

# European Green Leaf Open call for 2026

Will your city be the next European Green Leaf winner?

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

The title of European Green Leaf is awarded annually to one or two European cities with a population between 20 000 and 99 999 inhabitants for their commitment to environmental sustainability. It is linked to the title of European Green Capital, awarded to cities as of 100 000 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 Leaf 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 Leaf comes with a financial prize of EUR 200 000 per winning city (max. two cities per year) intended to help environmental action on the ground and contribute to achieving the city's sustainability 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



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A panel of seven independent experts will carry out a technical assessment of the eligible applications received. Afterwards, the Commission will select the finalists that will present to their vision on the city's environmental governance to a jury, along with their communication strategy and actions for the year 2026 as European Green Leaf.

The jury, chaired by the Commission, will select the winner, or winners, 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 Leaf.

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

## European Green Leaf 2026 - Key Dates

- December 2023: Competition opens
- February 2024: Online applicant city workshop – how to make a strong application
- April 2024: Competition closes on 30/04/2024 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
- October 2024: Awards ceremony in Valencia

## What do past winners say?

“It is a great honor and a great responsibility to be a Green Leaf City in 2024. It obliges us to keep up the good work and to share our experiences with other cities. Winning the prize has made it possible to give even better support for citizen driven initiatives for sustainability and to activate the widespread engagement needed to handle the climate challenges. And to accelerate the transition of our local businesses.”

Benedikte Kiær, Mayor of Elsinore, Denmark



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“The European green leaf title is an excellent opportunity to actively encourage our city, its citizens, visitors and everyone who co-shapes our local community to think even greener and more sustainably. It is important that each of us, and all of us together, continue to change our habits in all areas and write a successful story together – for green Velenje and for a green life for all of us.”

Peter Dermol, Mayor of Velenje, Slovenia



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