

# EUROPEAN CITIES IN GREEN CAPITAL AWARDS



Since 4 out of 5 Europeans now live in an urban area, it is safe to say that being green and keeping to the fashion of being green are of huge importance. The European attitude towards the environment is continually improving, as cycle lanes are now being applauded instead of scorned at by angry drivers and the emergence of parks is far more popular than the emergence of a smoking factory. The ultimate proof of European cities' aspirations to be green is their entering into the European Commission's Green Capital Awards, which so far have 8 nominees for the gold medal set to be given out in February next year.

The evaluation panel shortlisted the eight nominees out of 35 European cities to support their applications for the title as European Green Capital 2010 and 2011: Bristol, Amsterdam, Freiburg, Munster, Oslo, Stockholm, Hamburg and Copenhagen. It is no coincidence that 2 of the nominees happen to be regarded as cycle centres of Europe. Along with Vienna, there are no better places for urban cycling than Amsterdam or Copenhagen. As Britain's only representative, Bristol, prides itself on the amount of open park space it has. There are now 450 open parks in Bristol, which provides a stern comparison to a host of traffic-filled British cities. The presence of German cities confirms the nation's reputation as being one of environmental sensitivity.

Starting in 2010, one European city will be selected each year as the European Green Capital of the year. The nominees are responsible for submitting applications to be the greenest city of the continent and have to send applications to a chosen committee. The panel decides whose application is most worthy of the award and grants the title to the greenest city. The winner's award is presented in Brussels. It seems that certain cities are keen to boost their green reputation, as it looks excellent to visitors. There is a great stress on being green in today's market.

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