Capital Award recognises the important role of cities as drivers of sustainable development and rewards cities for their commitment to improving their urban environments. Nijmegen will act as role model for sustainable urban development, sharing and promoting best practices that have been tried and tested in this Dutch city.

Commissioner Vella said: *"It is with great honour that I pass the title of European Green Capital to Nijmegen, the first Dutch city to win the award. Nijmegen has shown what true collaboration can achieve. From its ambitious energy targets and commitment to circular economy, remarkable cycling movement and green transport, to impressive flood protection measures at the River Waal, Nijmegen has proven itself as a leader in urban sustainability. I am confident it will inspire and support other European cities on their path towards a greener future. I wish Mayor Bruls, his team and the people of Nijmegen the very best."*

Recognising the important role local authorities play in improving the environment, the Commission has dedicated its annual environmental flag-ship event [Green Week](#) in 2018 to cities.

What impressed the jury?

- Citizen engagement and the inclusion of a diverse range of actors was at the heart of Nijmegen's sustainability projects;
- The city administration believes in leading by example; it utilises green electricity and a biogas car fleet, and has installed 1,400m² of green roofs and 1,485 solar panels on its own buildings;
- With 250 000 bicycles in Nijmegen, cycling accounts for 65 % of journeys to the city centre and Radboud University. The city boasts 60km of cycle superhighways, with another 20km underway;
- The entire bus fleet runs on regionally produced biogas, resulting in cleaner public transport and boosting the local green economy.
- Every citizen lives within 300m from green space of 0.5ha or more;
- Currently, 67 % of Nijmegen's waste is recycled, with plans to increase this amount to 75 % by 2020. The remaining domestic waste is converted to energy, providing district heating for Nijmegen's residents;

- The Room for the Waal project created a new channel to drain the Waal River at high water levels, greatly reducing the risk of flooding and increasing the area's climate resilience.

During its year as the 2018 European Green Capital, Nijmegen will host a range of events under the following five key themes:

- Vital City – Healthy and Green Together
- Energy Transition – Happy with Sun, Wind and Heat
- Climate Change – Living with Water
- Circular Economy – Everything is Useful
- Smart Mobility – Sustainable Transport

Background

To date, ten cities have been awarded the title of European Green Capital since it began in 2010. Stockholm, Sweden, won the inaugural title, followed by Hamburg in Germany (2011), Vitoria-Gasteiz in Spain (2012), Nantes in France (2013), Copenhagen in Denmark (2014), Bristol in the UK (2015), and Ljubljana in Slovenia (2016). Essen, winner of the 2017 award, will now pass the title for 2018 to Nijmegen in the Netherlands, followed by Oslo in Norway in 2019.

For more information:

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EuropeanGreenCapitalAward

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LinkedIn: [European Green Capital Award](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-green-capital-award)

EU policy on Urban Environment : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/index_en.htm