THE EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL AWARD

– Towards a sustainable Europe?

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Abstract

Today a grand majority (around 80%) of the European citizens live in cities or towns. Europe is more urbanised than ever. Contemporaneously, climate change and global warming is an increasing threat worldwide. In 2006, the European Commission of the European Union (EU) therefore launched the idea of implementing the yearly *European Green Capital* (EGC) award. The aim was (and still is) to create role models by promoting cities that constantly take strong actions for the environment and thereby inspire other cities to make green choices too. In February 2009 the first two EGC winners were announced: Stockholm (Sweden) 2010 and Hamburg (Germany) 2011.

The question is whether an award of this kind is the right method for the EU to deal with environment issues. If not, the EU should invest its resources elsewhere. This thesis aims at evaluating the EGC by looking closer at Stockholm as the EGC winner of 2010 and by analysing the impacts the EGC title has on Sweden’s EU Presidency the second half of 2009. The ecological modernisation theory reconciles economic growth and environmental protection, and provides several relevant features and aspects to this thesis regarding sustainable development, voluntary approaches and environmental policy-making. By applying the theory on the EGC many things such as the underlying visions and methods of the award can be explained and analysed. The conclusion of the thesis is that the EGC in some respects is leading to a greener and more sustainable Europe or at least has the potential to do so.
# List of contents

**Abbreviations** ........................................................................................................ 4  
**Key words** .............................................................................................................. 4

## 1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 5  
1.1. Introductory note ..................................................................................................... 5  
1.2. Problem field .......................................................................................................... 6  
1.3. Problem formulation .............................................................................................. 6  
1.4. Theory: Ecological Modernisation ........................................................................ 7  
1.5. Method .................................................................................................................... 10  
  1.5.1. Analysis of material .......................................................................................... 10  
  1.5.2. Questionnaire ................................................................................................... 11  
  1.5.3. Google search test ............................................................................................ 12  
1.6. Material .................................................................................................................. 13  
1.7. Previous research ................................................................................................... 15  
1.8. Limitations ............................................................................................................. 17

## 2. Background information ......................................................................................... 18  
2.1. The European Green Capital Award ...................................................................... 18  
2.2. Stockholm – European Green Capital 2010 ......................................................... 21  
2.3. The EU policies ..................................................................................................... 22  
2.4. Sweden’s EU Presidency 2009 ............................................................................. 24

## 3. Analysis .................................................................................................................. 26  
3.1. Voluntary approaches ............................................................................................ 26  
3.2. Different green players’ view on the EGC ............................................................. 28  
3.3. How well-known is the EGC? ................................................................................ 31

## 4. Final Discussion & Conclusion .............................................................................. 32

**Bibliography** ............................................................................................................. 37  
**Appendix** ................................................................................................................. 40
Abbreviations

6th EAP  Sixth Environmental Action Programme  
COP15  Conference of the Parties 15  
CoR  Committee of the Regions  
EEA  European Environment Agency  
EGC  European Green Capital  
EMAS  Eco-Management and Audit Scheme  
EMS  Environmental Management Systems  
EU  European Union  
ICLEI  Local Governments for Sustainability  
MEP  Member of the European Parliament  
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation  
OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
SMHI  Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute  
SSNC  Swedish Society for Nature Conservation  
T&E  European Federation for Transport and Environment  
UCUE  Union of Capitals of the European Union  
UN  United Nations  
UNFCCC  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
WWF  World Wildlife Fund

Key words

European Green Capital Award, Stockholm, Sweden’s EU Presidency 2009, urban development, sustainable development, environmental protection, ecological modernisation, voluntary approaches, COP15 in Copenhagen, environmental policy-making.
1. Introduction

1.1. Introductory note

Everyday we hear warnings about climate change on the news, we read about pollution in the papers, we search for the latest environmental information on the internet, we listen to debates about global warming on the radio, and we are told about environmental destruction in school. We are encouraged to travel by train instead of aeroplanes, to recycle our waste, to take shorter showers and to buy ecological and locally produced food. The environment is indeed one of the biggest, if not the biggest, issue of our time and we should deal with it immediately. We should not wait any longer to take action.

There is a lot we as individuals can do in order to improve the environment as just mentioned, but what about the cities? What role do they have? According to the European Union (EU) cities have an important function when it comes to environmental contribution. But are cities really the problem or the solution to our unhealthy planet Earth? When referring to cities do words like pollution, noise, traffic jam, industries and energy consumption come to mind or rather words like public transport, shorter distances, market access, business, condensed living and energy efficiency? Probably a bit of both. Cities do have some of the worst environmental problems nowadays, but in many respects they also offer green living conditions or at least have the potential to do so!

Box 1

‘Europe is now an essentially urban society, with four out of five Europeans living in towns, and it is in urban areas that the environmental challenges facing our society are most apparent. [...] I trust that this award will help us turn our urban centres into prosperous places to live and work, and that the European Green Capitals of the future will be attractive and healthy cities for generations to come.’

Stavros Dimas, EU Commissioner for the Environment

The quotation very much summarises the current urbanised reality in Europe and the underlying idea behind the EU’s European Green Capital (EGC) award. The urban environment and the quality of people’s city life need to be improved. This is what the EGC aims to promote – greener cities for the benefits of the environment as well as for the citizens. The EGC was developed by the European Commission in 2006, and in February

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1 European Green Capital, Green cities – fit for life, p. 3.
2009 the first two winners were announced: Stockholm (Sweden) 2010 and Hamburg (Germany) 2011. The idea behind the award is that the holder of the title will become a role model for a year and inspire other cities to make greener choices. The EGC is based on voluntary participation with the hope that cities will want to develop to the better.

The question is whether the EGC actually will have any effect. Will an award of this kind really lead to a greener Europe? The fact that Stockholm did win the prize might not be such a big surprise to many people. It could be said that Sweden already has a good and well-known reputation when it comes to environment management. What will be interesting to see though is whether the EGC title will mean anything for Sweden’s EU Presidency that starts 1st of July 2009. The Swedish Government has already stated that environment questions will be highly prioritised during the six months as President. One of Sweden’s core focuses will be the United Nations (UN) Conference of the Parties (COP) 15 meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009. There the current Kyoto Protocol has to be replaced by a new international climate agreement on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. As the EU President, Sweden will have a crucial role during the meeting.

1.2. Problem field

By analysing the EGC, it is interesting to see if the award is a genuine attempt by the EU to fulfil its commitments about reduced emissions. If it turns out that the award in fact has none or very little effect, the whole idea could be a waste of time and resources. In that case the EU may have to reconsider where to invest its resources. It is therefore relevant to study the winning city, in this case Stockholm, in order to estimate the award’s actual outcomes for the city and the nation (Sweden) as a whole. The EGC offers a good opportunity to analyse the relation between the objectives and policies on the supranational level with the actual implementation on the local level.

1.3. Problem formulation

The purpose of this thesis is to find out to what extent the EGC could help to make European cities greener. The problem formulation is two-folded and as follows:

- In what ways might the EGC influence Stockholm (as the winner of the EGC 2010) and Sweden?
- How might the EGC help to promote environmental issues in Europe?
Sub question:
• How will Stockholm’s EGC title affect the Swedish EU Presidency? Will Sweden become more influential when it comes to environmental matters within the EU, and at the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen?

1.4. Theory: Ecological Modernisation

For this theoretical part, the book The Politics of Environmental Discourse – Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process (1995) by Maarten A. Hajer has been valuable, especially the chapter about the historical roots of the theory. James Connelly and Graham Smith’s book Politics and the Environment – from Theory to Practice (2003) has complemented Hajer’s book very well in describing the main features and criticism of ecological modernisation and Hajer is often referred to in their book. Also Jane Roberts’ research mentions ecological modernisation in her book Environmental Policy (2004) but her findings will be described further in the subchapter 1.7. Previous research.

