



Urban Green Days 2005 raises awareness of Climate Protection across Europe

The European Commission has reacted to the rising concern on climate change by launching several initiatives on the international, national and local levels. Knowing that urban areas have a direct impact and key role in protecting the climate, the European Commission has established climate as a main theme for Urban Green Days 2005. UGD links decentralised activities organised by cities and towns aiming to raise the public's awareness of urban environmental issues and increasing participation in initiatives that will improve the quality of the environment. Urban Green Days take place during May and June, in conjunction with Brussels European Green Week (31 May-3 June) and the UN World Environment Day (5 June). Over 100 UGD activities have already been registered at www.urbangreendays.org.

The world's climate is changing. According to the UK based Climate Group, a majority of the world's climate experts believe most of the warming is caused by human activities, which emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The atmosphere is warming at a rate not seen for 10,000 years. The impacts of climate change are potentially devastating. For example, if no action is taken, economic losses from extreme weather are predicted to be larger than GDP by 2065. The European Commission, also with the support of local governments aims to reduce damages by providing education which will achieve positive behaviour changes in Europe.

Of the over 100 Urban Green Days activities in 20 countries already registered, each activity highlights environmental issues of high importance in each city and town's agenda. Not astonishing, many aim to contribute to climate protection. For example, in the Hämeenlinna region in Finland, one Environmental Day activity will be a panel session entitled, "How to survive climate change". The panel, open to the public will address the use of city bikes, which have already been taken into use by local politicians as a mode of transportation. Another creative UGD called Ice Cube Action will take place in Győr, Hungary. In March a two cubic meter ice cube was placed in a small house with thermal insulation. Before it is reopened in June, citizens will be asked to guess how much ice has melted before the answer is revealed before their eyes.

All Urban Green Day events are centrally recorded in a database on the official website, www.urbangreendays.org. The fully searchable database contains information in English and a range of other languages. Urban Green Days is a European Commission, Directorate General Environment initiative coordinated by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. The initiative also receives the support of National Partners and Promoters that are Local Agenda 21 Coordinators, local government associations and local governments present in 20 EU countries. ICLEI supports local governments, the media and other actors with a range of services.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

European Secretariat

Leopoldring 3

79098 Freiburg / Germany

Phone: +49-761 / 36 89 2-63 or -0, fax: +49-761 / 36 89 2-29

E-mail: urbangreendays@iclei-europe.org

www.urbangreendays.org