



TALLINN — EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL 2023

Mid-Term Report



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INTRO

The European Green Capital year gave Tallinn the opportunity to bring attention to environmental issues, test new green solutions in the city and launch new projects focusing on environment and inclusivity.

The European Green Capital year has helped to accelerate the green transition initiatives in Tallinn that already underway and has laid the foundations for a number of new approaches. Flagship projects and innovative actions of various size and scale were implemented that gave Tallinn the opportunity to learn, experiment and discover best sustainable solutions that can be developed further.

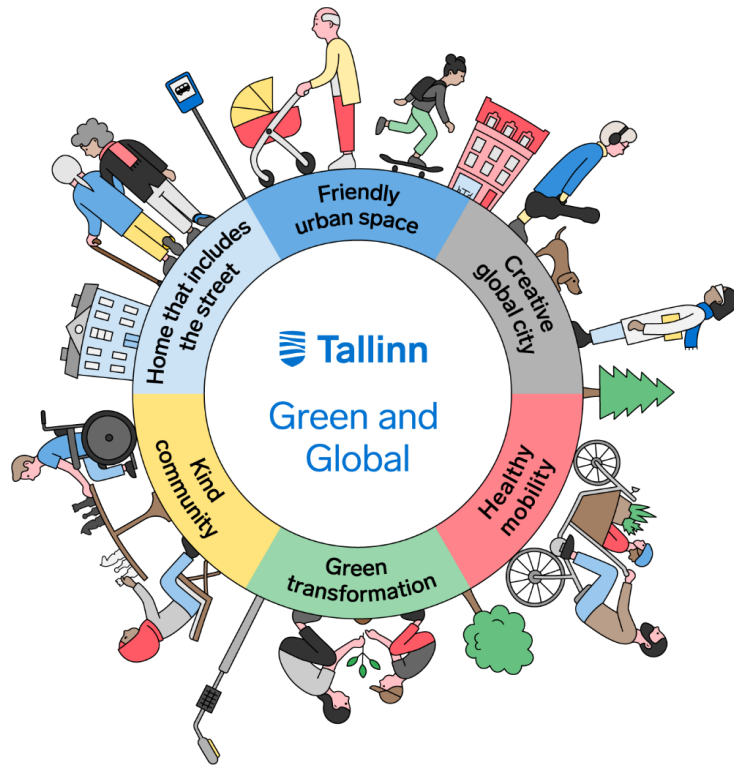
The European Green Capital Year also provided more opportunities for citizen participation.

We wish to further involve local communities in city development, find opportunities to support green innovation, develop environmentally friendly modes of travel, such as cycle lanes and public transport, and improve circular economy. In addition, we also wish to help citizens better understand the importance of environmental protection.



Photo: Tõnu Tunnel

EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL 2023 TALLINN



In the Green Capital year, Tallinn's main themes are biodiversity, green innovation, climate and sustainable governance.

Tallinn's main objectives for European Green Capital 2023 have been to:

- initiate change and new sustainable activities
- accelerate the sustainable processes, eco-innovation and green growth
- engage citizens and organisations in becoming more sustainable and bring the city closer to the citizens
- develop city space which considers the needs of all citizens

BIODIVERSITY:

PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY AND INCREASING URBAN GREENERY

This objective contributes to the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and its urban ecosystems target in the EC's proposal for a Nature Restoration Law; the Environment action programme to 2030, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030, the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan, the EU Environmental Noise Directive, and the Green City Accord.

TALLINN'S ACTIVITIES:

Creating at least two new protected areas in locations of strategic importance. There have been constant discussions with landowners in the areas in 2023. Tallinn has made a proposal for the Ministry of Climate of Estonia to start the process of creating a protected area in Kakumäe. In addition, two linear parks (Klindipark and the Pollinator Highway) are being created to connect Tallinn's green areas with each other and support biodiversity.

