

Tallinn – Green Capital 2018?

Hi, I am Marvi, a MEG 7 student. As our class is having internships at the moment, I am blogging to you from Tallinn, Estonia. What is positively surprising about this rather small city is the intention to become a Green Capital in this decade! So, what's up in Tallinn?

Tallinn is transforming incredibly fast.

Not only in terms of new buildings and infrastructure, but also technologically, culturally and economically. In the 90s *Tiigrihüpe* (Tiger's Leap) initiated an information technology leap that has brought the city, as well as the whole country, into a sort of e-state. You can do almost anything with your ID card, for example. You don't need to carry your driver's license as long as you have your ID card; you can buy a monthly train ticket or collect your medication with the electronic prescription with the ID card, also use it for internet banking, digital signing, [e-school](#), e-voting, parking etc. Tallinn has even been called among the top 10 digital cities in the world, having WIFI hotspots all over the city. Also, skype, an Estonian start-up, is originating in Tallinn.

In 2002, the Eurovision song contest was held in here, and in 2011, Tallinn was the European Capital for Culture (along with Turku). Now, the city is aiming for the Green Capital for 2018.

But what would Green Capital 2018 mean for city like Tallinn?

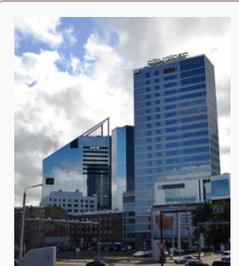
Well, I guess, it would be a great opportunity as well as quite a challenge. In a way, it could contribute with the sustainable development triangle – achieve environmental goals, support economy (tourism, financing, jobs) and, hopefully, encourage social aspects (create networks, involve communities).

At the moment, the public transport is going through major changes.

- From next year on, the public transport will be free of charge in Tallinn (for people living there),
- there are already new bus lanes in place,
- there are ongoing talks whether to allow cars with at least three people in it to drive on the bus lane (obviously there is some pressure to have this number down to 2);
- there are several major infrastructure projects going on (that will hopefully ease the traffic),
- and from emissions trading (Kyoto units), finance was provided to new cleaner (less polluting) buses and to an initiation of the electric car project. The finance for the project covers the costs of building a [charging network](#) across the country (expected to be completed by the end of this October) and also, provides grants up to €18 000 for the purchase of the electric car. In addition, over 500 electric cars were already given to the social workers of the local governments. Furthermore, what really indicates the commitment to the program, is that the Environmental Minister of Estonia herself is driving one of the electric cars.



The Old Town



The City Centre



New buses that were financed through selling AAUs (Kyoto emission allowance units)



An electric car in Tallinn

On the other hand side, what still needs to be done before Green Capital title would become more certain, is to create cycle lanes and, in general, awareness among drivers to watch out for the cyclists; to try to get people back to using more public transport; to improve building insulation and renovation and some other aspects (see more on [Green City index](#)).

I think Tallinn has a great chance to become a green city and a Green Capital. However, thinking of our student organized event (2013), the question on my mind is: what shade will this green be?