Within green politics different concepts of sustainable development are often used and ecological modernisation is the dominating interpretation today. To put it simply, ecological modernisation attempts to make capitalism greener. Instead of claiming that environmental and economic interests are contradicting, they coexist and nurture each other. It is an optimistic theory that sees no difficulty in adopting an ecological approach into the daily practices of businesses, scientific experts and policy-makers. By implementing different economic mechanisms and other means such as the integrated pollution control and the so-called precautionary principle (meaning that prevention should be applied when there is uncertainty about a potential environmental harm), it is possible to change the economic development into new directions. Ecological modernisation aims at making the economy environmentally efficient at the macro and micro levels for instance by making industries

Box 2

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consume less energy and fewer resources (macro) and by implementing clean technologies (micro). This way the environmental challenge can be a boost instead of a threat to capitalism.⁴

According to Hajer the UN’s Conference on Environment that took place in Stockholm in 1972 is often seen as the starting point for the boom of green politics that followed. The ecological modernisation theory developed in the 1980’s and have had great impact within green politics ever since. There were several reasons why the environment movement took a new direction and into ecological modernisation. Due to the economic recession in the late 1970’s environmental concerns lost attention in favour of for example unemployment and economic inflation. Environmentalism therefore had no choice but to find a concept where economic growth could be connected to environmental protection. Another reason to the shift into ecological modernisation was the internal changes within the environment movement where Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) had to find other ways to act when mass demonstrations did no longer work. This along with ozone layer issues and problems with acid rain made the discussion about the environment relevant again.⁵

Ecological modernisation was welcome and very much needed. The theory offered a political alternative to the environmental threats that industries caused. Concrete solutions to environmental destruction were provided by academics and experts thanks to the ecological modernisation. The theory was highly promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), especially at the International Conference on Environment and Economics in 1984. Governments and environmental experts discussed the theory and came to the conclusion that environment, economy and technology can be strongly interlinked and profitable, if managed correctly.⁶

Connelly and Smith refer to six main features of ecological modernisation: new principles of policy-making (that is to say prevention rather than curative measures); an increased role for scientific knowledge of experts in policy-making; the idea that environmental protection leads to developed and energy saving technologies that are more cost-efficient which generates economic growth and profits; that nature is no longer seen as a ‘free’ but a public good which means natural resources need to be conserved (not over-consumed) through improved recycling and technological innovations to mention a few; that the suspected polluter, instead of the environmental victim should be objective of the burden of proof; and developed cooperation (preferably based on voluntary agreements) in the policy-making

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process between new participants such as business and NGOs. Hajer adds the aspect of collective action of individuals, industries, companies, organisations and governments. A management problem arises when not everyone is committed to environmental protection. If everyone was committed, a functioning and environmentally friendly society would be possible.7

All in all, the ecological modernisation theory is beneficial for governments (providing a new policy approach), businesses (cost-savings, new market opportunities and an increased role in making the modern society ecologically friendly), and for environment organisations (decision makers take the environment issues seriously). For example the Scandinavian countries have been seen as good examples of the benefits of ecological modernisation.8

Nevertheless, the ecological modernisation theory has been widely debated within the green politics. Connelly and Smith have distinguished five critiques against the theory, outlined here briefly. First of all, the decoupling thesis (that is to say the economy’s ability to grow without harming the environment) has in many cases been demonstrated when heavy industries have been relocated to less developed countries, taking the associated environmental impact with them. Movement of heavy industries does not make these industries more energy efficient, despite economic growth and increased consumption. The second critique regards that view that the theory is constructed by and for well developed countries. Issues connected to poverty and the values and needs of the developing countries are not considered. The social justice aspect has been neglected when the environment is not seen as a hindrance to capitalism. Thirdly, nature is not seen as a free good when it is included in policy-making. Efficiency wins over ethics when it comes to the protection of nature. The fourth point is that the sociological theory questions the modernisation of technologies which can go out of hand and if so, lead to devastating risks for us all (for example nuclear power). Anxiety will make people to no longer have faith in politicians and business. The last criticism against ecological modernisation concerns radical greens’ suspicion that politicians only promote the theory in order to take the credit for a better environment (and do not recognise the ‘real’ environmentalists).9

By applying ecological modernisation on the EGC, many things such as the underlying visions and methods of the award can be explained. The economical aspects of the theory will not be prioritised, even though they can not be fully excluded. In this thesis the economical development is not placed in the main spotlight, but is rather seen as a side effect and bonus

of sustainable development and environmental protection. Instead, focus will be on the features of the theory related to policy-making. The EGC is very much connected to green politics, and the award can be seen as an instrument used for environmental protection in everyday life within society, in this case Stockholm. The aspects of voluntary approaches, collective action and sustainable development are particularly useful when analysing the award’s impact and relevance. The theory deals with policies as well as concrete solutions, demonstrating that the macro/global level and the micro/local level are both included. It is for these reasons that the ecological modernisation theory is relevant and suitable for this thesis even though economics are not the main focus.

1.5. Method

For a long time now I have been very interested in environmental protection and how to combat climate change. With the support from GlobalFOCUS, an organisation initiated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for students engaged in finding solutions to environmental problems (www.globalfocus.net), the topic for this thesis was developed. It is very motivating to look into a new EU project of this kind to see what impact it might have on Stockholm and Europe, and in the end on the global environment. My three method components used in this thesis will now be presented: analysis of materials, questionnaire and Google search test.

1.5.1. Analysis of material

In this thesis I have collocated and analysed different qualitative material in order to interpret the EGC award. Based on that, I draw conclusions and answer my problem formulation. The material used is a combination of my own findings from my questionnaire and Google search test (described further down), and the material of others (see 1.6. Material). The choice to write about Stockholm instead of Hamburg for instance, was simply out of practical reasons. For me as a Swede originating from Stockholm, it was easier language wise to find material and contact people. The amount of accessible information was higher than if I would have had to reach people in Germany or elsewhere. The topic of the thesis also provided a chance to find out more about my hometown and an opportunity to see how I and my family can be a part of the EGC and benefit from it.

Regarding my analysis, the process will now be presented briefly. First background information about the EGC award will be described (background, aim and selection process) followed by Stockholm as the EGC-winner of 2010 (the city’s application and projects), the EU’s different policies (particularly the environmental policy and the Sixth Environmental Action Programme) and Sweden’s EU Presidency 2009. The analysis will then outline the
importance of voluntary approaches that is to say that people, companies and governments among others will do something voluntary in order to improve the environment. This aspect is highly relevant to the EGC award. Based on the questionnaire answers different green players’ view on the EGC will then be analysed, followed by an analysis of the Google test result regarding how well-known the EGC is. In the final discussion my findings about what impact the EGC is likely to have in Stockholm and in Europe will be discussed and conclusions will be drawn. A deeper description of the questionnaire and the Google search test will now follow.

1.5.2. Questionnaire

In order to get a wider perspective of the EGC and its effects on European cities and the environment as a whole, I wanted to hear some qualified opinions about the award. I therefore constructed a questionnaire for people involved in Stockholm’s EGC title, environment issues or EU matters in one way or another, to get their view on the EGC. Their answers became a keystone of my final analysis of the EGC.

The questionnaire (see appendix A) was deliberately made simple and short in order to ensure as many replies as possible. There were 15 questions in total. Twelve of the questions had five answering alternatives. Some of the questions were formulated as statements and the respondent had to mark to what extent he or she agreed with each statement. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: the European Green Capital, the Swedish EU Presidency, open questions, and general comments. The last two parts were made to give the respondent an opportunity to write more freely and to comment on his or her previous answers. The questionnaire was sent out to 21 people by e-mail in the end of April and in the beginning of May 2009. In most cases the respondents were first contacted by phone and asked whether it was alright for them to receive the questionnaire. In the end, eleven people replied with filled-out questionnaires.

The questionnaire was conducted in Swedish and sent to organisations, authorities, politicians, officials and others in Sweden in order to get a Swedish perspective on the EGC. Questionnaire answers were received from people from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), the Swedish Ministry of the Environment, the Green Party of Sweden10 (represented in the Swedish Parliament), the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological

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10 The Green Party focuses on environment issues but has also been very EU-critical (even though the party now has a less critical EU approach) which makes the party very interesting to include in the questionnaire target group. Other political parties care for the environment too (to different extent). The two biggest political parties in Sweden, The Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party, were also contacted but no questionnaire answers were retrieved.
Institute (SMHI), GlobalFOCUS (an organisation initiated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for students engaged in finding solutions to environmental problems), Stockholm City (the Environmental Department, the Executive Office and the County Administrative Board) and the Environmental Department in Malmö.

It is important to stress that the respondents answered according to their personal views, and not on behalf of their organisations or employers. The intention was never to undertake a statistical survey and quality was therefore prioritised over quantity. Diversity and a wide spread within the target group were more relevant than the actual number of answers. That way, opinions from different perspectives have been covered.