Increasing the number of community and learning gardens in Tallinn. As of 2024, there are over 190 community and learning gardens in all of Tallinn's districts, 33 of them community gardens (in 2020 there were only 10). During the last five years, more than one hundred and fifty public schools and kindergartens and twelve private educational institutions have created an educational garden with the support of the city. At the Pollinator Highway, the first communal garden of Tallinn „Pelgusaed“ will open next spring.

Creating first urban food forests. Tallinn planted nine urban food forests in 2023 in more populated districts like Lasnamäe, Mustamäe and Põhja-Tallinn with the goal of creating more them in the following years.

Increasing urban greenery in the city centre. Within the project „Green Tracks“, Tallinn planted over 400 trees (300 of them shade trees) in areas that needed more greenery or shade. New solutions were tried in landscaping: several trees that were growing in the middle of construction sites were replanted and the intensity of mowing grass was reduced during the hot summer period. These practices will be continued in the future. 14 new flower meadows were planted around the city, new parklets that provide greenery in parking spaces, new landscaping was created at three major intersections.

Supporting the co-creation and local initiatives and projects related to environmental awareness. We held several educational programs for children (Nature and environmental conservation theme year in kindergartens and schools in Tallinn) and adults (special environmental programs in Botanical Gardens, Open University and Tallinn's Library). Exhibition „City with trees“ at National Museum of Nature was co-funded by Tallinn – European Green Capital 2023. More than 35 activities and clean-ups were carried out in the biodiversity action days program through collaboration and engagement of citizens, which will also continue in the coming year. Regional campaign Save our Sea brought together more than 156 000 people around the Baltic Sea to care for their home sea.

Development of innovative solutions to raise environmental awareness, including implementation of technological solutions. A technique that had never before been used in Tallinn – trees that were growing in the middle of construction sites were replanted (plus a new pocket park was made from replanted trees). Tallinn was also the first city in the Baltics to use TreeTube technology in planting trees to places with very limited underground space. Several workshops using new technology were held in 2023, for example the VR Showcase of nature-based interventions in Tallinn's participation hub Avalinn (project GoGreenRoutes).

BIODIVERSITY:

PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY AND INCREASING URBAN GREENERY

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

[The Pollinator Highway, 1st phase](#)

The development of the first stage of Pollinator Highway covers mainly the North Tallinn district. In the Year of EGC, the building of **Tallinn's first communal garden Pelguaed** was started. The garden will open in spring 2024. Procurement process for the first stage of Pollinator Highway has also been completed. The „Place Buzz“ installations of Tallinn EGC 23 at the Pollinator Highway made it to the finals at the prestigious New European Bauhaus competition. A Smithsonian Gardens exhibition on biodiversity was opened with the US Embassy in Tallinn.

[The pollinator-friendly plant e-catalogue](#)

The catalogue rates 900 plants according to their value for pollinators, allowing gardeners and city developers make better choices for green spaces. In May, an advertising campaign introducing pollinator-friendly landscaping and the catalogue was launched. Other activities using this catalogue were the biodiversity European Day, planting of 14 flower meadows in the city, handing out signs for not mowing the lawn, handing out pollinator-friendly flower seeds.

[Regional campaign SOS - Save Our Sea](#)

The campaign took place from August 31 (the Baltic Sea Day) to September 16 (the World Clean-Up Day). More than 156,00 people from 45 municipalities along the Baltic Sea took part in the activities of the campaign, co-organized by European Green Capital Tallinn, the city of Helsinki, John Nurminen Foundation and the environmental organization Let's Do It World. We had 91 events in 45 municipalities of 10 countries and territories. In Tallinn, over 15 000 people participated in the events, such as Seminar on Baltic Sea biodiversity, Baltic Sea family day, Going to Zero exhibition, Life in the Baltic Sea program for schools, Several clean-up days on beaches. In addition, an advertising campaign was held August 23 – September 16.

[GoGreenRoutes](#)

In cooperation with the the local community, the landscape architectural sketch of the Vormsi green area was analyzed and according to the community's feedback tenders for the design and construction were prepared. We are progressing to plan the commencement of construction activities in the upcoming spring-summer. Several workshops were also held within the GoGreenRoutes project, for example, the VR showcase of nature-based interventions in Tallinn's participation hub Avalinn.

