

Press release

For immediate release

ICLEI member cities triumph once again as Vitoria-Gasteiz and Nantes announced as European Green Capitals for 2012 and 2013

Stockholm Sweden, October 22, 2010 – The European Green Capital Award winners for 2012 and 2013 were announced at the inaugural European Green Capital Conference in Stockholm Sweden, on 21 October. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for the Environment revealed the winners at a gala dinner with the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz Spain crowned the 2012 green capital and Nantes France, to have the honour for 2013.

Five of the six shortlisted cities are ICLEI members: Nantes France, Vitoria-Gasteiz and Barcelona Spain, Malmö Sweden and Reykjavík Iceland. Nuremburg Germany, completes the list. The evaluation panel was made up of a group of internationally recognised experts in the environmental field, while the jury, which finally selected the winners, included representatives from ICLEI, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, the Committee of the Regions, the Covenant of Mayors and the European Environmental Bureau.

Vitoria- Gasteiz and Nantes follow in the footsteps of fellow ICLEI members and current Green Capital Stockholm Sweden, and the 2011 winner Hamburg Germany. Regional Director of the ICLEI European Secretariat, Gino Van Begin was a member of the jury and congratulated both the winners and those nominated, saying it was, “an extremely difficult decision making process with all six shortlisted cities presenting high quality applications. It gives encouragement to all medium sized cities in Europe that Vitoria-Gasteiz and Nantes are crowned the Green Capitals for 2012 and 2013.”

“Green inside – green outside” was the slogan for 2012 winner **Vitoria-Gasteiz**. The city impressed the panel with a long-term coherent set of policies and actions at local level. Vitoria-Gasteiz has a high proportion of green public areas, giving the entire population the opportunity to live within 300m of open green space. Half of the trips made in Vitoria-Gasteiz are on foot, with only 37 percent made by car. Also, an ambitious objective aimed at a reduction of domestic water consumption to below 100 litres per capita per day has been largely successful so far.

The 2013 Green Capital, **Nantes Métropole**, is a member of the Covenant of Mayors and Local Agenda 21. The French city caught the panel’s attention by aiming to cut its CO₂ emissions by a quarter by 2020. Named ‘the most liveable city in Europe’ by Time Magazine, Nantes won the CIVITAS Initiative 2009 award ahead of 57 other cities, for the development of an integrated and sustainable transport policy. Investments in new tramways, bus services, electric cars and bicycle infrastructure are foreseen. Since 1994, Nantes has also spent 300 million euro developing a sustainable water management system.

Each of the shortlisted cities excelled in different areas with **Barcelona** scoring marks for its efficient water treatment plants and efforts to raise public awareness of water shortages, as well as its low individual motorised mode-share and ambitious urban transport network. **Malmö** was praised for its transformation from a former industrial city with many brownfields towards a new, green efficient and dynamic city, thanks to a string of successful projects.

Reykjavík's ambition when it comes to protecting its air quality is commendable. The Icelandic capital also boasts impressive measures aimed at reducing transport emissions. **Nuremberg** is a leader in municipal recycling.

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Background:

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

The **European Green Capital Award** is the result of an initiative taken by 15 European cities (Tallinn, Helsinki, Riga, Vilnius, Berlin, Warsaw, Madrid, Ljubljana, Prague, Vienna, Kiel, Kotka, Dartford, Tartu & Glasgow) and the Association of Estonian cities on 15 May 2006 in Tallinn, Estonia. Their green vision was translated into a joint Memorandum of Understanding establishing an award to reward cities that are leading the way with environmentally friendly urban living. Currently, more than 40 major European cities, including 21 EU capitals support the initiative.

The overarching message that the award scheme aims to communicate is that Europeans have a right to live in healthy urban areas, and cities should therefore strive to improve the quality of life of their citizens and reduce their impact on the global environment. This message is brought together in the Award's slogan "Green cities – fit for life".

More information:

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

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