1.5.3. Google search test

The EU’s objective with the EGC award is that the holder of the EGC title shall inspire other cities to make green choices and make tourism and business investments increase in the winning city. However, if the award is not known, this will not happen. Therefore, in order to get a reasonable idea of how recognised the EGC award actually is, I chose to do a small test using the well-known internet search engine Google (www.google.com). The test was done the 21st of May 2009 and the results are presented in a diagram (see p. 31).

At the official website of the EGC, a brochure about the award is available for downloading in 20 different languages. There the translations of European Green Capital could be found. I selected twelve languages trying to cover a geographical spread in Europe including bigger and smaller countries. I then went to the advanced search at the Google website and typed the translation for ‘European Green Capital’ into the space for Find pages with the exact phrase, and then chose language (for example French) and region (for example France). Finally, I clicked on Google search to see how many hits there were. In order to exclude all the EU websites in the search and thereby get a better indication of how much the EGC has been mentioned in other places than in EU occasions only, I chose No pages from this domain and typed .eu in the space. All in all, two searches were made for each language/country, one including and one excluding the EU websites but it turned out that the difference was very marginal (see p. 31 for the diagram and the appendix B for all the exact test results). This way I got a quite good estimation on how much the EGC have been written about in general and thereby how well-known it is.

It is a more complicated procedure to get an official statement from organisations/employers since the statements often need to be agreed on by the board of the organisation/employer. It is time consuming and therefore a lower turnout of the questionnaire answers would be expected if the respondents answered as representatives of their organisations/employers.

However, there are a number of restrictions to keep in mind when looking at the results. First of all, the search word ‘European Green Capital’ has been typed as a noun in its grammatical base form. This means that different endings and/or inflectional forms of the word in other languages might not appear in the Google hit list. Finnish is a typical example of that which might explain the low turnout in this test. With another, more common ending, it is possible that Finland would make a higher result. English for example, has no other grammatical forms than ‘European Green Capital’ and thereby generates more hits.

Second of all, the diagram shows that the biggest countries are at the top (with the exception of Sweden). This is logical since they have more citizens and thereby naturally more writers, newspapers, blogs and websites that can write about the EGC. However, it does not necessarily mean that the interest is bigger in those countries. On the contrary, the number of hits per capita is most likely lower than in the smaller countries.

A third restriction regards ‘bigger’ newspapers (such as the Times in the United Kingdom, and Le Monde in France) and other well-known websites. They reach out to a large part of the population which is why it is impossible to know how big penetrating power one Google hit actually indicates. Even though it would have been interesting to check the websites of big newspapers to see how many EGC-hits there are, there is a problem. Different newspapers have different principles regarding their article archives. Some of them simply might not be searchable anymore. If there were articles written about the EGC a few weeks or months ago, it is possible that the articles have been removed by now. Therefore there might be a loss in the hit list. For these main three reasons, the figures in the diagram are not exact. The numbers also vary from day to day, but they still give a good indication of how much the EGC has been mentioned on the internet.

### 1.6. Material

Different types of material have been used and the main ones will be described here. James Connelly and Graham Smith’s book *Politics and the Environment – from Theory to Practice* (2003) has served as my main book of reference. Not only do they write about the ecological modernisation theory, but they also discuss different methods that have been used within politics when dealing with environmental issues (for instance voluntary approaches), the EU’s environmental policy and the work of local authorities and so on.

Regarding the background information to the analysis the EU’s official website of the European Green Capital ([www.europeangreencapital.eu](http://www.europeangreencapital.eu)) has been of great importance. 
Relevant documents about Stockholm’s application, the evaluation panel’s report and the jury’s conclusions were available there. However, it is crucial to remember that the website is not only an information site about the EGC, but also a pro-EGC platform. The EU is of course in favour of the EGC and promotes the benefits of the award. The website has therefore been used for my descriptive part, based on facts about the EGC (history, evaluation process, qualifications, underlying EU policies). It has often served as a starting point in order to find deeper and confirming information elsewhere (for example on other EU websites).

Since this thesis does not evaluate Stockholm as such and the green projects that the city runs, the city’s official website for the environment (www.miljobarometern.stockholm.se) has not been used. In the case of the EU and Sweden’s upcoming Presidency on the other hand, I have mostly relied on Swedish official websites for information and reports, such as the Swedish Ministry of the Environment (www.naturvardsverket.se), the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (www.naturskyddsforeningen.se) and the Swedish Government (www.regeringen.se). These three were chosen because they have great knowledge within the field of environment and the EU.

As a complement to this, I took part in the European Forum that was held in Hässleholm (Sweden) between the 11th and 14th of May 2009. The European Forum yearly offers an opportunity (free of charge) to the public to participate, discuss and debate important topics and issues from a European perspective. The main objective is to provide an active discussion about the EU outside the big arenas and at the same time bring the citizens and the decision makers closer to one another. This year, the general focus was on the European Parliament elections and Sweden’s Presidency. I participated in the forum on the 12th of May 2009. The Swedish Minister for European Affairs, Cecilia Malmström (the Liberal Party), and two Swedish Members of the European Parliament (MEP), Lena Ek (the Centre Party) and Anders Wijkman (the Christian Democrat Party), participated and talked about the EU with a focus on the Swedish EU Presidency and what the climate demands of the EU. The discussions were interesting and useful to this thesis, but it is important to remember that all of the politicians had pro-EU opinions which do not cover both sides of the coin so to speak.

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1.7. Previous research

There is little research already available regarding awards of the same kind as the EGC in a European context, but there is a lot done within the field of the environment. In this thesis focus has been on previous research with connections to politics and policy-making, namely environmental policy research. Most, if not all, of the EU’s actions in different questions can be explained through its many policies. The environment is no exception. That is why research about this particular policy is very interesting and relevant to the thesis. The EGC is to a large extent (but not solely) based on the EU’s environmental policy. To look closer upon the underlying environmental policy therefore helps to better understand, analyse and evaluate the EGC award.

Environmental decision making of this kind covers the national and international level as well as the individual level where decisions are taken in everyday life. Environmental issues involve a wide range of aspects (social, political, ethical, technical, and economical) which is why environmental policies need to be multi-disciplinary. This is what Jane Roberts, Principal Lecturer in Environmental Policy at the University of Gloucestershire, focuses on in her study Environmental Policy (2004). In the book she covers dimensions about our human demands on the environment; the need of a changed behaviour; sustainable development as a result of environmental policy; the connection between environmental policymakers, science and technology; the role of environmental policy nationally and internationally; and solutions to different policy problems. In the end Roberts comes up with a policy ‘toolkit’ adapted to the decision makers of the 21st century where environmental protection is combined with development. With her study she hopes to provide multi-disciplinary solutions to the environmental policy issues that we experience today.15

The first thing Roberts points out is that a change in human behaviour is fundamental in order to solve environmental problems, and that environmental policy is the best instrument to achieve the change. Throughout the book she has a fully anthropocentric approach, arguing that humans either directly or indirectly are the cause to all environmental problems.

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The growing world population is seen as one of the main issues as the demands on the environmental resources are radically intensified. Environmental policies are therefore needed in order to maintain a sustainable development that does not have any negative impact on climate change. Included in Roberts’s policy toolkit are concepts such as the precautionary principle, no-regrets strategies, life-cycle analysis, sustainability management systems, environmental management systems and green taxes. The last three examples help promoting economic growth worldwide.\textsuperscript{16}

The crucial role of sustainable development in environmental policy is not neglected in Roberts’s analysis. She mentions three key principles for assessing sustainability. Firstly, \textit{equity} in the sense of how fair the environmental services and resources are distributed between the rich/poor, and between/within generations. The idea is that everybody will have their basic needs covered which means that wealthy people have to change their lifestyle. Secondly, \textit{futurity}, that is the long-term impacts on the environment. Proposals with benefits only in the short run and high costs in the long run should be avoided. Thirdly, the \textit{value} of the environment, that is to say the caring for the environment and not over-consuming environmental services and resources. By applying these three criteria on policies and projects, the sustainability of the policies and projects can be tested and evaluated.\textsuperscript{17}

When solving environmental problems, Roberts emphasises the relations between the developed and the developing world. She argues that sustainable development has become the solution when dealing with a world that suffers from poverty, unsteady economic growth and a constantly growing population. According to Roberts, the lack of thinking in long-terms, along with the selfishness of the vested interests of people and business, are the two main barriers for implementing sustainable development policies. In order to overcome these barriers and to achieve changes in behaviour, leadership in the sense of setting good examples to others is needed. This includes all sectors: policies, communities, governments, interest groups, companies and networks. Roberts points out that there are three options to keep in mind: sustainable, unsustainable or no development.\textsuperscript{18} When putting it that way, the choice seems to be fairly easy.

