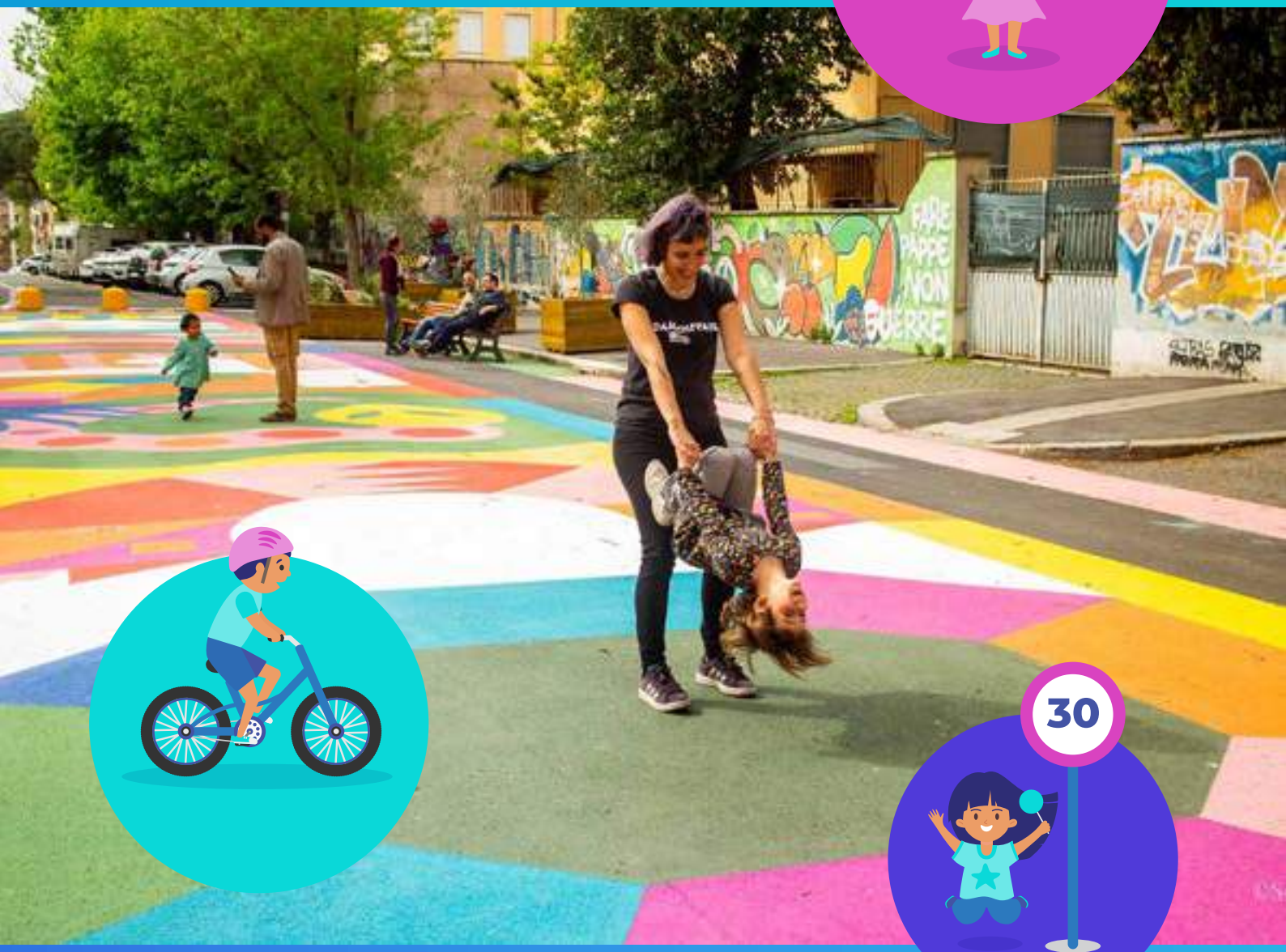
CleanCities

Streets for Kids, Cities for All

Ranking Europe's cities on child-friendly urban mobility



This briefing was written by Clean Cities, hosted by T&E. Clean Cities is Europe's largest network of organisations on a mission to build public support for cities to shift from polluting vehicles to active, shared and electric mobility.

