

Press release

For immediate release

City of Almada wins prestigious European Mobility Week Award 2010

Freiburg, Germany, 17 March 2011 - Almada, Portugal, member of ICLEI – Local Governments for sustainability, has been named winner of the prestigious European Mobility Week Award 2010. European Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potocnik presented the award to the Portuguese city at a ceremony in Brussels, Belgium, on 14 March 2011.

An independent jury of experts deemed Almada the winner for strongly promoting alternatives to private vehicle use, and innovatively highlighting the positive impact of other means of transport on public health and the environment. Speaking at the ceremony, Commissioner Potocnik said, “Too many Europeans rely on their cars even for short journeys. The effects of increased pollution and congestion are harmful for both the environment and our health. European Mobility Week shows how local authorities can encourage people to use other ways of travelling and in doing so improve their health and well-being.”

The coastal city, which has been an ICLEI member since 1999, introduced dozens of long-term measures during the week, including making improvements to road infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and held a week of activities to promote sustainable transport as a means to improve health and well-being. On 18 September the city held a major event titled “Mobility Festival Day”, which saw an impressive mix of films, exhibitions, street markets, demonstrations of electrical vehicles, bicycle fairs, concerts, sport activities, dance and street performances, bike sprints, workshops and street art demonstrations. The city also increased the number of bicycle parking spaces available and created charging stations for bikes and electric vehicles. For the required “Car Free Day” Almada converted the historic and commercial centre of Cacilhas into a pedestrian zone.

The jury assessed thirty applications and shortlisted ten local authorities before deciding on Almada as overall winner. ICLEI member Riga, Latvia, and the city of Murcia, Spain, were runners up in the competition. Riga focused its plan on promoting sustainable mobility on cycling and encouraging citizens to suggest where potential improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure could be made. The city also held competitions, exhibitions, information programmes, retro cycling tours, electric vehicles promotions, demonstrations on air quality measurement and traffic safety, art performances, concerts and street games on the theme of transport and health.

A record 2,221 European towns and cities officially participated in the 2010 European Mobility Week. The theme of the week was ‘Travel Smarter, Live Better’, emphasising the benefits of active and sustainable mobility on citizens’ health and well-being. European Mobility Week 2011 will be held from 16 - 22 September and will focus on Alternative Mobility.

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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.

European Mobility Week is an awareness raising campaign that promotes the use of public transport, cycling, and walking and encourages European cities to invest in the necessary sustainable transport infrastructures. The overall aim of the campaign is to encourage public awareness of the need to act against pollution caused by the increase in motorised traffic in the urban environment.

More information:

Website: www.iclei-europe.org

Website: www.mobilityweek.eu

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