With my study I hope to bring new perspectives into this field of research. The EGC award to a large extent summarises and combines sustainable development and environmental policy into one. Roberts focuses on how to make environmental policies efficient, and I would like to develop on that. By looking closer upon the EGC it is possible to evaluate how the EU’s

\textsuperscript{17} Roberts (2004) pp. 75, 77.  
environmental policy turns out in practice. Will the EGC actually change people’s behaviour and lead to sustainability?

1.8. Limitations

This thesis does not intend to evaluate or value the EGC award in the sense of how it is being conducted regarding the city requirements, the selection process, the criteria categories for evaluation, the expert panel and the jury, the applications and the promotion/PR of the EGC. Nor do I evaluate Stockholm’s projects and whether Stockholm is a worthy winner. All focus is on the EGC as such and the relation between the global (the EU) and the local (Stockholm).

Since the EGC has not been awarded to a city as yet, there are no previous green capitals to investigate and compare with. Out of the scope of this thesis, I do not make a comparison to other awards of this kind on the EU level either, such as the European Capital of Culture, even though this indeed would be relevant in order to evaluate the outcomes. Because no city yet has administered the EGC title, the actual outcomes are still unknown. My conclusions are qualified speculations about the EGC’s actual relevance and outcomes based on facts about the award and the EU policies as well as on people’s personal opinions expressed in my questionnaire and the results from my Google search test.

I am aware of the fact that my material might guide me into a pro-EGC direction. In order to compensate and balance that, my questionnaire and small Google search test about the EGC award have been vital. To a large extent the analysis is based on my own findings from the questionnaire and Google search test. However, the results cannot be taken with too much certainty since the questionnaire only was given to a small number of people, and because of the restrictions mentioned in the method part that affect the Google search test (see method p. 12 and analysis p. 28 for further details). I am well aware of the limited magnitude of the questionnaire and the Google search test, but nevertheless they provide a good indication of how well-known the EGC is and if it will have the expected outcomes that the EU hopes for. The results are therefore valuable and relevant for my analysis.

There is a lot of previous research done within the field of the environment, but focus in this thesis has been on research about the environmental policy with connections to sustainable development and policy-making. The same goes for the application of the environmental modernisation theory. Only the features suitable for this thesis will be used, namely the ones connected to policy-making. The economic aspect will therefore not be considered as much.
2. Background information

In this chapter a more thorough description of the EGC will be presented. The award will first be described in terms of background, visions, aim and selection process. Following, Stockholm and the city’s application and green projects will be outlined as well as the EU’s policies regarding the environment. Last but not least different aspects of Sweden’s EU Presidency 2009 will be described.

2.1. The European Green Capital Award

The EGC award is an initiative by the European Commission based on the reality that Europe today is more urbanised than ever. Most Europeans (about 80%) live in towns and cities. Therefore, a big part of the solutions to climate change must be found in the urban areas where the local contribution to authorities is of major importance. By establishing the EGC, the European Commission wants to highlight and promote the commitment of cities to a better environment. EGC is a yearly award and the selected European city will be holding the title of the EGC for a year.19

Box 4

The award is given to a city that:

- Has a consistent record of achieving high environmental standards;
- Is committed to ongoing and ambitious goals for further environmental improvement and sustainable development;
- Can act as a role model to inspire other cities and promote best practices to all other European cities.

[...] The award marks a city’s wish and capability to solve environmental problems in order to both improve the quality of life of its citizens and reduce the contribution it makes to the global environment as a whole.’

(European Commission)

The very first step towards the EGC award was made at a meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, in 2006 where 15 European cities agreed to establish the EGC. Today, the award is supported by more than 40 cities. Improving city life and the environment (locally and globally) by contributing to a sustainable development is the main aim of the EGC.20 In this way, the EU

wants to tell the local authorities about the importance of having urban areas where people can live and enjoy a healthy life. The award’s slogan is therefore: *Green cities – fit for life.*

Since the idea is that cities should *want* to contribute to a better environment globally and at the same time improve their citizens’ urban life locally, the participating green cities are not given any particular funding. The award’s budget of €300,000 is administered by the Green Capital Secretariat, currently run by a Danish company (COWI) that manages administration and the development of the EGC’s visual identity for example. Local authorities are encouraged to apply for other funding at EU level, for instance the Structural Funds.

> ‘Progress is its own reward, but the satisfaction and pride involved in winning a prestigious European award will spur cities to invest in further efforts and will boost awareness in other cities. The award will enable cities to inspire each other and share best practices, in the context of a friendly competition. Winning the title of the European Green Capital will also bring advantageous side effects such as increased tourism, more investment and an influx of young professionals. It is therefore in a city’s interest to become a prosperous place to live and work.’

(The Expert Panel)

**Box 5**

European cities (not only EU cities) with at least 200,000 inhabitants are welcome to apply for the EGC title. In countries where there are no cities of that size, the biggest city can apply. The very first selection process (to declare the winners of 2010 and 2011) was based on ten different categories:

| Local contribution to global climate change | Waste production and management |
| Local transportation                       | Water consumption               |
| Availability of green areas open to the public | Waste water treatment         |
| Quality of local ambient air               | Environmental management of the local authority |
| Noise pollution                            | Sustainable land use           |

**Box 6**

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Within each of these ten categories, the participating cities had to show (in their applications) their results, positive development of the urban area, future plans and commitments as well as the environmental measures taken. In the first round, an expert/evaluation panel with expertise in all of the ten areas went through the applications of the 35 participating cities (see appendix C) while applying a system of points in order to evaluate the cities. For each of the ten categories a city could obtain up to 15 or 30 points depending on the category. The panel also took into consideration some other criteria. The eight cities with most points in total were selected as finalists for the EGC title of 2010 and 2011: Amsterdam (Netherlands), Bristol (United Kingdom), Copenhagen (Denmark), Freiburg (Germany), Hamburg (Germany), Münster (Germany), Oslo (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden).27

The finalists went to the second round and were there able to more thoroughly give an outline about their environmental urban achievements. Based on the evaluation panel’s recommendations, the two EGC winners were finally chosen by a jury of people from the European Commission, the European Environment Agency (EEA), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), the European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E), the Union of Capitals of the European Union (UCUE) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR).28

In the first round of the evaluation process, Stockholm ended up as number four with 143.61 points. Hamburg was number one with 150.43 points. Malmö as the only other applying city from Sweden ended up as number nine with 137.89 points and was thereby very close to make it to the eight finalists. In the second round, Stockholm got 157.3 points and Hamburg 161.4 points. Even so, Stockholm was elected the winner of 2010 and Hamburg the winner of 2011 (without any published explanation).29 The award winners were announced at a ceremony in Brussels the 23rd of February 2009.30

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2.2. Stockholm – European Green Capital 2010

According to the expert panel and the jury, the main reasons why Stockholm will be holding the title of the EU's very first EGC in 2010 are thanks to the city's aim of being independent of fossil fuels by the year 2050 and the fact that Stockholm has reduced its emissions by 25% per person since 1990. Today each Stockholmer contributes 50% less emission than the Swedish average. Renewable fuels are for instance used for all public transports in the city. Another reason is that 95% of the Stockholm population live no further than 300 m away from green areas and that water covers 10% of the city area. A water protection plan was implemented in 2006 by the City Council. Last but not least, Stockholm wants to inspire other cities and share its knowledge through its Communication Strategy.32

Many of the environmental projects are conducted through the Stockholm Environment Programme where greenhouse gas targets are the focus. Stockholm’s Action Programme on Climate Change is a complement to the Environment Programme, focusing on the actual climate actions and activities. A Climate Policy is included in the Action Programme which is based on the idea that ‘no one can do everything, but everyone can do something’.33 The strategy used within the Action Programme consists of some keystones such as investments in public transports and district heating; to constantly work with energy, consumption, urban planning, waste and traffic (based on a referendum held in 2006, congestion taxes are now used for cars going in and out of the city centre during daytime); communication; cooperation with local, national and global bodies dealing with climate change; and coordination with the City's Energy Plan and other similar programmes.34 These are just examples of some of the measures taken in Stockholm to improve the environment, and Stockholm's strong efforts clearly pleased the EGC evaluation panel and the jury.