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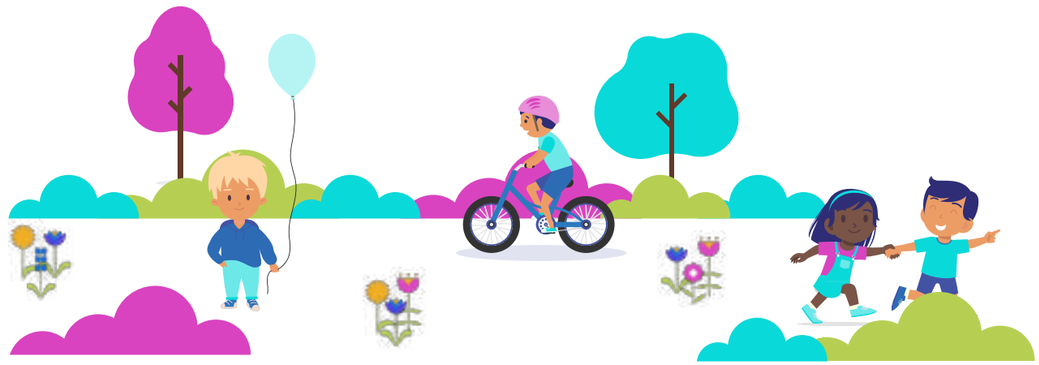


Executive summary

Research shows that **child-friendly cities contribute to more liveable environments for all residents**, and more than 3,500 municipalities from around the globe have joined UNICEF's 'Child Friendly Cities Initiative'. Transport shapes the physical environment in cities and has an outsized impact on the health and well-being of children, affecting road safety, air quality and physical activity. In response to these challenges, numerous cities have taken measures to promote child-friendly mobility.

This 2025 City Ranking on Child-Friendly Mobility assesses a **representative snapshot of 36 European cities on their efforts to prioritise children in their urban mobility decisions.** The ranking evaluates cities across three key indicators that have been identified as key measures by the EU's European Road Safety Observatory and align with UNICEF's recommendations:

- the adoption of school streets, which limit motorised traffic,
- the extent of safe speed limits (30km/h or less),
- the availability of protected cycling infrastructure.

These measures can primarily be implemented at the local level and have proven to be effective: school streets improve road safety and air quality, and can increase the number of children walking or cycling. Expanding 30km/h zones and building physically separated cycling infrastructure significantly reduce collisions and noise, and promote active travel, especially among children.

