

**1<sup>st</sup> European Award of Excellence “City for Children”**  
**Laudatio Category “Design of Open Spaces and Play Areas”**

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It is my pleasure to be involved in the first time awarding of the **European Award of Excellence “City for Children”** this evening.

For the Category **“Design of Open Spaces and Play Areas”**, the Jury received a total of 45 applications from cities around Europe. Deciding on the shortlist among all the very good applications was therefore a difficult task. Three outstanding projects were nominated in the cities of **Darmstadt, Zurich and Malmö**.

Making a final decision based on the on-site Jury visits to these projects, proved to be an even greater challenge. The Jury has therefore also decided to Award two cities with the European Award of Excellence in this category.

The two winning projects apply two very different approaches, but both have the same intention: to best meet the wishes and needs of children and youth in planning and designing open play areas.

The first city has made one of the most interesting building sites near the city centre available, in reaction to the wish of young people for an area for extreme sports. In addition to extensive areas for skateboarding and rock climbing, the “Stapelbäddsparken” in the City of Malmö offers spaces for artistic and cultural activities for young people. Although young people’s interests are in the forefront in the Stapelbäddsparken, it also supports inter-generational meetings with its different offers of sporting and cultural events. The success of this project is measured not by its financial gain but by popularity and demand. The Jury finds this attitude exemplary and it can also be extended and transferred to smaller projects for children and young people.

I am therefore honoured to present the **City of Malmö** with the **European Award of Excellence “City for Children”**.

While available land was excellently planned and designed in Malmö, the focus in the second winning city is on the urban renewal of a 1960ies high-rise settlement, with an over proportional youth and immigrant population. Here, administration and policy makers consciously decided to pursue the wishes and needs of young people. They were included in the different stages of the planning and implementation of diverse open spaces and play areas. The various measures are characterized by their individuality and simplicity. They complement the existing facilities, revalue them and serve the various leisure, exercise and social needs of children and adolescents. The Project "**Children as builders - Pioneering projects in a child-friendly neighborhood**" can therefore serve as a prominent example for neighbourhoods with similar problems in other European cities.

I am honoured to present the **European Award of Excellence “City for Children” to the City of Darmstadt.**