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33 Stockholm - Application for European Green Capital Award, p. 3.
34 Stockholm - Application for European Green Capital Award, pp. 3, 6, 7.
According to Linda Persson (EU Policy Adviser, City of Stockholm, Executive Office and contact person regarding Stockholm’s EGC title) the reason why Stockholm applied to the EGC at all was because there was a belief that Stockholm stood a good chance of winning and thereby would get the confirmation that Stockholm in fact is the greenest capital in Europe, not only 2010 but always.\textsuperscript{35}

2.3. The EU policies

The EU has established many policies regarding the environment and urban areas, such as the \textit{EU Sustainable Development Strategy} as well as urban dimensions in Community policies. Even though the EGC is implemented in all these policies (directly or indirectly), the award has its roots foremost in the \textit{Sixth Environmental Action Programme} (6\textsuperscript{th} EAP) from 2002, and the follow-up called the \textit{Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment}.\textsuperscript{36} The latter was adopted in 2006 and indicates the support, engagement and efforts of the European Commission when it comes to make cities approach urban management in a more integrated way. The idea is that the cities in this way will experience a positive development connected to improved living conditions and a better environment as a whole. It is also an encouragement to local and regional authorities to take advantage of the EU’s funds and programmes that are available. The EGC fits very well into this policy area since the strategy is based on inducements and does not include any legislative measures.\textsuperscript{37}

What is seen as the main method within the EU’s environmental policy is \textit{sustainable development}. That is considered the key for a better environment. The 5\textsuperscript{th} EAP (1993-2000) focused on this and thereby changed the EU’s environmental policy quite radically. However, the EU still lacked a policy or a strategy that combined social and economic development without harming the environment. Therefore the 6\textsuperscript{th} EAP was put into practice with the title \textit{Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice}. The characteristics of the 6\textsuperscript{th} EAP is that it builds on the 5\textsuperscript{th} EAP; that environmental laws and policies at the EU-level and at the national level need to be better used and implemented; that the market, production as well as consumption need to be made greener through ecological modernisation; and that the number of different policy instruments need to be extended, especially voluntary agreements (see p. 26).\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Persson, e-mail sent 2009-05-18.
\item \textsuperscript{36} \textit{EU Policy} \url{http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/about_submenus/eu_policy.html} (Retrieved 2009-05-10).
\item \textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Expert Panel’s Evaluation Work & Final Recommendations for the European Green Capital Award of 2010 and 2011}, p. 3.
\end{itemize}
Covering all kinds of environmental challenges, the 6th EAP is the foundation for the European Commission’s environmental policy.\textsuperscript{39} It has set the strategic framework for the EU’s environmental policy-making for the period of 2002-2012, and what needs to be done in order to realise and implement the policies. Four areas are prioritised within the 6th EAP, namely climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment and health; natural resources and waste.\textsuperscript{40} Particularly the first and the third areas are relevant to the EGC. The EU’s work within climate change is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions for example through the target of reducing the union’s emissions with 20% by the year 2020. The relation between environmental issues (especially pollution and noise in cities) and people’s health should no longer be neglected, which is why more research on the topic is needed as well as new strategies dealing with this problem. The idea of the 6th EAP is not only about environmental protection today and for future generations. Our quality of life is equally important.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{quote}
‘The 6th EAP promotes full integration of environmental protection requirements into all Community policies and actions and provides the environmental component of the Community’s strategy for sustainable development. The link is made between environment and European objectives for growth, competitiveness and employment.’
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{(European Commission)}

\textbf{Box 8\textsuperscript{42}}

By launching the EGC, the EU encourages environmental action taken at the local level in the cities. There are several benefits by reinforcing local democracy. First of all, subsidiarity is highly promoted, indicating that local problems should primarily be taken care of at the local level by the local government and the local decision making process. They know how to best deal with the issues since they know the area (in this case, the city) and its needs, demands, interests and how things generally work. Secondly, local democracies guarantee that power is not over-centralised for example on the EU level. This also leads to the third argument namely that citizens have a greater possibility to participate and influence decisions. Public political participation is crucial. From the green political point of view there are certain arguments for local democracy too, for instance that decentralisation leads to green

\textsuperscript{40} The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community 2002-2012, \url{http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/intro.htm} (Retrieved 2009-05-10).
consciousness; that sustainability requires grassroots democracy; and that there are not as big environmental impacts when using economic processes in a smaller scale.\textsuperscript{43}

### 2.4. Sweden’s EU Presidency 2009

Starting the 1\textsuperscript{st} of July 2009 for six months, Sweden will be chairing the EU Presidency. During that period, Sweden will lead and be in charge of the EU’s work within many important areas. Holding the Presidency implies a unique chance to influence the EU and to put extra emphasis on particular questions. The Swedish Government has already decided to be a driving force within the environmental politics of the EU. Environmental questions will be highly prioritised and the Swedish Ministry of the Environment will particularly focus on issues related to climate, marine environment, biological diversity, and eco-efficient economy.\textsuperscript{44} The Swedish Government is for instance going to work hard to implement carbon dioxide fees within the EU.\textsuperscript{45}

The year of 2009 is very critical for the global environment because of the UN’s upcoming COP15 meeting that will take place in Copenhagen in December. A new international climate agreement has to replace the existing Kyoto Protocol which will expire in 2012. Chairing the EU Presidency, Sweden will be the one representing the EU in the negotiations.\textsuperscript{46} This is indeed a very crucial post in order to make the new agreement a success. To make China and the US sign is a key factor. The \textit{United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change} (UNFCCC) is the base for the international climate politics, with the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. According to the convention it is foremost the developed countries’ responsibility to actively take action since they have contributed the most to climate change.\textsuperscript{47} As a developed country Sweden will therefore play an important role in Copenhagen for that reason too.

At the \textit{European Forum} in Hässleholm Cecilia Malmström (the Liberal Party), Minister of European Affairs, confirmed that the Swedish Government will highly prioritise the climate on the EU’s agenda during the Presidency. She also stated that the current financial crisis should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat to the environmental work. The climate and

\textsuperscript{44} Miljödepartementets arbete under Sveriges ordförandeskap, http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/3711/a/96711 (Retrieved 2009-05-11).
the economy must be dealt with at the same time and Europe has to act jointly. On the question on what will be considered a successful Swedish Presidency, she answered that a positive outcome at the COP15 meeting would be a good measurement but that it is not solely up to Sweden to make a new agreement come true.\textsuperscript{48}

The Swedish Members of the European Parliament, Lena Ek (the Centre Party) and Anders Wijkman (the Christian Democrat Party), were invited to the European Forum to talk about ‘what the climate demands of the EU’. They agreed with Malmström that joint action is needed in order to fight climate change, and that the financial crisis should result in less emission. They also pointed out the importance of new technology that constantly needs to be developed, which is crucial for the environment as well as for industries in the future. Wijkman demanded more honesty before the COP15 since there are different opinions among countries regarding climate issues and how to tackle them. He believed that the EU’s current climate commitments are too low. The EU should reduce its emissions more and thereby become a role model to the US and China. Politicians must put up realistic but at the same time tougher commitments.\textsuperscript{49}

Regarding Sweden’s Presidency and the COP15 meeting an interesting question came up: Is Sweden really good enough within climate work to make the rest of the EU follow? Ek believed that Sweden has come a long way (the carbon dioxide tax as a good example), but Swedes are lacking experience in some areas such as solar energy. She pointed out that we are not always the best, but we have the strongest will. Swedes are very environment-conscious and that is a major strength. Wijkman’s answer was that Sweden is doing quite well, but that we all can and should to do much more.\textsuperscript{50}

Another crucial event this year is the elections to the European Parliament in the beginning of June. In Sweden the elections will take place the 7\textsuperscript{th} of June 2009. The Swedish citizens are going to vote for which 18 candidates from different political parties that will represent Sweden in the European Parliament the coming five years.\textsuperscript{51} When Sweden starts its duty as EU President, there will be a new Parliament which will mainly focus on administrative and internal issues at first.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} Malmström, Speech given at the European Forum in Hässlehom 2009-05-12.
\textsuperscript{49} Ek & Wijkman, Discussion at the European Forum in Hässleholm, 2009-05-12.
\textsuperscript{50} Ek & Wijkman, Discussion at the European Forum in Hässleholm, 2009-05-12.
\textsuperscript{52} Vad innebär ordförandeskapet? \url{http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/11191} (Retrieved 2009-05-11).
The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) has recently conducted a report where the current 19 Swedish parliamentarians are reviewed in relation to the parliamentarians’ environmental engagement, work and decision making within the European Parliament. According to the SSNC, five of the parliamentarians strongly worked in favour of the environment (among them Lena Ek and Anders Wijkman\textsuperscript{53}) but interestingly they all represent different political parties. It is thus clear that not only the Parliament, but also the individual parliamentarians have a major impact on the EU’s environmental politics. The elections to the Parliament will therefore matter a lot for the future environment. The SSNC’s conclusion is that anyone who cherish and cares for the environment should vote in the European Parliament elections.\textsuperscript{54}

3. Analysis

In this chapter the EGC will be analysed and discussed in order to make an evaluation of the award’s relevance. Since it is optional for cities to apply to the EGC, the aspect of voluntary approaches will here be outlined. Different green players’ view on the EGC, and a discussion on how well-known the award is will follow.