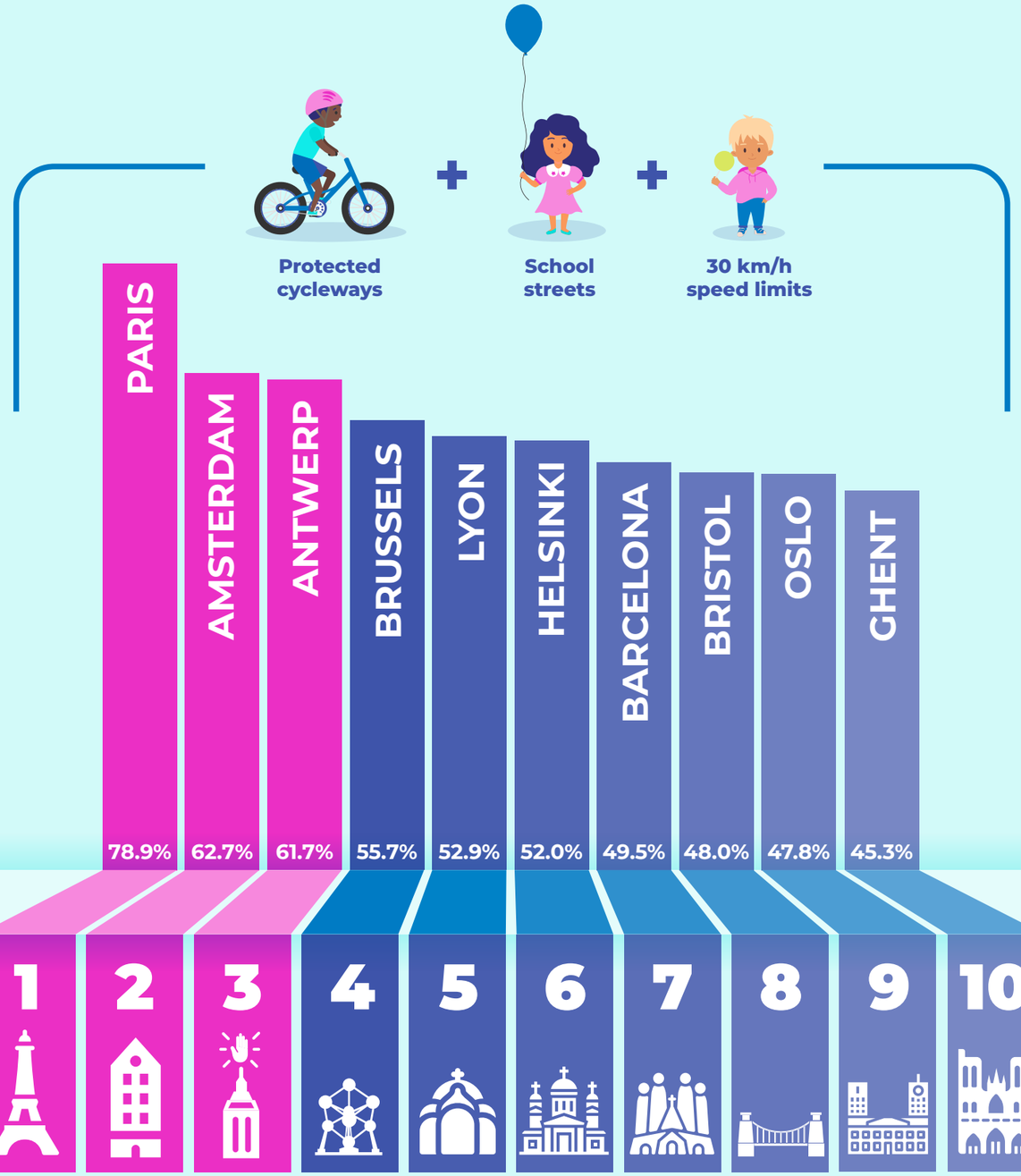
Data was gathered through direct engagement with city administrations, publicly available sources, and input from the Clean Cities network of more than 120 local partner organisations across 20 European countries. The main findings of the research are:

Overall results

- **Paris shows the strongest performance**, with consistently strong results across all three indicators and a total score of 79% (B+), nearly achieving an A grade. This is mostly the result of Mayor Hidalgo's efforts to boost the transition of the city over the past decade, from the rollout of school streets and cycling infrastructure to the introduction of a generalised 30km/h speed limit. In overall second place came Amsterdam (63%, B), followed by Antwerp (62%, B), the Brussels Capital Region (56%, C) and Lyon (53%, C).
- **Greater London** leads in school streets and gets a total score of 42% (C), having created more than 500 school streets in less than 10 years. Paris ranks first on protected cycling infrastructure and speed limits, having introduced a general 30km/h speed limit back in 2021.
- **'New champions' make rapid progress**. Among the leading cities, some – such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen – are widely recognised as long-standing pioneers in progressive urban mobility, having started the re-design of transport infrastructure decades ago. Others – like Paris, Brussels and London – have achieved remarkable progress in just the past 10 years. This demonstrates that meaningful change is possible within a relatively short period of time.
- **However, no city reaches an A grade (80% or more of the total score)**, with the absence of city-wide roll-out of school streets emerging as a common shortcoming. Eight cities, primarily in Southern and Central and Eastern Europe, are underperformers, receiving grades of E or F.
- **Cities in the same countries achieve very different scores**, highlighting the critical role of local leadership, vision and long-term commitment and investment.