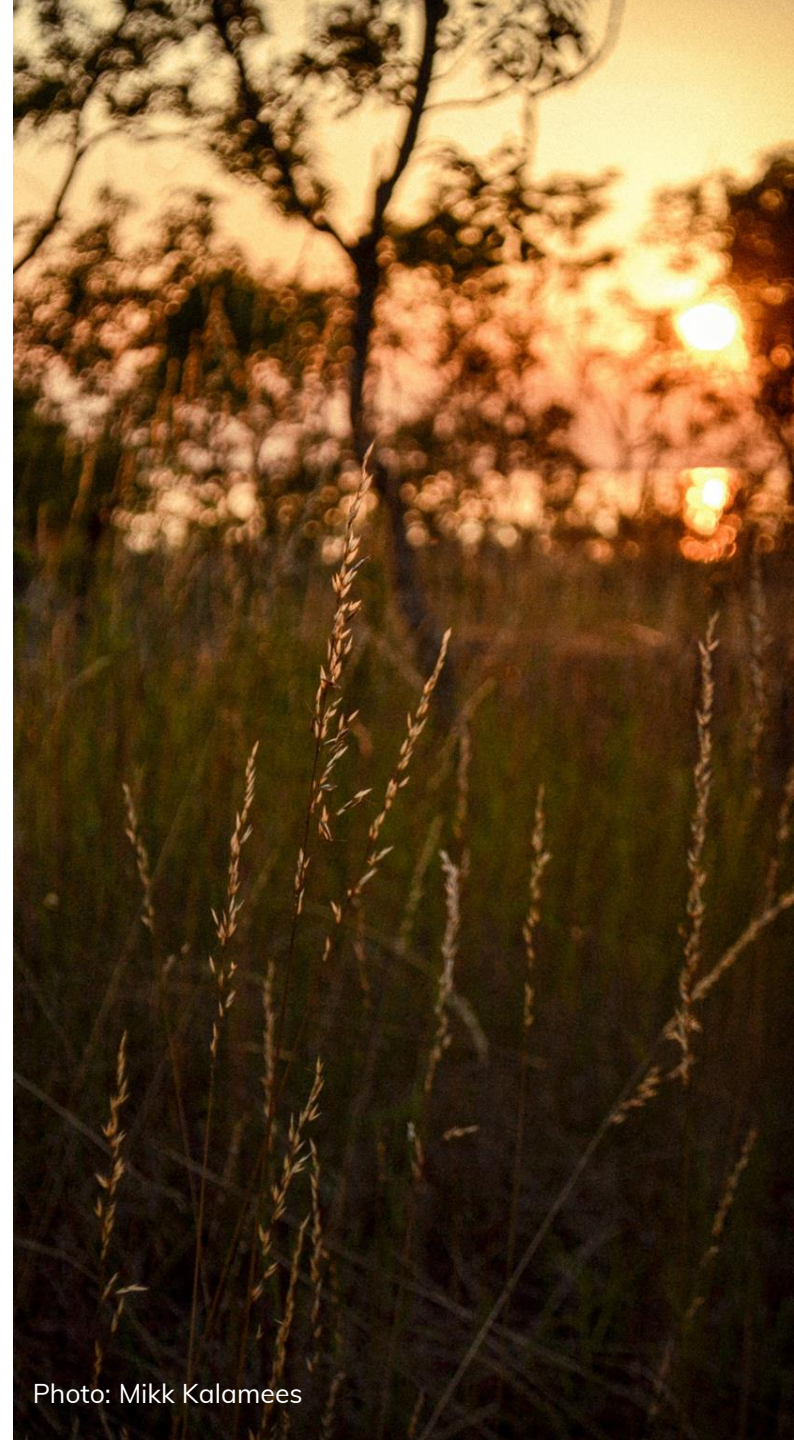


Photo: Mikk Kalamees

BIODIVERSITY:

PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY AND INCREASING URBAN GREENERY



SELECTED EVENTS

LOCAL

January-December 2023: Special Program Of The European Green Capital in Tallinn Botanical Gardens

February-October 2023: Biodiversity Action Days

6th May: Let's Do It - Garbage Collection action day in various green areas in Tallinn

9th May: Europe Day: Greenfest dedicated to biodiversity organized with Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission representation and European Parliament Liaison Office in Estonia

11th-13th May: Biotoopia Conference

10th June: Nature Conservation Fair

August 2023: Action Days – Restoration of Pääsküla Bog and Paljassaare dry meadows

September 2022-June 2023: Nature And Environmental Theme-Year in Tallinn's Schools and Kindergartens

October 2023-April 2024: Exhibition "City with Trees" at the National Museum of Nature

3rd-19th November: Environmental film program at the Black Nights Film Festival

INTERNATIONAL

31st August - 16th September 2023: International Baltic Sea Campaign "Save Our Sea"

GREY TO GREEN:

INCREASING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

This focus area aligns with the EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, the 8th Environment Action Programme, the EU Adaptation Strategy, EU Circular Economy Action Plan, as well as the New European Bauhaus and the New EU Urban Mobility Framework, and the Covenant of Mayors energy policy initiative of the European Commission.

TALLINN'S ACTIVITIES:

In March, Tallinn joined **EU's Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change**.

Supporting healthy mobility of children. Tallinn provides €100 for a school child to buy a bicycle if they obtain a bicycle licence and an additional €25 for a safety helmet. By June 2023, there were 325 applicants.

First Robotex Green City Entrepreneurial Challenge for children and youth. 100+ children aged 7-12 years participated in the competition „My Car Free City“.

Supporting the **construction of bicycle storage facilities** near apartment buildings. In 2023 the budget was 165 000 euros and will be 315 000 euros in 2024. In addition, Tallinn published [instructions](#) for apartment building co-ops.

Reorganizing four waste stations into circular-economy centres, with the main emphasis on reuse rooms and repair workshops. The goal is for more than 65% of waste to be recycled by 2035.

In 2023 we started several pilot projects in cooperation with reuse organizations and opened a sewing repair workshop, a wood repair workshop, a reuse room and general repair workshop and reuse room in our waste centres. Tallinn's first circular economy centre is in construction, due to open in autumn 2024.

In June the OECD circular economy roundtable was held in Tallinn, where we presented the [OECD Tallinn circular economy report](#), that will be the basis for the city's circular economy strategy due in 2024.

Building Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce the negative impact of climate change. Tallinn was part of LIFE UrbanStorm project which aims to reduce the vulnerability of cities to the effects of climate change and to increase the cities' capacity to mitigate floods caused by torrential rains.

Sustainable mobility. The goal is to reduce CO2 emissions by 40% by 2035 (with 2007 as the starting point). By 2035, the aim is for 70% of citizens to use public transportation compared to other mobility options. This also involves achieving CO2-neutral public transport by 2035.

New tram lines are under construction, with the first to be completed by summer 2024. **Tallinn's mobility strategy 2035** was approved in november 2023; the bus system will be re-organized and more bike lanes will be created.

The number of bikers has almost doubled in two years. Tallinn continues to develop our bike lane system (17 new lanes to be created between 2022-2026) and making the existing infrastructure safer and more coherent.

One of Tallinn's strategic objective is to ensure the availability of environmentally friendly district heating. New technology is being created for the development of **renewable energy solutions** using seawater and waste water to help Tallinn move towards carbon neutrality.

The Green Compass – an interactive website where people can think about the impact of their daily habits and how they can make more environmentally conscious choices in four categories: energy, mobility, biodiversity and consumption.

GREY TO GREEN:

INCREASING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

[Tallinn Green Tech Week](#) – In November 2023, Tallinn hosted the CleanTech Forum Europe, and organized the Green Capital EXPO (NEXPO) to introduce smart solutions and new technologies, implemented by the cities, and to facilitate dialogue between European cities, greentech companies and leading experts in this topic. The week had five international conferences with over 4000 participants from 64 countries.