3.1. Voluntary approaches

According to Connelly and Smith, studies of policy instruments show that changes of collective behaviour in favour of the environment will only be reality if there is either an economic encouragement or a threat of being punished. It is believed that without any of these two components people, groups or businesses will not change just for the sake of what is good, in this case the environment. However, voluntary policy instruments have been developed in opposite to this view aiming to educate, negotiate and persuade individuals and organisations in order to make them want to change their behaviour. Here the focus is on the underlying values and attitudes of people and business. Connelly and Smith mention two types of voluntary policy instruments; one where information, voluntary standards and education is provided, and one based on negotiated agreements. One way of providing education and increased knowledge is through eco-labelling which has become very common. Eco-labels regarding energy efficiency, ecological and/or Fair Trade products, to mention a few, are highly used in order to make customers make the right choices. Green campaigns,

\textsuperscript{53} En röst för miljön? pp. 23, 30.
\textsuperscript{54} En röst för miljön? pp. 2, 4, 34-35.
projects and special courses in schools and at universities are other ways of reaching out to companies, organisations and the public.\textsuperscript{55}

The supporters of voluntary principles say that the system is less expensive, more flexible and more efficient and that it can be put into practice much quicker than an ordinary system. Critics on the other hand claim that neither individuals nor businesses will act on a voluntary basis and that therefore behaviours will not actually change. There is no guarantee of an improved environment unless there are mandatory regulations or economical benefits.\textsuperscript{56} It could be seen that a mix of regulations and voluntary principles probably is the best solution.

There is also a more formal way of applying voluntary principles, namely through \textit{Environmental Management Systems} (EMS) which are supported by national governments and the EU. The EU’s system was launched in 1995 and is called \textit{Eco-Management and Audit Scheme} (EMAS). The main idea is that companies and organisations can use EMAS as an instrument to report, evaluate and improve their work related to the environment. Companies and organisations participate on a voluntary basis, but once they take part in EMAS, they have to live up to the agreements and commitments and be ready to be scrutinised. By taking part of EMAS a company can adopt a greener image which will attract customers.\textsuperscript{57}

What about the EGC award then? The EGC is entirely a voluntary award that aims at promoting and encouraging an environmentally friendly city life. It is not mandatory for cities to participate; they chose to do so. The award does not provide any particular economical benefits (except an expected increase in tourism and investments in the winning city, but there is no such guarantee) which means cities participate first and foremost for the sake of a better environment. It could even be argued that the EGC functions as an eco-label. Stockholm has been labelled European Green Capital 2010 and thereby inspires other cities to make the right choices too. Many of the projects in Stockholm are based on regulations (for instance the congestion taxes) as well as on voluntary means, but the EGC award itself is solely based on a voluntary approach.

\textsuperscript{56} Connelly & Smith (2003) p. 175.
3.2. Different green players’ view on the EGC

It has been of great importance to get different perspectives on the EGC award when writing this thesis. For this reason my questionnaire has been crucial. As discussed previously, the target group includes politicians, officials and people within organisations or authorities in Sweden involved in Stockholm’s EGC title, other environment issues or EU matters in one way or another. Once again, it is important to stress that this is not a statistical survey and that the respondents have been answering the questionnaire according to their personal opinions, and not as representatives of their organisations or employers. This subchapter serves as my interpretation and analysis of the respondents’ answers (see appendix A for the questionnaire results except for the respondents’ freely written answers and comments). A deeper analysis will be provided in the Final Discussion & Conclusion (chapter 4).

When analysing the questionnaire results some divided opinions about the EGC can be noticed, but some collective conclusions can also be made. About half of the respondents believe that the EGC will have little impact in general, whereas the other half believes that the impact will be fairly big. Regarding Stockholm in particular, a slight majority believes that the impact will be fairly big or big (in terms of for example publicity, tourism, economy and politics). The respondents are not too optimistic when it comes to the award’s possibility to inspire other cities, and they seem to agree that Stockholm’s EGC title will have none or only little effect on Sweden’s role as EU President. The same goes for Sweden’s ability to influence the EU within environment questions as well as the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen. The questionnaire target group expect no or little increased influencing power of Sweden at the meeting. Still a majority of them are in favour of the award and think that it is, to different extent, a good or even a very good method for the EU to work with environment issues, but some of them are not so sure.58

Regarding the advantages of having the EGC award in Europe, many different aspects and comments came up in the questionnaire answers. To highlight positive work and projects are seen as a good and important thing. The EGC is an encouragement to prioritise environmental issues and to continue the environmental work, but also to make the citizens proud. Additionally, the role of the cities in environmental work at the EU level and the global level will be reinforced. As the winner of the EGC, Stockholm is seen as a role model and inspiration to other cities and Sweden will automatically get more attention too. Sweden’s ability to influence the EU and the rest of the world increases. At the local level, in this case Stockholm, the citizens can put demands on the politicians to make sure the EGC

58 Lönegren (2009), Questionnaire (see appendix A)
environment commitments are actually fulfilled. There is probably a huge risk that the environmental issues are neglected in favour of the financial crisis and unemployment issues, but the EGC will hopefully help lifting the environmental issues nationally and within the EU especially during Sweden’s EU Presidency. 

Even though the respondents do not appear to believe that the actual impact of the EGC will be extremely large, most of them see no disadvantages of having the award. The few respondents that do see some disadvantages are all concerned about the political aspect of Stockholm’s EGC title. Arne Forstenberg (GlobalFOCUS) had hoped that other cities would have done far better than Stockholm, because there is still much left to do in the city. Some projects in Stockholm are not heading in the right direction. The purpose of the award has gone wrong if the EGC makes the politicians in Stockholm feel proud and satisfied with their work. He also points out that an award of this kind is an opportunity for politicians to shape and push the development forward, but the question is whether Swedish politicians are willing to grab this chance to lift their politics to a new level or if they will be satisfied with what they have accomplished so far.

Also Per Bolund (the Green Party) is critical. According to him, the main problem is that the EGC rewards already implemented efforts that might be a couple of years old. Regarding Stockholm the city is awarded with the EGC title during the period of the right-wing government, when in fact the environmental work was done during the last period with the left-wing government. The right-wing parties do not prioritise the environment as much and have destroyed a lot of Stockholm’s environmental work, but they now use the EGC title for promoting their ‘environmental policies’. Karin Ek (the County Administrative Board of Stockholm) mentions similar concerns, but also points out that Stockholm does work hard within certain areas today, whereas there is not much done within others. Also Svenne Junker (the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) acknowledges the political problem but sees an important advantage of the EGC when it comes to maintaining and reinforcing the image of Sweden and Stockholm as predecessor within the field of the environment on the EU level and globally, even though this no longer is the political reality.

Overall, most respondents agree that the actual outcomes of the EGC award depend on how well Stockholm manages to administer the title. It is up to the politicians to make the best out

59 Lönegren (2009), Questionnaire (see appendix A)  
60 Forstenberg (questionnaire respondent)  
61 Bolund (questionnaire respondent)  
62 Ek (questionnaire respondent)  
63 Junker (questionnaire respondent)
of it and to follow up with concrete programs, reforms, initiatives and proposals, and to coordinate the activities and to keep a clearly defined goal. The politicians also need to make sure that Stockholm lives up to its EGC commitments. The award should be an encouragement to keep promoting and prioritising environmental questions. The environmental work needs to continue and be developed further. This is a chance to expose Stockholm as an internationally leading city on the way to a sustainable society. If Stockholm manages to promote the title and make it visible, a certain impact can probably be expected. Several of the respondents mention the importance of communicating the award and the projects to the citizens, co-workers, companies and to other cities in Sweden and Europe.  