Top 10 cities in Europe for child-friendly mobility

We assessed 36 cities on how they support child-friendly mobility - one way to make urban life better for everyone.



School streets

- **Nearly 1,000 school streets (streets where walking and cycling are prioritised and motorised traffic is limited) have been implemented at primary schools across the 36 cities**, with 26 cities having introduced at least one. This shows school streets are now widely being adopted throughout Europe and have become a key tool for cities to advance child-friendly mobility.
- **The leading cities – Greater London, Milan, Paris, Turin and Antwerp – have implemented school streets at more than one in five primary schools**, a significant result given that most school streets were only created following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **London leads significantly with over 500 school streets** and the highest share of any city in the ranking (27% of all primary schools). **Paris, Lyon** and **Milan** also stand out for their commitment to permanent pedestrianisation and greening of school streets.
- **In cities with a high number of school streets, strong grassroots mobilisation of parents, pupils and teachers has played a crucial role in driving change** (e.g. London, Paris, Milan and Turin).
- **However, 10 cities have not yet implemented any school streets**, with uneven uptake across Europe.
- **Permanent pedestrianisation remains less common than time-restricted closures**, which are usually applied at drop-off and pick-up times.

Nearly **1,000 school streets** have been implemented at primary schools across the 36 cities

Safe speeds

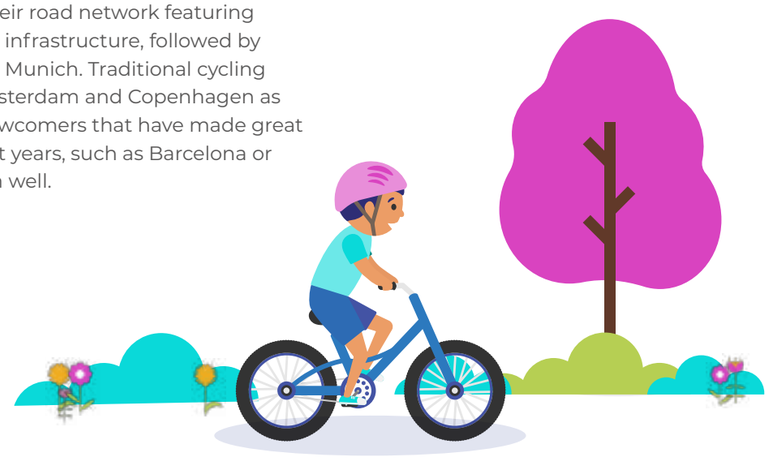
- **Nearly half of the cities have set at least 50% of their road networks to 30km/h** – showing that lower speed limits are becoming the norm. With the exception of early adopters such as Graz (1992) or Stockholm (2004), generalised 30km/h speed limits only started to be introduced in the second half of the 2010s, when cities such as Bristol, Grenoble, Ghent and Edinburgh set 30km/h speed limits in large parts of their streets.
- **Six cities** – Paris, Brussels, Lyon, Amsterdam, Bristol and Madrid – **stand out with 80% or more of their roads under 30km/h limits**.
- Conversely, **five cities have less than 10% of their streets covered**.
- The implementation of speed limits is primarily driven by two factors: ambitious local plans, or national laws setting lower default speed limits for all cities.

