

Press release

For immediate release

## **Train of Ideas rolls into Brussels just five days before ICLEI European Convention kicks off**

*Brussels, Belgium, 7 September 2011* - It's full steam ahead for European Green Capital 2011 Hamburg's Train of Ideas, which arrives in Brussels today as part of its six-month tour of 18 European cities. The train arrives in time for the start of the ICLEI European Convention, which takes place from 12-14 September and features a visit to this rolling exhibition entitled "Visions for the Cities of the Future".

Marking a departure from traditional approaches to promoting sustainability, the train is reaching thousands of European citizens and showing them that cities of the future can be both attractive and sustainable. Its exhibition presents best practices from Hamburg and many other ICLEI member cities. In Oslo (Norway), the city demonstrated how Europe can light its streets intelligently and in Copenhagen (Denmark), Nordhavnen, a model district for sustainable building practices and cycling was showcased.

Hamburg is among the main supporters of the ICLEI European Convention. All European Green Capital winning cities will share their views at the Convention, giving participants the chance to learn from the many innovative initiatives of Hamburg (Germany), Nantes (France), Stockholm (Sweden) and Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain). Around 300 representatives from various European cities and institutions will discuss the Europe 2020 Strategy and exchange on what is needed to make Europe environmentally sustainable, economically smart and socially inclusive.

European Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potočnik, recognises the value of the Train of Ideas, describing it as, "a wonderful expression of European values. The European Green Capital Award is all about sharing. If we want our cities to change for the better then we cannot keep all the good ideas to ourselves. Hamburg has much to teach other cities."

The Commissioner will speak at the Convention to outline the Europe 2020 Strategy and overall policy objectives of the EU and its Member States. He will then discuss the issue of whether these are sufficiently sustainable to guarantee a secure foundation for this and future generations with a panel including Heide Rühle, Member of the European Parliament and Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions.

On the morning of 14 September, the Convention will conclude with a political message to the EU institutions on the role of local governments in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

**Word count: 376**

**All members of the press are welcome to attend the ICLEI European Convention free of charge. For more information and to receive accreditation visit the [Press Corner](#) and follow ICLEI Europe on [Twitter](#).**

## **Background:**

**ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has over 1,200 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 Convention is supported by the Brussels Capital Region, Hamburg European Green Capital 2011 and the Metropolitan Council of Dunkerque and in cooperation with ICLEI member representation offices in Brussels.

**Europe 2020** is the EU's growth strategy, made up of three pillars – smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. The EU has set five ambitious targets based on these pillars, relating to employment, innovation, education, social/inclusion and climate/energy, all to be reached by the year 2020.

The **European Green Capital Award (EGCA)** recognises and rewards local efforts to improve the environment, the economy and the quality of life in cities. The EGCA is given each year to a city, not necessarily a capital, which is leading the way in environmentally friendly urban living and which can act as a role-model to inspire other cities. Vitoria-Gasteiz will be European Green Capital in 2012 and the title will pass to Nantes in 2013. Applications for the 2014 award are now open.

## **More information:**

Website: [www.convention2011.iclei-europe.org](http://www.convention2011.iclei-europe.org)

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