



NEWS RELEASE

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How can cities reduce their waste or use it as a resource? A new European Green Capital Network toolkit paves the way

A new toolkit launched by the European Green Capital Network (EGCN) contains tips, guidance and inspiring stories from experts, to encourage cities to transition to a circular economy and improve waste prevention practices.

From cycling compost heaps to showing packaging producers where their rubbish ends up, cities are full of ingenious ways to reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling. The new toolkit "[How can your city get to less waste, more value?](#)" launched on 08/09/2020 shows that reducing waste is possible, but it will require a big shift in mentality and increased commitment and cooperation across the board. Cities must adopt an inclusive resident-focused approach, and engage with other key stakeholders, including tourists, local companies, advocacy groups, industry and other cities, to achieve this vision. The toolkit also highlights the need to consider the environmental, social and technological aspects of waste prevention and minimisation.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a stark warning that our ecosystem is more fragile than we may think. The resource efficient vision of this toolkit focuses on us all making the best of what our planet has to offer", said Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment. "The wonderful initiatives showcased in this toolkit include: communication campaigns to encourage people to rethink their purchasing habits; reuse centres that give new life to old objects and stimulate the local economy at the same time; and techniques for increasing the efficiency of recycling, such as working with manufacturers to ensure that their packaging doesn't end up in landfills. These inspiring examples are food for thought, not just for other European cities, but for regional and national governments, and even for us at the European level. The EU supports cities and Member States with the green transition through a number of instruments including the Recovery Fund."

The toolkit provides insight into the pillars of a resource efficient future: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Recycling, which in itself, does not reduce waste levels, should always be the last resort. Positive outcomes of this approach go way beyond waste management, by strengthening community relations, creating business ties and bolstering the local economy.

The toolkit highlights the importance of communication, innovation and inspiration. Actions taken by cities are showcased, such as multifaceted communication campaigns (Ljubljana), working with producers to tackle packaging waste (Copenhagen), school and family competitions to make waste reduction fun (Strasbourg), and encouraging tourists and the tourist industry to rethink their use of plastic (Vitoria-Gasteiz). The toolkit highlights successes, but more importantly shows how cities achieved their goals and the obstacles they faced along the way.

Above all, the network highlights the potential for the success of having less waste and more value in cities, if circular economy and waste prevention practices are incorporated jointly with their citizens.

The [toolkit](#) includes a downloadable brochure, video interviews with the contributing EGCN experts and access to further 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, Amsterdam, Freiburg, Münster, Barcelona, Malmö, Nuremberg, Reykjavik, Frankfurt, Brussels, Glasgow, Umeå, 's-Hertogenbosch, Ghent, Lahti, Tallinn, Lille, Strasbourg, Dijon, Grenoble and Turin.

Between 2018 and 2020, the network has been holding thematic expert workshops on different urban development visions to share with and inspire other cities.

The network has launched three other toolkits exploring the topics of [Future-Proof](#) and [100% Renewable](#) cities, and guidance on [becoming the next European Green Capital](#). An upcoming toolkit will focus on the topic of creating Human-Scale Cities.

For more information:

[European Green Capital website](#)

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EGCN press kit is available [here](#).

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