Paris, Brussels, Lyon, Amsterdam, Bristol and Madrid stand out with **80% or more of their roads** under 30km/h limits

Protected cycling infrastructure

- **On average**, protected cycling infrastructure covers the equivalent of only **17% of the road network** in the 36 cities. Over a third of the cities examined are below 10%.
- **Seven cities have coverage over 30%**, meaning that a safe route will be available for many destinations.
- **Paris and Helsinki lead with the equivalent of over 48%** of their road network featuring protected cycling infrastructure, followed by Copenhagen and Munich. Traditional cycling cities such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen as well as several newcomers that have made great progress in recent years, such as Barcelona or Wrocław, perform well.

On average, protected cycling infrastructure covers the equivalent of only **17% of the road network** in the 36 cities



The findings highlight that any city can create the conditions for child-friendly mobility. The **common denominator among top-performing cities is strong political leadership**. Ample research and our own data shows that creating child-friendly cities is a crucial step toward developing liveable urban environments for everyone.

A correlation analysis further shows that **cities with high scores** also tend to have **cleaner air** and **higher levels of walking** – two important indicators of child-friendly mobility that, while not directly included in the ranking due to limited data availability and quality, are indirectly reflected in the indicators used.

Based on the findings, the report recommends that **cities adopt a child-first approach** to urban mobility by mainstreaming school streets, **lowering speed limits** to 30km/h and **investing in protected walking and cycling infrastructure**. National governments should empower cities to implement these measures by adapting legal frameworks where necessary. The European Commission should include school streets and protected cycle lanes in forthcoming guidance under the **Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management**, and mandate the **publication of crash data disaggregated by age** as part of the Urban Mobility Indicators.

1. Introduction: Why rank cities on child-friendly urban mobility?

Urban mobility: key to liveable cities for all, especially children

Urban mobility shapes the daily lives and futures of a large share of Europe's population, with children particularly affected. Over 70% of the EU population lives in cities, where minors under 14 make up 14% of residents. Cities are places where challenges and opportunities converge. Their high population density enables easy access to jobs, services, and social activities, including schools, healthcare, and leisure. However, urban areas also face distinct challenges – especially dense motorised traffic, which contributes to high levels of air and noise pollution, and results in road collisions.

While the challenges of urban mobility affect everyone, children are particularly at risk due to their increased vulnerability. Their developing bodies, behaviours, and the environments they navigate expose them to risks that are often greater than those faced by adults. Moreover, they do not have the same opportunities to advocate for their needs, making it all the more important to consider their perspective in planning and policy, as outlined below. Children living in deprived areas are at particularly high risk, as studies show that air pollution levels are often higher in these neighbourhoods, and residents tend to be more vulnerable to its harmful health effects.

Addressing these challenges requires a shift towards a more inclusive and child-friendly approach to mobility – one that makes cities safe, accessible and welcoming for all residents. This research examines the changes needed and assesses the progress made in 36 capital and major cities across Europe.

Children are particularly at risk from collisions

Children are particularly vulnerable road users. According to the European Transport Safety Council, children's lack of experience, smaller stature, and limited awareness of road risks make them more susceptible to road collisions and injuries. Every day in the European Union, more than eighteen children are seriously injured, and one child is killed in road collisions. Over the past decade, more than 6,000 children have lost their lives on European roads.

> Every day in the European Union, **more than eighteen children** are seriously injured and one is killed in road traffic collisions.

Official EU data shows the share of road fatalities occurring in urban areas is proportionally higher for children than for the general population. This underlines the particular importance of cities in protecting young lives and ensuring safe environments for independent mobility. Children are particularly at risk when walking or cycling as they do so more than the general population: One-third (32%) of children aged 0–13 who are killed on European roads are pedestrians, and 11% are cyclists. For all ages the shares are lower: 20% and 9%, respectively. The level of road safety for children varies significantly across Europe, with the child road mortality rate in Romania being ten times higher than in countries like Norway, Cyprus, or Sweden. This disparity underscores the need for road safety measures tailored to protect younger road users.

