



International conference to find solutions to cope with rainwater in our cities

An international conference aimed at stormwater issues is taking place in Estonian Ministry of the Environment. The event showcases a variety of technological options to cope with rainwater in our cities.

Rainwater is a major problem in urban areas because of pavement that does not let rainwater infiltrate into the soil. This causes floods during heavy rains.

"We've all seen the pictures and videos where Tuukri Street has become a street only accessible with a rubber boat. These kinds of floods are due to the fact that water can not infiltrate away." explained Rene Reisner the head of Water Department in Estonian Ministry of the Environment.

Estonia's storm-related problems are important particularly in larger cities - Tallinn and Tartu. Contaminants that reach water bodies through diffused rainwater are causing rapid algae growth in the Bay of Tallinn and can cause bad smells along Piritä Road.

"We need to rethink the way we build paved surfaces so that rainwater run-off would have somewhere to go." said Reisner.

Reisner added that the new smart solutions allow us to use rainwater for maintenance of green areas in the city, or even toilets

During the conference experts will suggest new models to help predict stormwater and how to control storm water. It also presents various techniques using sensors to quickly determine the concentration of pollutants in stormwater to avoid and prevent the contamination of water bodies. New software solutions that help cities to better manage stormwater flow and organization are also displayed.

The conference will take place under a Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union. The ongoing project is called "Baltic Flows". The conference hosts about 80 participants from the Baltic Sea Region countries as well as China and the United States.

