

Brussels, 7 February 2007

Commissioner Dimas presents European Mobility Week awards to the cities of Léon, Budapest and Bologna

European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas today presented the 2007 European Mobility Week award to the Spanish city of Léon. The two runners-up were Budapest and Bologna. European Mobility Week (EMW), supported by the European Commission and held annually, promotes sustainable mobility in towns and cities by encouraging use of low- or non-polluting alternatives to private cars, such as walking, cycling, public transport and car-sharing. The introduction of permanent measures to facilitate these alternatives is a condition of participation. The awards were given for the best contribution to last year's EMW, focused on combating climate change, which attracted 1,322 participating cities with a combined population of over 200 million. Léon was chosen as the winner by an independent jury of experts for both the breadth of its EMW activities and its strong communications strategy on sustainable mobility. Commissioner Dimas presented the awards at a workshop held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels to prepare European Mobility Week 2007, which will take place from 16 to 22 September.

"European Mobility Week makes a major contribution to improving public health and quality of life in urban areas through the permanent measures it promotes to achieve sustainable mobility and activities to raise public awareness," Commissioner Dimas commented. "The steady increase in the number of municipalities taking part in European Mobility Week reflects our citizens' growing desire to be able to move around their towns and cities quickly, safely and without polluting the air they breathe. Léon, Budapest and Bologna have all implemented excellent initiatives, and I congratulate Léon in particular for its winning contribution."

Selection process

The 2007 European Mobility Week awards have been given for the quality and comprehensiveness of the actions undertaken by a local authority, its strategic approach to communicating and promoting EMW to citizens and the media, and the innovativeness of the permanent measures implemented.

Forty-five municipalities put themselves forward for the award. The entries were judged by an independent panel of seven experts in sustainable mobility issues and climate change. Besides selecting Léon, Budapest and Bologna as the three best entries, the jury also recognised examples of best practice from five other cities: Nantes (France), Elblag (Poland), Cascais (Portugal), Östersund (Sweden) and Glasgow (UK).

Achievements of the three finalists

Léon: Léon impressed the jury by its ability to cover a wide range of important topics dedicated to sustainable mobility and climate change during a single week. Each day of Mobility Week was dedicated to a different topic and many exhibitions and awareness-raising events were organised, with children one of the main target groups. Léon also introduced several permanent measures to facilitate sustainable mobility in connection with Mobility Week, including an information centre on renewable energy, a cycle route linking the

university campus to other parts of the city, an online information service on urban transport and a new access ramp for disabled people.

Budapest: The jury was particularly impressed by Budapest's achievements in terms of getting the public involved, as well as the exceptional quality of its partnerships with stakeholders and the effectiveness of its communications strategy. Mobility Week has become the biggest environment and sustainability event in the Hungarian capital – a green festival attracting over 110,000 visitors on car-free day and more than 40,000 at other events. It launched six permanent measures, most of them aimed at improving public transport services.

Bologna: Bologna was chosen as a finalist for its well-planned activities prepared in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, ranging from public transport providers to universities and other regional governments. Mobility Week also marked the conclusion of a public forum involving more than 300 key stakeholders and members of the public in elaborating a new master plan for urban traffic. Bologna inaugurated 21 new clean buses and actively promoted alternative transport modes through the appointment of mobility managers in private businesses.

Background

European Mobility Week is coordinated by the three European networks of cities, EUROCITIES, Climate Alliance and Eurocités, and supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment.

Launched in 2002, EMW has seen participation grow steadily to 1,322 towns and cities in 38 countries last year, with a combined population of over 200 million. These included around 40 municipalities in non-EU countries, not only in Europe but also in Asia, Latin America and Canada.

European Mobility Week 2006 formed part of the European Commission's wider "You control climate change" campaign to raise public awareness of climate change and what everyone can do to help combat it.

Further information:

European Mobility Week <http://www.mobilityweek-europe.org/index.php?lang=en>

You control climate change <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/index.htm>