Air pollution puts children more at risk

Air pollution is the leading environmental health risk for children in urban environments. Children are more vulnerable due to their developing lungs, faster breathing rate, and proximity to the ground, where pollutants concentrate. Their exposure is further heightened as they tend to breathe more pollutants through their mouths (see also Figure 1).

The effects of air pollution on children's health are well-documented. It has been linked to a range of health issues, including asthma, respiratory infections, allergies, and reduced lung function. In the long term, it can also increase the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood. The European Environment Agency estimated that 1,200 premature deaths among children and adolescents are caused by air pollution in Europe every year.

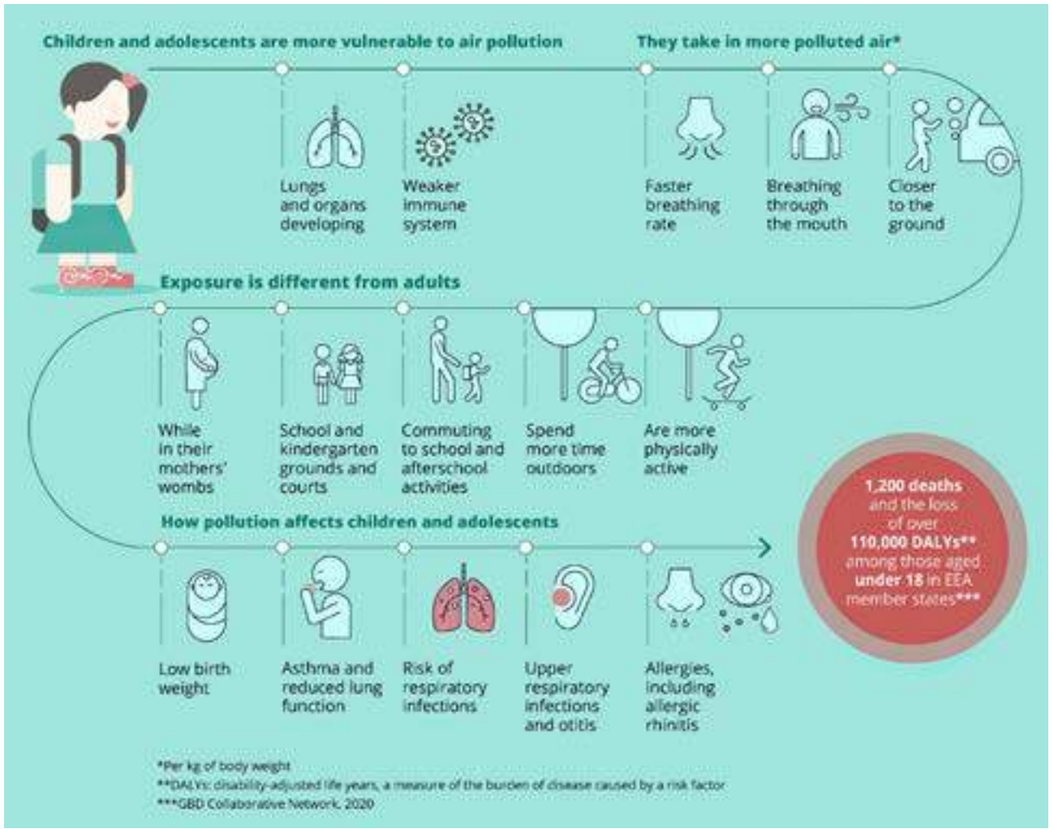


***Figure 1**. Overview of health effects of air pollution on children and adolescents. Source: European Environment Agency*

> Air pollution causes **1,200 premature** deaths among children and adolescents in Europe every year.

