

Environment: Gävle wins European Mobility Week Award 2009

Gävle has won the 2009 European Mobility Week Award. The Swedish coastal city was judged by an independent panel of experts to have done the most to promote clean mobility initiatives during European Mobility Week 2009. Leon in Spain and the Croatian city of Ivanic-Grad were runners-up. The awards were presented by Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik at a ceremony in Brussels last night.

Commissioner Potočnik said: "The pressures on our environment force us to accept that we cannot take mobility for granted, and that we must also look for new ways in which we can be mobile – and in doing so, actively help our planet, our own health and our economies. European Mobility Week is the perfect expression of this realisation."

European Mobility Week 2009

More than 200 million people across Europe took part in Mobility Week 2009, held between 16 and 22 September, in 2,181 European towns and cities. The theme was 'Improving City Climates', so events focused on local level efforts to tackle climate change. The award rewards the local authority that is deemed to have done most in raising public awareness of sustainable mobility issues and implementing projects to achieve a shift towards sustainable urban transport. The winning city was chosen by an independent panel of transport experts who have assessed 29 applications and shortlisted 11 local authorities which they considered had performed outstandingly well during EMW 2009.

Winning entry: Gävle

The Baltic coastal city of Gävle promoted mobility week through a mix of traditional activities and new social media. Activities included workplace seminars promoting sustainable travel; free chocolate for commuters at the central station and the 'Gästrikeloppet Cycle Race 2009' on Car Free Day. Gävle also had its own blogger in 20-year old Ingrid Bergström Nilsson, who travelled round the county on public transport reporting on her adventures. Local media students produced a video diary of the week's events which was utilised as a promotional tool. Gävle also introduced dedicated parking spaces for electric cars with facilities for recharging batteries, and new bike racks at bus stops to encourage active travel.

Runner-up: Ivanic-Grad

The small town of Ivanic-Grad in Croatia, situated 30 kilometres east of Zagreb, was commended for promoting sustainable urban mobility with a modest budget. Their programme highlighted broad environmental and mobility concerns through a series of themed days. These included 'Environment Day' with a presentation of a local waste management project; a 'Mobility and Health' day with free blood pressure testing for citizens; 'Energy Efficiency Day' with an info point presenting Ivanic-Grad's energy-saving projects and 'Accessibility for All' which focused on the needs of the disabled. Ivanic-Grad also committed to adopting an environmental monitoring programme for noise, air, water and soil quality. This is the third time a Croatian city has been a finalist in the Mobility Week awards – Koprivnica was the overall winner in 2007.

Runner-up: León

León in central Spain offered a comprehensive programme of activities to promote sustainable urban mobility. The jury were particularly impressed by the degree of cooperation and consultation that had gone on with city stakeholders including local politicians, commercial partners, schools and non-profit associations. Activities included a 'Street Gym' promoting physical activity; pollutant and noise tests on vehicles carried out by a mobile inspection unit, and an outdoor screening of Al Gore's documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth'. There was also a Car Free Day with free public transport. To mark its commitment to sustainable urban mobility, permanent measures implemented by León included new 30 kph speed restrictions in the Old City and University neighbourhoods, and a new public bicycle loan system in close proximity to a busy hostel.

European Mobility Week 2010

EMW 2010 will be held from 16 to 22 September and will focus on the links between transport and health, under the slogan "Travel smarter, live better".

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