



10 Minutes For The Planet

Amsterdam Leads the Urban Green Revolution©

by Pierre Vercueil

Vocabulary & pronunciation study by Catherine Balter Kendall©

Words are explained alongside the text

Stressed syllables are underlined and in bold*

Hi there and welcome back to our weekly environmental series here on EnglishWaves, Ten Minutes for the Planet. In our current theme we're taking a **worldwide** tour of the planet's greenest cities and last time we visited the global leader, Copenhagen. Our cities play an indispensable part in **affecting** our transition to **sustainability**. In **reality**, urban areas cover only 2% of the earth's surface, but they're home to more than 50% of the global **population** and thus account for more than 80% of **greenhouse gases** produced. This means that the effort to **curb global warming** and move towards a more environmentally **sustainable** future starts in our metropolises.

Today we move on to number 2 on the **Economist Intelligence Unit's** Green City Index, none other of course than the vibrant Dutch capital. Amsterdam has long been one of the world's most environmentally progressive cities. With the number of bicycles **vastly outnumbering** the number of cars — more than 60 percent of inner-city trips take place **on two wheels** — the city **boasts** the world's most complex network of non-vehicle routes.

Like **its European peer** Copenhagen, Amsterdam also has a vision for 2025: reduce CO2 emissions by 40% compared to the 1990 baseline (in other words, by 2025 produce 40% less carbon emissions than the city was producing in 1990). How is the city doing this? First, it has implemented a **comprehensive insulation** program for its many existing buildings that the city's **executive** council put into place as far back as 2011. **Homeowners** have also been encouraged to **improve** the insulation of their buildings through numerous tax **incentives**.

worldwide (adj.) international

to affect (vb.) to have an impact on

sustainability (n.) a system that respects the environment in the way it is managed

to account for (vb.) to represent, to make up

greenhouse (n.) hothouse

greenhouse gases (exp.) carbon dioxide emissions

to curb (vb.) to control, to keep within limits

global warming (exp.) the process by which the earth is getting hotter due to carbon emissions

vastly (adv.) greatly, by a large amount

to outnumber (vb.) to be more numerous than

on two wheels (exp.) by bicycle

to boast (vb.) to be proud to have

peer (n.) equivalent, similar (city)

homeowners (n.) people who own, or possess their own house

Second, wind energy also forms a large part of Amsterdam's ambition for its 2025 goal. It's hoped that by then, 25% of the city's electricity needs will be generated sustainably within the city's **boundaries**. The ultimate **aim** is to produce 400MW wind energy by 2040, which is quite a bit more than the 334MW being produced now. **On top of this**, the global solar power **revolution** has **taken roots** locally with the city boasting one of the highest rates of homes being self-sufficient - in other words, homes that generate 100% of their energy consumption through solar **technology**.

But perhaps the most exciting green **development** in the city that has placed it at number 2 on the Green City Index is Amsterdam's Smart City partnership with Silicon Valley **frontrunner** Cisco Systems. The city **signed an agreement** with Cisco to "**foster** smarter and greener **innovation**" by working to shape the city as one of the company's **showcase** Internet metropolises. That might sound like exciting tech language, but what does it actually mean? **Essentially**, vehicles, buildings, thermostats, streetlights, motors, sensors, smart meters, **vending machines**, parking meters, traffic signals, and literally billions of other things will be connected to the Internet. This will **enable** the city's infrastructure to become ultra energy-efficient, and attract further global investment in its green infrastructure and initiatives.

Amsterdam might only be number two on the list but its future doesn't look any less green. With its Smart City initiative and rich tradition of non-motorized transport, Amsterdam **is set to** lead the urban green revolution for years to come. Join us again next time when we continue our look at the world's greenest cities. Stay tuned to Ten Minutes for the Planet on EnglishWaves.

to improve (vb.) to make better

incentive (n.) a thing which encourages or motivates so. to do sth.

boundary (n.) limit

aim (n.) objective

on top of this (exp.) in addition to this

root(s) n. the part of a plant that is underground

to take root (exp.) become established

frontrunner (n.) leader

to sign an agreement (exp.) to have a contract with

to foster (vb.) to encourage sth. or so. to grow or develop

showcase (n.) model

vending machines (exp.) machines stocked with products which you can buy directly

to enable (vb.) to make it possible for sth. to happen

to be set to (exp.) to be ready to and likely to do sth.

***Tip!**

These four syllable words all have their main stress on the second syllable:

reality, sustainable, economist, intelligence, executive, technology, development, essentially,

These four syllable words all have their main stress on the third syllable:

population European, comprehensive, insulation revolution, innovation