

The Green Key- Belgium - 'De Groene Sleutel' launched today

Today *Bond Beter Leefmilieu (BBL)*, the Flemish federation of environmental organisations and *Toerisme Vlaanderen*, the Flemish government administration of tourism, launch The Green Key Programme 'De Groene Sleutel'. The eco-label is awarded for campsites that work towards a low impact on the environment. The Green Key labelling in Flanders - Belgium is combined with an extensive guidance programme for the candidate camp sites.

'De Groene Sleutel' is part of The Green Key Programme, the international eco-label for tourist accommodations. More than 450 hotels, hostels, campsites and others in France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Greenland have been awarded with this prestigious quality label.

In Belgium 'De Groene Sleutel' is being launched for the campsites. In 2008 group accommodations and recreational domains will join. From 2009 on hostels, hotels and B&B will be able to participate in the Programme.

Criteria for camp sites

To obtain the eco-label, campsites have to fulfil a number of mandatory criteria and also realise a few optional criteria. Green key camp sites have an ambitious environmental management and an eco-minded and involved staff. They use water and energy sparingly, they work on waste prevention and sorting and inform their guests on their policy so to make them aware and involved. The managers also give special attention to sufficient open spaces and green space management. They reduce traffic circulation on the campsite and organise green activities.

For as well the guests as for the campsite managers the Green Key Programme has nothing but benefits. As a guest you choose for a Green Key campsite for it's good quality and you reward the environmental efforts made by the managers, you learn in a very practical way how you can help save the environment as well. Campsite managers get a guarantee of a strong environmental image. On top of this they can make cost savings on energy up to 30% and they can access an international network of environmental minded enterprises. They also benefit of marketing advantages and professional guidance.

Green Key is a Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) programme. FEE is an international NGO that also organises programmes such as the Blue Flag. The Green Key in the Flanders is run by BBL. Toerisme Vlaanderen will guide the campsites to obtain the eco-label. All candidates get the chance to work on bottle-necks one by one together with Toerisme Vlaanderen. The annual attribution of Green Keys is done by an independent jury with representation of the government, environmental organisations and the tourist sector.

Info-session

On Wednesday 21st of March all information necessary in order to obtain of a Green Key will be exposed to campsite owners and managers. All criteria and procedures will be illustrated with the new website www.groenesleutel.be

The info-session is on March 21st from 13h30 on at hotel Serwir in Sint Niklaas

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