



## **A green heart is easy to find: City of Nijmegen**

RIGHT: Solar Flower Tree Nijmegen, design and photography by Andreas Hetfeld.



Several cities have taken measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and offset currently unavoidable emissions. Becoming climate neutral is one way to tackle some of the major environmental, economic and social challenges facing cities today, leading to reduced costs, increased standards of living and improved health.

The City of Nijmegen wants to become climate neutral by 2032. They are aiming for a 3% energy reduction every year and 20% sustainable energy generation in 2020. With this in mind, the city has joined the EU Covenant of Mayors.

Nijmegen is working with residents, institutions and industry on a series of high-profile projects. These projects fall under the umbrella campaign 'The Green Heart', reflecting the idea that green ideas and action must come from the heart. In the Nijmegen dialect, the words for deer and 'heart' are pronounced the same, much like hart and heart.

The big leading companies and organisations in Nijmegen have joined the municipal council in the Nijmegen Energy Covenant. Each year, participating companies voluntarily save at least 3% of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Because many big users have signed up, the savings are substantial, with an 1.2 million tons anticipated over three years.

The Nijmegen housing associations are busy making their homes energy efficient and turning to sustainable energy. At the start of 2011, the climate shop, 'The Green Heart', will open in the centre of Nijmegen. Here homeowners will receive tips on how to make their homes energy efficient and find out about subsidies issued by the municipality for solar panels and roof gardens and sustainability loans for expensive insulation measures.

### **Tapping into the elements**

Nijmegen also wants to generate its own sustainable energy and is planning the construction of five big wind turbines. These will supply electricity to thousands of new homes. The city is further investigating the potential for a hybrid heating network using residual heat from a waste incineration plant. This will significantly improve the energy performance of these homes.

Nijmegen also has much to offer as a 'sun city'. Radboud University has set a world record with the production of the thinnest solar cell. And government, industry, housing associations and residents are working together on small and large photovoltaic projects.

City centre shops and companies in business parks use bicycle couriers and clean vehicles for bundled deliveries. And the city buses now run on clean natural gas and will soon be using CO<sub>2</sub> neutral biogas. Yet they say they have a long way to go before they can claim to be an energy neutral city. Hopefully 'Cancún' energy will give them and the world the boost we need.

**The City of Nijmegen** was settled by the Romans more than 2,000 years ago, making it the oldest city in the Netherlands. Nijmegen, as a city of knowledge, is also strongly focused on the future. Groundbreaking fundamental research at the Radboud University's leading institutes and in the field of medical technology at its Medical Centre contributes crucially to this.

Forecasts show the city's population will continue to grow in the coming decades from 163,000 to over 200,000. This is why the city is investing in new, attractive residential areas on both sides of the River Waal. Over the next few years, a secondary channel will be created in the Waal to accommodate high water levels resulting from climate change. This is the biggest climate adaptation project in the Netherlands. A unique feature of this is the creation of an island in the river, which, in combination with the new development on both banks of river, will give the city new impetus.

<http://www.rtcc.org>

<http://www.nijmegen.nl>