NEWS RELEASE

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How can your city become 100% renewable?

European Green Capitals show technology is only part of the solution

If Europe is to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, its cities need to think and act beyond their borders, consider the social and technological aspects in urban planning, and harness the ideas and potential of their citizens. These are the main conclusions of the new toolkit *"How can your city become 100% renewable?"* launched this Thursday, 2 July 2020 by the European Green Capital Network.

The toolkit contains guidelines, tips and inspiring stories from renewable energy experts and urban planners from Europe's leading cities: members of the European Green Capital Network. The aim of the toolkit is to encourage other cities to take the next steps towards a carbon-neutral Europe.

"Cities and urban areas are Europe's most energy-consuming hotspots, where the bulk of the population lives. But they also have the greatest capacity for innovation and change, and therefore need to lead the way. In times of crisis, renewable energy should not be seen as a burden, but an important element of a successful and sustainable economic recovery", affirms the Director-General for Environment of the European Commission, Mr. Daniel Calleja, in his opening statement to the toolkit. *"Only then will the European Union be able to achieve the climate goals and emissions reduction targets set out in the Paris Agreement."*

The toolkit looks beyond increasing renewable energy sources; it is also about improving energy efficiency and reducing energy demand through infrastructure changes in mobility, housing and other sectors. It explores the sustainable neighbourhoods of Umeå (Sweden), the solar energy strategy in Lisbon (Portugal), the retrofitted energy-efficient public buildings of Ljubljana (Slovenia), and regional cooperation for renewable energy in Nüremberg (Germany). It highlights successes, but more importantly it shows how the cities have achieved their goal and the obstacles they faced, such as opposition to wind park developments or the resistance to change consumption patterns.

A clear message from the European Green Capital Network is that energy transitions can take all shapes and sizes but there is one thing they need to have in common: that the process is inclusive and leaves no-one behind. This means, for example, that cities need to consider the impacts of gentrification when planning housing developments, or the role

of gender when working on mobility (in Umeå women are 15-20% more likely than men to choose sustainable transport for the same journey).

Above all, the Network highlighted the potential for success if cities work on the energy transition together with their citizens. As stated in the toolkit, cities need to make energy everybody's business, since many people and organisations are eager to play a part in the energy transition. All they need is a space to act.

The toolkit is available here. In addition to a 20-page downloadable brochure, you can watch video interviews with the contributing experts and access further energy-related tools and resources for cities.

Background:

The European Green Capital Network (EGCN) is a network of former European Green Capital Award winners and finalists. The Network's role is to:

- share best practice, discuss challenges and create solutions for impactful sustainable urban development in Europe, and
- serve as a platform for change, representing European cities in relevant European and global political processes.

Member cities include: Stockholm, Hamburg, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Nantes, Copenhagen, Bristol, Ljubljana, Essen, Nijmegen, Oslo, Lisbon, Lahti, Amsterdam, Freiburg, Münster, Barcelona, Malmö, Nuremberg, Reykjavik, Frankfurt, Brussels, Glasgow, Umeå, 's-Hertogenbosch, Ghent, Tallinn, Lille, Strasbourg, Dijon, Grenoble and Turin.

During 2018 - 2020, the European Green Capital Network has been holding expert workshops on different urban thematic development visions to share with and inspire other cities. Previously the Network launched the Future-proof Toolkit. Up-coming toolkits will be based on the topics: the European Green Capital year, Zero Waste and Human Scale.

For more information:

- European Green Capital: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/

- European Green Capital Network: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/applying-for-the-award/egc-network
- EGCN press kit available here.
- Twitter: @EU_GreenCapital
- Facebook: EuropeanGreenCapitalAward
- LinkedIn: European Green Capital Award
- YouTube: European Green Capital Secretariat

Images

For a selection of downloadable photos, visit the European Green Capital Network 100% Renewable Toolkit Flickr album.

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