[Green Tracks](#) – Programme of innovative pop-up interventions in Tallinn's urban space. The aim was to improve the quality of green areas by bringing greenery to densely used areas, supporting the development of urban green networks, and testing innovative urban spatial solutions in the form of changes in spatial organization, as well as testing new spatial prototypes. In 2023 we have completed: summer park on Town Hall Square, Jõesuu 5 beach park, coastal area installation and city space interventions by Linnahall, 8 parklets around the City, 14 flower meadows, 9 food forests, over 450 new planted trees. More interventions are planned to be completed in 2024.

[Green Twins](#) – This digital 3D-model (in cooperation with TalTech ja Aalto Universities) shows how urban greenery changes over time and helps us understand how these changes affect the city's ecosystem. In 2023, the characteristics and parameters of Tallinn's Toompark (approx. 20 tree species) were modeled and described in the 3D model. In 2024, in the spring, it is planned to map and measure all Tallinn's trees through mobile data acquisition (including the evaluation of their health condition). Based on this, a 3D model of landscaping covering the entire city will be created, that shows how urban greenery changes over time and helps us understand how these changes affect the city's ecosystem.

[Test in Tallinn](#) – For exploiting the potential of green innovation and strengthening collaboration with private sector in the areas of mobility and energy, Tallinn launched the Test in Tallinn program. Currently, 15 innovation projects are underway. Tallinn supports the testing of innovation projects in the urban environment on a case-by-case basis with a duration of up to 12 months.

GREY TO GREEN:

INCREASING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

EVENTS

LOCAL

11th February: **Sprint Of Ideas** at the Tallinn Creative Incubator

22nd February: **Sustainable Hospitality** MAD Academy

10th-18th June: **Urban Space Festival**

13th November: **Greenest Summit**

January-December 2023: **Garbage Wolf – Collection By Type Campaign** for separate collection of waste in kindergartens and schools

January-December 2023: **Special Program Of The European Green Capital** in Tallinn's Open University

January-December 2023: **Special Program Of The European Green Capital** in Tallinn's Public Library

