

Press release

Brussels, 9 February 2016



Ljubljana becomes European Green Capital 2016

Today, European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, officially handed over the title of European Green Capital for 2016 from Bristol to Ljubljana.

The European Green Capital Award rewards EU cities' efforts and commitment to improving the urban environment, boosting awareness of the need for environmental change at the city level. As European Green Capital 2016, Ljubljana will act as ambassador for sustainable urban development, sharing and promoting best practices that have been tried and tested in the Slovenian capital.

The Commission is also developing a new voluntary tool which any city can use to benchmark and monitor its environmental performance, based on the 12 criteria used to select Green Capitals. The aim is to invite all European cities to improve their urban environment and quality of life. The tool is expected to be launched in June.

Speaking at the handover ceremony in Brussels Commissioner Vella said: *"I congratulate Ljubljana for becoming greener, healthier and more sustainable. The title of European Green Capital 2016 is well deserved and it's a title that brings with it great responsibility. Taking care of the urban environment means taking care of the health and well-being of the people who live in our cities. You have a beautiful city and I hope your efforts and expertise act as an example for other cities."*

Ljubljana has put in place a comprehensive set of policies to help deliver a more sustainable city. The capital boasts a vast area of green space (542 m² per inhabitant). Public transport, pedestrian access and cycling networks (220 km of managed cycling routes) are the backbone of its urban mobility system.

With its **Zero Waste Strategy**, Ljubljana makes a significant contribution to Europe's transition to a more circular economy. In the new [circular economy package](#) adopted in December 2015 the Commission proposed actions that will contribute to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use. Here, Ljubljana can act as a role model, as the European capital with the largest share of separately collected waste and actively promoting recycling and re-use.

Background

The European Green Capital Award is presented to a city that excels in generating environmentally friendly urban living. It is ultimately about making cities more pleasant places in which to live and work. A panel of independent experts assesses the performance of the competing cities against 12 environmental criteria. A jury then evaluates their commitment to ongoing environmental improvement and sustainable development, as well as their skills in communication, and the extent to which they could act as a role model by showcasing best practices for use elsewhere. In addition to providing inspiration to other cities, the winner benefits from an increased profile, which serves to enhance the city's reputation and makes it attractive as a destination for people to visit, work and live in.

Eight cities have been awarded the title of European Green Capital since its inception in 2010. Stockholm won the inaugural title, followed by Hamburg in 2011, Vitoria-Gasteiz in 2012, Nantes in 2013, Copenhagen in 2014, Bristol in 2015, and Ljubljana in 2016. Ljubljana will pass the title to Essen in 2017.

Since 2015, towns and cities with a population between 20,000 and 100,000 can apply for the European Green Leaf Award. The title 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. Torres Vedras (PT) and Mollet de Vallès (ES) currently hold the title for 2015.

For more information:

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