

# European Green Capital Open call for 2026

Will your city be the next European Green Capital?

The European Commission has launched the new competition round to nominate the European Green Capital for 2026.

The title of European Green Capital is awarded annually to a European city with a population of over 100 000 inhabitants for its commitment to environmental sustainability. It is linked to the title of European Green Leaf, awarded to cities between 20 000 and 99 999 inhabitants.

Is your city becoming cleaner and healthier, while inspiring others to do the same?

Deadline for applications is **30 April 2024**.



## Why apply?

Being the European Green Capital makes citizens proud and spurs local action on environmental projects, making the city more attractive as a destination and a better place to live. The application process helps generate self-promotion and gives the opportunity to compare actions with other cities. Finalists and winners also become part of a network of frontrunning cities that exchange knowledge and best practices.

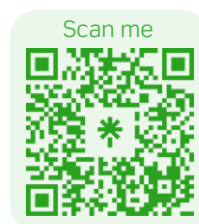
The European Green Capital 2026 comes with a financial prize of EUR 600 000 to help environmental action on the ground and encourage an even more ambitious vision.

The award also contributes to the dissemination and exchange of green actions among European cities supporting key EU policies, such as the [European Green Deal](#), the [New European Bauhaus](#) and the [Zero Pollution Action Plan](#). In addition, it complements the [NetZero Cities Mission](#) to deliver tangible benefits for citizens in several areas.



## How to apply?

[Information and competition rules of the European Green Capital and the European Green Leaf](#)



## Evaluation Process

The Award criteria are grouped around **seven environmental and climate focus areas**:

- 1 Air Quality
- 2 Water
- 3 Biodiversity, Green Areas & Sustainable Land Use
- 4 Waste & Circular Economy
- 5 Noise
- 6 Climate Change: Mitigation
- 7 Climate Change: Adaptation

A panel of seven independent experts will carry out a technical assessment of the eligible applications received. Afterwards, the Commission will establish several short-listed cities that will present their application and action plan to a jury. The jury, chaired by the Commission, will select the winner based on the following award criteria:

- 1 The technical assessment of the environmental performance of the applicant city.
- 2 The applicant city's overall strategy, vision and commitment to sustainability, alongside short- and long-term implementation plans.
- 3 The applicant city's communication strategy and actions for its role as a European Green Capital.

The title will be awarded at a festive ceremony in Valencia, Spain, in **October 2024**.

## European Green Capital 2026 - Key Dates

- December 2023: Competition opens
- February 2024: Online applicant city workshop – how to make a strong application
- April 2024: Competition closes on 30/04/24 at 23:59 CEST (GMT+2)
- May-June 2024: Assessment of applications by the expert panel
- July 2024: Announcement of finalist cities
- October 2024: Jury presentation and awards ceremony in Valencia

## What do past winners say?

Get inspired by other cities' journeys, discover what it means to get involved in the awards, and learn from previous winners.

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“It will be the cities that implement the EU Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level [that win]. The European Green Capitals are the pioneers, bringing leadership in creating sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities of the future.”

Mihhail Kõlvart, Mayor of Tallinn, Estonia,  
[European Green Capital 2023](#)

“Valencia is the first major Mediterranean city to become an European Green Capital. It is a source of pride, but also a great responsibility to position ourselves as a lighthouse city for green policies in Europe. Being the European Green Capital is an incentive in the participatory construction of our city model: clean, healthy, sustainable, entrepreneurial and inclusive.”

M<sup>a</sup> José Catalá, Mayor of Valencia, Spain,  
[European Green Capital 2024](#)



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“Being a European Green Capital is extraordinary. It allows a city to bring many local actors on board. Already the application process allowed us to structure many aspects.”

Éric Piolle, Mayor of Grenoble, France  
[European Green Capital 2022](#)



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Publications Office  
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The European Green Capital and the European Green Leaf awards are managed by the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission.

Manuscript completed in December 2023

This document should not be considered as representative of the European Commission's official position.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023

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PDF KH-02-23-347-EN-N ISBN 978-92-68-10008-0 doi:10.2779/526849