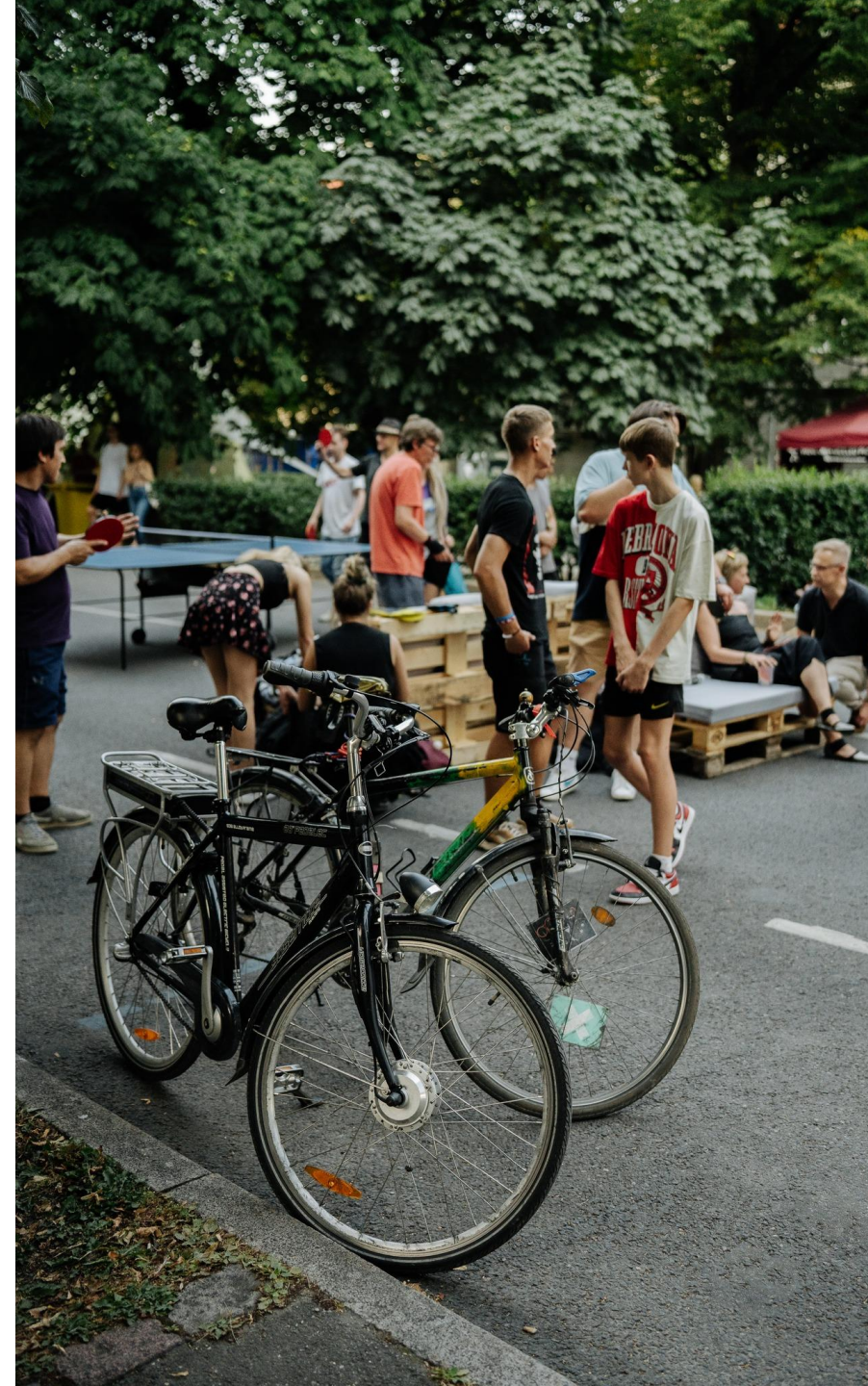
March and October 2023: **Green Labels** – Environmentally friendly options in the menus of Tallinn Restaurant Week

23rd March: **Seminar "Exchanging Experiences Of Environmentally Friendly Events,,**

April-December 2023: **Program "Green And Smart"** for raising awareness in Tallinn's housing co-op's

22nd September: **EU Mobility Week And Car-free Day Activities In Tallinn**

September – December 2023: **Exhibition "Let's Go To Zero,,**



GREY TO GREEN:

INCREASING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL

25th January: **Urban Storm Conference** (part of Tallinn's LIFE UrbanStorm project)

26th January: **Smart City Exchange Forum**

22nd March: **Webinar "Tallinn – The Green Capital of Europe – From a Water Perspective"**

28th April: **Hydrogen Conference** at TalTech University

10th-11th May: **International conference Future Forum** in Ülemiste City

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6th June: **The 5th OECD circular economy roundtable and CoR ENVE seminar**, presentation of the OECD Tallinn circular economy report

4th-5th September: **"Empowering Cities: Accelerating the Green Energy Transition"** organized with the Covenant of Mayors Europe

14th September: **Tallinn Urban Lighting Seminar „Light Pollution in Focus“**

5th-6th October: **Impact Day**, the largest sustainability festival in the Baltics

9th-10th October: **Sustainable Tourism Conference Green Destinations**

27th-28th October: 24-hour climate hackathon **CLIMATHON**

13th-17th November: **NEXPO Tallinn – Tallinn Cleantech EXPO**

14th-15th November: **Smart Cities Convention**

15th-16th November: **Cleantech Forum Europe**

16th November: **Green Governance Conference „Driving Change: Empowering Sustainability Through Green Governance"**

17th November: **Balanced Economy Forum "Elephant in the Room"**

17th-18th November: **Competition „My Car-Free City" at Robotex International**

6th December: **COP28 Green Capital Day** in the Estonian pavilion.