Linda Persson (EU Policy Adviser at the Executive Office, the City of Stockholm, and one of the contact persons regarding Stockholm’s EGC title) believes that Stockholm has everything to gain by administering the title accurately. She hopes that the soft factors will be emphasised, that is the work method and the cooperation between the civic authorities, the government and the business world. Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities that each has big freedom and responsibility, and Persson points out that there is where the efforts need to be taken, and maybe not so much at the national level. By promoting municipal self-government (even though it might be difficult to implement in other European cities), it will show that local initiatives can lead to something much bigger, and that there are local solutions to many of the global problems. The EGC is a way for the EU to acknowledge the importance of the local level efforts.  

In conclusion, there seem to be a generally positive approach to the EGC within the questionnaire target group even though they notice some political issues with the award. Nevertheless I see a contradiction here in their answers. According to the survey responses, the respondents believe that the award will have limited impact on Sweden and Europe. However, in the free-text answers, there seem to be quite a positive faith in the EGC award’s effects. There is in any case a common belief that it is up to Stockholm and the local and national politicians to grab the chance and administer the EGC title wisely.
3.3. How well-known is the EGC?

The EU’s objective is that the holder of the EGC title shall inspire other cities to make green choices and make tourism and business investments increase in the winning city. However, if the award is not known, this will not happen. The diagram below shows the results from my small Google search test (described in the method part) regarding how recognised the EGC award actually is. The numbers shown in the diagram in yellow indicate the number of hits where the EU websites were excluded (see appendix B for all the exact test results).

Before drawing any conclusions about the diagram, it is vital to stress once again that the test results can not be taken too seriously. The restrictions mentioned in the method part can not be neglected. Therefore, the figures in the diagram are not exact (which the French result indicates where the number of hits even slightly increased when the EU websites were excluded). Despite the restrictions, the diagram still gives a good indication of how much the EGC has been mentioned on the internet, and thereby how well-known the award is.

The number of Google hits varies a lot from 3 hits in Slovenia to almost 5000 Swedish hits. In relation to the other countries the EGC has definitely made an impression on Sweden. Despite the small Swedish population the actual number of Google hits was considerably higher than in the other countries. However, the result was expected since Stockholm is the winner of the EGC 2010. Surprisingly, Germany did not get particularly many hits (in relation to the German population) even though Hamburg is the EGC winner of 2011. Moreover, Germany was the country with most applicant cities. Seven German cities applied for the EGC and three of them made it to the final (see appendix C). It could therefore be seen
that the interest for the EGC should be quite high in Germany. Still the number of German Google hits was relatively low.

All in all, one could come to the conclusion that the EGC is not particularly well-known in Europe in general. It is possible that the EGC will get more attention in the beginning of 2010 when Stockholm’s year as EGC will start off, but nobody knows whether this will be the case or not. So far it seems like most attention to the EGC award is given within the country of the winning city. Is the EGC making Europe greener then? This will be discussed in the next chapter.

4. Final Discussion & Conclusion

Referring back to the general purpose of this thesis, namely the studying of what extent the EGC award will help making European cities greener, I will here discuss and answer my problem formulations which are: *In what ways might the EGC award influence Stockholm (as the winner of the EGC 2010) and Sweden? How might the EGC award help to promote environmental issues in Europe?* My sub questions are: *How will Stockholm’s EGC title affect the Swedish EU Presidency? Will Sweden become more influential when it comes to environmental matters within the EU, and at the COP15 meeting in Copenhagen?*

There is no doubt that the ecological modernisation theory has influenced green politics for quite some time now, and neither the EU nor the EGC are any exceptions. The economy and the environment need to go hand in hand. Today when there is a financial crisis and a serious climate threat of global warming, there do not seem to be any other option than to apply the ecological modernisation theory in order to solve the problems. This is also what Cecilia Malmström, Lena Ek and Anders Wijkman identified at the European Forum. It is no longer a question of priority, but a question of how to take action and establish sustainable development before it is too late. The question is whether or not the EGC is the right way to achieve sustainable development. Will the award fulfil its vision of greening European cities and improving the citizens’ quality of life? Are Europe’s urban areas really becoming prosperous thanks to the award? There are no clear-cut answers to those questions. However, my findings in the analysis indicate that in some respects the EGC might lead to a greener Europe or at least has the potential to do so.
The main features of ecological modernisation used in this thesis regards collective action, an ecological approach in everyday life, sustainable development and not the least a developed cooperation in the policy-making process through voluntary approaches. The EGC award can be seen as an instrument or method based on the theory. Many of the underlying ideas can be explained through ecological modernisation. Following, the main features used in this thesis will be applied and discussed.

Since the EGC is not an EU regulation the voluntary aspect is highly relevant. The award evolves around this to a large extent. The idea of the EGC was (and still is) to create a system where cities choose to participate because they want to make a positive contribution to the local and global environment. As a bonus the EGC title might lead to good PR, new investments, better living conditions and increased tourism. This is the core of ecological modernisation and also the EGC; one positive outcome generates another and that is how sustainable development could be achieved. Cities have everything to gain and nothing to lose by participating. Through the EGC competition cities can develop networks and cooperation and thereby inspire each other to collectively make green contributions.

The applying EGC cities are free to choose their own methods and projects which mean they can adopt environmental policies suitable to their local needs. The projects implemented at the local level are of different magnitudes including overall policies as well as practical solutions. The EGC particularly encourages green implementations within the ten criteria categories previously mentioned in the descriptive part about the EGC. The local implementations will that way have an affect in everyday life and lead to sustainable development. The EGC suits very well into the EU policies for the same reasons as for the theory. The 6th EAP promotes ecological modernisation and thereby sustainable development which is the key to a better environment according to the EU. Policies intend at changing behaviour as Roberts points out in her research, but how could this be seen in reality? The EGC award and its impacts will now be discussed.

I agree with the respondents of the questionnaire that good and positive environment efforts should be promoted, but according to my findings it seems like the EGC is mostly beneficial to the winning city. As my Google search test indicates most attention to the EGC is given within the winning country, Sweden. This clearly shows the importance and the responsibility that Stockholm has to spread its green knowledge to other cities. As mentioned in the analysis, the benefits and the outcomes of the EGC very much depends on how Stockholm decides to administer the title. If the city promotes and communicates the award to its own citizens and to other European cities, there is a lot to gain for Stockholm in terms
of reputation, projects, investments and tourism. It is up to Stockholm to make the best out of it and to treasure the title, especially when it comes to informing and inspiring other cities and share its knowledge about green projects. Other cities will hardly copy the green ideas (at least not to the same extent) unless Stockholm takes an active position in reaching out to Europe.

Within Stockholm there are many invisible green efforts taken such as policies, projects, industry and company agreements, programmes and the implementation of low energy traffic-lights. Others are more visible such as cycle-tracks, green areas, public transports and the payments of congestion taxes. Even though there are visible green measurements taken, it still might not be obvious visually what makes Stockholm the EGC compared to other cities. I agree with one of the respondents of the questionnaire who pointed out that tourists hardly choose to go to Stockholm just because of the fact that the carbon dioxide emissions have decreased with 25% per citizen since 1990. However, local and/or national politicians in Europe might visit Stockholm to get inspiration and knowledge about the green projects. In my opinion, the EGC will have a bigger influence on politicians, decision makers and businessmen rather than tourists unless the award is highly promoted. If Stockholm makes the EGC visible and attractive through campaigns, information and projects, more people (Stockholmers as well as tourists) and not the least the city itself are likely to benefit from it.

