

Tallinn clean electricity

Located on the shores of the Baltic Sea in northern Estonia, Tallinn is a hub for start-ups and high-tech companies, while also drawing tourists to its beautifully preserved historic center. This vibrant city has been actively advancing sustainability initiatives in recent years, earning the title of European Green Capital in 2023. Now, Tallinn is fully committed to its heat detox as part of its ongoing efforts towards climate neutrality.

Situated in one of Europe's coldest regions, Tallinn faces significant heating demands, meaning a substantial portion of its emissions stem from the heating sector. However, with an ambitious goal of becoming climate-neutral by 2050, Tallinn is striving to fully decarbonise its district heating system by 2030. As of 2024, this target appears increasingly attainable, as 70% of the district heating is already powered by renewable sources.

With this goal in mind, the implementation of Tallinn's heat plan is already well underway. The city's district heating primarily relies on biomass residue and, more recently, energy from its largest solar park. Efforts are also in place to decarbonise the remaining heat supply. Heat pumps are being installed in the sea to replace fossil gas, and there are plans to utilise low-temperature heat from treated sewage water as well.

The finish line is already on sight, but there are still obstacles to overcome. For Tallinn, there's still work to do in order to connect to the buildings that are not yet supplied by district heating. It is now fundamental to incentivise local population to make the switch, and to keep a structured plan to install and refurbish the network without causing much trouble to the residents.

Traditionally concerned mostly with heating, the cold city of Tallinn now faces the need to cool as well, as summers get progressively warmer. To meet this new demand, the city started in 2019 to build a district cooling network, which has been expanded every year in the city centre by approximately one kilometre. This network is designed to be carbon neutral from the outset.

The Climate Strategy aims to develop a model of community-based renewable energy cooperatives, promote bicycle traffic, improve the accessibility of public transport, and support the complete reconstruction of apartment buildings, considering the requirements of energy efficiency.

In close cooperation with the private sector, it is planned to expand the district heating network, develop the district cooling network, and apply the principles of circular economy in energy production. A climate proof city supports biodiversity and (re)uses natural resources with as few losses as possible. These activities make the urban environment cleaner and more enjoyable.

Taking into account all areas, the climate plan specifies the fulfilment of one of the sub-objectives of the

current long-term development strategy "Tallinn 2035", the green revolution. By making changes in the energy economics, transportation and construction, Tallinn aims to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 2007, and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Adaptation to climate change also has an important role to play: the use of nature-based solutions in urban planning, improving the ability to respond to weather-related risks and a comprehensive communication provide the fertile ground for tackling unavoidable climate change in the urban environment.

The strategy of climate neutral Tallinn has been compiled from the commitments made upon joining the Covenant of Mayors "Mayors Adapt". Both the development strategy "Tallinn 2035" and the Climate Strategy are based on the European Commission's agreement "A European Green Deal" and the EU strategic long-term vision "A Clean Planet for All", which were approved by the Estonian Government in October 2019. The vision is to make the entire European Union climate neutral by 2050, meaning that our continent will not emit more greenhouse gases than the ecosystem can sequester.

On Wednesday, March 31, from 4 pm to 6 pm, a webinar on the climate plan will take place, where you can discuss and provide feedback on the climate strategy. You can register to participate at: <https://forms.office/r/ppECHmVMvT>.

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