CITY FOR ALL:

FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

Sustainability is not only a paradigm but also an inclusive and collaborative governance method. This focus area supports all the objectives of the UN 2023 Agenda, the European Green Deal, as well as the Urban Agenda of the EU.

TALLINN'S ACTIVITIES:

[The Guideline for Organising Environmentally Friendly Events](#) sets the minimum requirements and recommendations for event organisers. Starting from June 2023, the requirements are mandatory for the city's own events.

Ban on the usage of single-use plastic dishes at public events. Tallinn was the first capital city in Europe to implement reusable solutions on such a large scale as the **National Youth Song and Dance Festival** with over 100 000 participants and visitors.

We organized educational **green capital lecture series** for employees of the city of Tallinn on the topics of waste collection, circular economy, green procurement, green office, climate change, urban greenery and biodiversity. A total of 328 people participated in the four lecture days.

Tallinn created a citizen's engagement program [“Let's create together”](#), that supported 48 local projects in total amount of 1,2 million euros.

Tallinn Green Ambassadors – environmental activists, influencers, scientists, cultural figures, and entrepreneurs who, through their example, contribute to the implementation of more environmentally sustainable lifestyles and principles.



CITY FOR ALL:

FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

CityHUB – The CityHub is an exhibition and co-creation space equipped with state-of-the-art visualization technology, with the aim of facilitating citizens' participation in urban design processes and fostering meaningful discussions between the city, developers, professionals, and citizens. The hub was opened in August 2023, offering space for regular meetings, exhibitions and seminars.

CENTRINNO, Kopli 93 Creative Centre – In 2023 Kopli 93 started negotiations with existing and newly created makerspaces to map their needs and secure the future of Makerspaces in the network of circular economy centers. The Centrinno project launched several programs, and two of the most significant are „Living Archive“, an archive of interviews and memories of community residents, and the "Cartography," which aims to map the network of local partners, businesses and resources to make community needs more easily met.

Participatory budgeting – in the European Green Capital year, the focus was on community projects in 12 EGC areas. All of the winning ideas – eight, one in each of Tallinn's district – were environmental and urban space themed, such as more noise-cancelling landscaping, landscaping for intersections, food groves and new public water taps.

Co-planning app "AvaLinn" (OpenCity) – an application that provides additional information and the opportunity for citizens to directly participate in planning processes.

Citizens' Assembly for a Green Capital – a co-creation format to expedite environmental decisions at both the local and national levels. The first Citizen' Assembly in Tallinn took place from October 7 to November 4. With the help of experts and stakeholders, Tallinn invited citizens to discuss and answer the question: „How can we link Tallinn's green spaces into an inviting urban whole?“ For the Green Capital Citizen' Assembly 30 000 invitations were sent out and 60 participants were selected by geographical and socio-economical aspects to form a representative mini-Tallinn, that made 39 proposals. These have been received by the city government and are currently in the process of being sorted for implementation.

The National Youth Song and Dance Celebration "Holy is the Land" - As a result of the cooperation between Tallinn, the European Green Capital 2023, and Estonian Song-and Dance Festival Foundation the 13th Youth Song and Dance Festival was held in a significantly more environmentally friendly manner than before. **100,000 people** were fed only with reusable dishes, about two times less garbage was produced than before, 70 separate waste collection containers and several public water taps were added to the site. More efficient public transport was organized: special buses and trams, and bicycle parking lots.

CITY FOR ALL:

FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL

21st January: The EGC 2023 Opening ceremony

8th February: The Sustainable City Management Roundtable and EGC2023 opening event in Brussels

10th-14th May: Seminars on sustainable city topics at Tallinn Music Week

21st-23rd June: Urban Future Forum in Stuttgart

4th-5th September: Sustainable City Management Seminar as part of the Open Governance Summit

7th October-4th November: Citizens' Assembly for a Green Capital



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



In collaboration with international partners, Tallinn hosted **31 high-level conferences in 2023**. Our partners included **influential organizations** such as the European Commission, OECD, Committee of the Regions, Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, ICLEI, and Eurocities.