The EGC award is an acknowledgment and a confirmation from the EU that Stockholm is doing well and actively is taking green steps forward. By launching the EGC award the EU show that environment protection and sustainable development is important and desirable, but also that collective action is needed. No city or country alone can make Europe green, but collectively it is doable. Shared knowledge is therefore crucial. The EU’s motive and approach might inspire cities and countries to take greener action. Regarding Stockholm the EGC title will probably influence Sweden’s international position, at least indirectly. It is thinkable that the title will come to increase the city’s confidence which may lead to the fact that Sweden takes a stronger position and pushes harder in international environment negotiations. However, it is again up to Stockholm and Sweden to administer the title wisely. As discussed previously, local politicians should not take the EGC title as if the urban environmental efforts are completed. They need to make sure to keep up the good work in Stockholm. Thanks to the EGC title Sweden has a possibility to enhance its position as an environment frontrunner. Furthermore, Stockholm as the Swedish capital could be considered to function as a power symbol which thereby gives Sweden a stronger voice internationally. If for instance Malmö would have received the EGC title instead, the possible penetrating power would probably not be as big (regardless of the quality of the city’s green projects).
Even though Stockholm may function as a symbol, the actual end-result of the new climate agreement in Copenhagen will most likely have very little to do with Stockholm’s EGC title (which also was pointed out by a majority of the questionnaire respondents). However, as recently mentioned the title can indirectly come to have an influence on Sweden and the EU Presidency. The EGC title certainly does not hurt the negotiations anyway. It could be seen as a lucky coincidence that Stockholm is entitled the EGC of 2010, just after Sweden’s EU Presidency and the COP15 meeting. This combination definitely gives Stockholm and Sweden a golden opportunity to lift environment and climate issues to a new level on the EU’s agenda and also worldwide. Stockholm could not have been awarded the EGC title with any better timing, and therefore Sweden can not let go of this unique chance to be in the spotlight and to make a radical contribution to the global environment.

In order to make the EGC successful, different components need to co-operate and it is foremost a question of responsibility. At the local level cities need to take green action by implementing projects, strategies and policies. As previously mentioned the winning EGC cities then have a responsibility to reach out and share their knowledge. At the supranational level, the EU has other responsibilities. Not only should the EU run the selection process and establish policies regarding the EGC, but the EU should also promote the award every year and make it desirable. It is the EU’s responsibility to maintain and increase the general interest of the EGC. If the EGC remains unknown, people will loose interest in it and thereby the whole idea with the award will be ruined. The European Commission should therefore continue to have a supportive and encouraging role for the applying cities (in accordance with the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, see p. 22), foremost in less developed countries where the cities might lack a tradition of dealing with environmental issues. However, the EU should also scrutinise the local projects and do regular follow-ups on Stockholm (and all other EGC winners to come) even after the city’s year as EGC to make sure that Stockholm lives up to its commitments. If Stockholm does not, the EU should take some sort of action in order to guarantee that no empty promises have been made.

As a final point I would like to emphasise that my conclusions are qualified speculations of the EGC award’s influence on Stockholm, Sweden and Europe. It is not possible to know what the actual outcomes will be until the year of 2010 is over. When Hamburg takes over the EGC title in 2011, the first ‘real’ measurements and evaluations of Stockholm can be done for instance through follow-ups on projects and campaigns. Thereby the first evaluation of the EGC award as such can also be done. However, in order to get a more thorough assessment one should wait a couple of years to see the outcomes of the EGC when several cities have been administering the title. Awards of this kind take time to launch. By establishing a good
reputation and make the EGC title desirable, the award will have a strong possibility to gradually generate greener cities. Stockholm as the very first city to be awarded the EGC title has though a great opportunity to shape and settle good examples of EGC management for the coming EGC winners.

To sum up, it is voluntary to participate in the EGC award but the winning city has a responsibility to wisely administer the EGC title for its own sake and for Europe’s. It is crucial for the city to reach out to other cities in order to share its knowledge and to make the EGC visible. The EU needs to make the award well-known and desirable, but should also do follow-ups to make sure that Stockholm’s commitments are fulfilled. If so, then the EGC award could be seen as a positive step towards a green and sustainable Europe.
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Forstenberg, Arne (GlobalFOCUS), Questionnaire respondent 2009-05-11 (see Lönegren, Questionnaire).

Junker, Svenne (The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation), Questionnaire respondent 2009-05-06 (see Lönegren, Questionnaire).

Lönegren, Lovisa, Google search test conducted 2009-05-21 (See appendix B).

Lönegren, Lovisa, Questionnaire conducted in April/May 2009 (See appendix A).

Persson, Linda (EU Policy Adviser, City of Stockholm, Executive Office), e-mail sent 2009-05-18 from linda.persson@stadshuset.stockholm.se Also questionnaire respondent 2009-05-04 (see Lönegren, Questionnaire).

**Pictures on front page:**

*Skyline of Stockholm*, private photo, Lovisa Lönegren, April 2009.

Appendix

A) Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out in Swedish, but here the English translation is provided in italic. The numbers within the answering boxes indicate how many people ticked each box.

Frågeformulär/Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ditt namn/name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Din organisation/arbetsgivare:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation/employer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontaktuppgifter (tel/mail):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacts (phone/e-mail):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datum/date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ar det OK att du citeras i den färdiga uppsatsen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it OK for you to be cited in the completed thesis?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Del 1 – European Green Capital (EGC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Hur mycket känner du till EGC?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How familiar are you with the EGC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>Hur stor betydelse generellt tror du att EGC kommer få?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How big impact generally do you think the EGC will have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(för miljön, Europa, städerna, medborgarna etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for the environment, Europe, the cities, the citizens etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C</th>
<th>Hur väl kände du till att Stockholm blir miljöhuvudstad 2010?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How familiar were you with the fact that Stockholm will be the EGC of 2010?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>Hur väl känner du till de bakomliggande anledningarna till att Stockholm vann?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How familiar are you with the underlying reasons why Stockholm won?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>Hur mycket kommer Stockholm påverkas av EGC-titeln?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(publicitet, turism, ekonomi, politik, miljö etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent will Stockholm be influenced by the EGC title?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(publicity, tourism, economy, politics, environment etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ett av EU:s syften med utmärkelsen är att skapa en förebild som kan inspirera andra städer till klimatsmarta val. Hur mycket tror du att andra städer i Europa kommer att ta efter Stockholms olika miljöprojekt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One of the EU's aims with the award is to create a role model that can inspire other cities to make green choices. To what extent do you think that other European cities will copy Stockholm’s green projects?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>Hur mycket kommer andra svenska städer (t.ex. Malmö) påverkas/ta efter Stockholms olika miljöprojekt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent will other Swedish cities (e.g. Malmö) be influenced by or copy Stockholm’s green projects?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hur mycket kommer Sveriges roll som EU-ordförande påverkas i och med EGC-titeln? 
To what extent will Sweden’s role as EU President be influenced by the EGC title?

Del 2 – EU och Sveriges ordförandeskap/the EU and Sweden’s Presidency

H

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inte alls</th>
<th>Lite</th>
<th>Ganska mycket</th>
<th>Absolut</th>
<th>Vet ej</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Kommentarer/Comments:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

A
EGC-utmärkelsen är en bra metod från EU:s sida att jobba för miljön. The EGC is a good method for the EU to improve the environment.

<table>
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<th>Ganska mycket</th>
<th>Absolut</th>
<th>Vet ej</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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Kommentarer/Comments:

B
Din organisation/arbetsgivare är positivt inställd till EGC. Your organisation/employer is positive towards the EGC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inte alls</th>
<th>Till viss del</th>
<th>Ganska mycket</th>
<th>Absolut</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

Kommentarer/Comments:

C
Sverige kommer få mer tyngd i miljörågor inom EU tack vare EGC-utmärkelsen. Sweden will gain more power within environment questions thanks to the EGC title.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inte alls</th>
<th>Till viss del</th>
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Kommentarer/Comments:

D
Sverige kommer få mer tyngd på COP15-mötet i Köpenhamn tack vare EGC-utmärkelsen. Sweden will gain more power at the COP15-meeting in Copenhagen thanks to the EGC title.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inte alls</th>
<th>Till viss del</th>
<th>Ganska mycket</th>
<th>Absolut</th>
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Kommentarer/Comments:

Del 3 – Öppna frågor/Open questions

A

According to you, what are the benefits of an award like the EGC? (For Stockholm? For Sweden? For the EU? For the global environment? Etc.)

B

What are the disadvantages? (No/little actual importance? Waste of resources and time? Etc.)

C
Hur bör Stockholm på bästa sätt förvalta titeln som miljöhuvudstad? How should Stockholm administer the EGC title in a best way?

Kommentarer/Comments:

Del 4 – Övriga kommentarer/Other comments

Kommentarer/Comments:
B) Google search test results 2009-05-21 (number of hits)

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<th>Excluding EU websites</th>
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C) Applicant cities for EGC 2010 and 2011

The eight finalists are marked in bold. (List and map retrieved from the same website\textsuperscript{66}.)

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<td>Bristol</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{66} Is your city a green role model?


(Retrieved 2009-06-01)