This year, we welcomed a total of **71 foreign delegations** to Tallinn. Official delegations visiting the city showed genuine interest in the EGC 2023 programme, its focal points, and follow-up projects.

Tallinn's Green Capital year was showcased on the **international stage**. The Green Capital program, its flagship projects, initiatives, and ongoing legacy were strategically presented at selected events during the Committee of European Regions Cities and Regions Week, as well as the EU Open Day in Brussels, the Urban Future Forum in Stuttgart, and the UN Climate Conference COP28 in Dubai.

The city of Tallinn joined the **EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change** and received invitations to join ICLEI and the **Open Government Partnership (OGP)**.

As the leading partner in the **European Green Capitals Network**, Tallinn organised the **European Green Capitals Roundtable in Brussels** in February to discuss urban governance models for a just and green transition in European cities and the role of European Green Capitals in this process.

Two **European Green Capital Network onsite meetings** were also organised in Tallinn (in January and October), along with the **EGC 2023 Opening ceremony, the EGC 2025 Award Ceremony**. One of the achievements of the year was the elaboration and adoption of the EGC Network's new **Terms of Reference**.



PROGRAMME

OUR PROGRAM WAS DIVIDED INTO FOUR FOCUS THEMES:

LEARNING CITY

The main aim of the learning city events and activities was to show how sustainable way of thinking improves life quality for everyone. During the Tallinn European Green Capital year, we organized many events, workshops, and seminars to explain environmental issues and initiatives better to the general population.



INCLUSIVE CITY

The main aim of the inclusive city events and activities was to advance co-creation with the citizens with the aim to bring the city closer to them. Tallinn is putting more and more emphasis on co-creation and participatory governance, so that citizens would have a say in the development of their neighbourhood.



SMART CITY

The main aim of the smart city events and activities was to bring innovation to Tallinn, which helps us accelerate the green transition. To bring more innovations to the city, we have moved towards a more systematic and practical partnership with universities and local companies want to test new environmentally friendly technologies and concepts in our city.



SUSTAINABLE CITY

The main aim of the sustainable city initiatives, projects and activities was to create an environmentally friendly and human-scale urban spaces, which increases the wellbeing of all citizens.





COMMUNICATION



A significant portion of the communication effort was directed towards explaining environmental topics to the people of Tallinn. Environmental topics are complex, and it is crucial for the citizens of Tallinn to comprehend the green initiatives and actively participate in making our city more sustainable.

The primary focus was on change and cooperation. We showcased the changes in Tallinn and actively engaged citizens, communities, organizations, and businesses.

The main themes revolved around biodiversity, green innovation, and sustainability governance. Our slogan was "Wildly changing".

The communication team of EGC sent out more than 50 press releases from January to November. From January to December, the total number of coverages in Estonian media was almost 1,700.

We had over 220 foreign press coverage (incl. Politico, Euronews, Euractive, Sustainable Europe Magazine). The work with a Brussels-based communications consultant continues in 2024.

We had a successful cooperation with Estonia's largest news portal Delfi, from which a total of 1,051,750 people read and saw our 250 articles, videos and video podcasts.

We also cooperated with Estonian public broadcasting channels ETV and ETV+ and private channel Kanal 2 for environmental awareness raising TV-shows and video clips (incl. videos at Estonian Eurovision show Eesti Laul, audience up to 300 000 people).

We created a Tallinn – European Green Capital 2023 gate in Tallinn Airport, plus EGC23 themed welcoming doors at the airport's entrance. Same was done in Tallinn and Tartu Bus terminals and Tallinn Port terminal D. The visibility of EGC in Tallinn's urban space was created by special banners on Tallinn's biogas buses and our special EGC23 tram.

We have held several environmental awareness campaigns:

- Public transportation and eco-friendly mobility (including the EGC23 tram)
- How the city has changed
- Biodiversity
- Save our Sea
- Consumption and circular economy
- My City Tallinn
- Green Compass

84,000 visitors have visited the website greentallinn.eu.

We have 4 social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.