Transport noise impacts children's health and development

Transport noise is another significant environmental factor that negatively affects children. Mostly generated by road traffic, long-term exposure to noise affects all age groups and causes 10,600 premature deaths per year in the EU. According to the European Environment Agency, children living or attending school in areas impacted by high levels of transport noise tend to score lower in reading comprehension and face more behavioural challenges. Over half a million children in Europe experience impaired reading ability due to environmental noise from transport. Furthermore, nearly 60,000 children in Europe are affected by behavioural difficulties as a result of noise pollution from transport. These negative effects, however, can be reduced. Research shows that interventions to reduce environmental noise, particularly at homes and schools, can largely prevent the issues related to impaired learning and behavioural challenges.

Noise exposure leads to over **half a million** children suffering from impaired reading ability.

The importance of space for children's physical activity

The lack of appropriate public space, which is often linked to road traffic, is another issue that disproportionately affects children. Research highlights the critical importance of physical activity for children (see Figure 2), including improved brain health, muscular fitness and better heart and lung health. The World Health Organization (WHO) strongly recommends that children and adolescents engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity exercise daily to maintain optimal health.

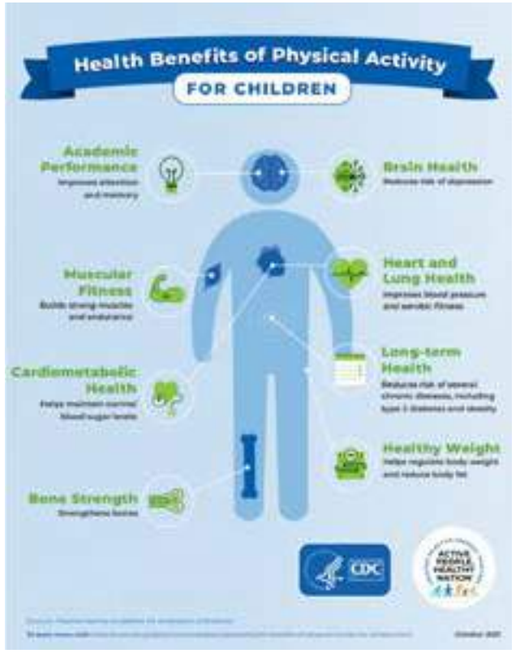


***Figure 2**. Health benefits of physical activity for children. Source: CDC*

Children need the ability to move actively and independently around cities. Ensuring opportunities for active mobility in their daily routines – such as walking or cycling to school or visiting local public spaces like parks and playgrounds – is essential. The availability of appropriate spaces plays a crucial role in encouraging recommended levels of physical activity. Studies have shown that access to green spaces, such as parks, encourages children to be more active and engage in outdoor play. These spaces not only provide opportunities for exercise but also contribute to mental well-being by offering areas for social interaction and relaxation.

Studies show that **access to green spaces**, such as parks, encourages children to be more active and play outside.

What is child-friendly urban mobility and why does it matter for everyone?

What are child-friendly cities

As awareness of children's needs in urban environments has grown, international organisations and researchers have developed different definitions of what makes a city child-friendly. These efforts are grounded in the recognition that children also have specific rights, as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to live in a clean and safe environment.

The most widely recognised framework is the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), launched in 1996 by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Today, more than 3,500 municipalities in over 40 countries have joined the initiative. It defines a child-friendly city as one that "implements the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level", and outlines a set of key building blocks to guide this implementation (see Figure 3).

Complementing UNICEF's framework, several other initiatives focus on transforming cities by reimagining them through the eyes of their youngest residents. The 8 80 Cities initiative is guided by the conviction that "if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then it will be better for all people." It promotes safe, inclusive, and accessible urban environments for people of all ages. Global initiatives such as Urban95 encourages city planning from the perspective of three-year-olds, using 95cm, their average height – as a lens through which to evaluate urban design. Similarly, the Europe-based Child in the City Foundation and the Global Designing Cities Initiative have developed strategies and best practices for child-friendly cities.

"A city that is good for children, is good for everyone."

Tim Gill, researcher and advocate for children's play and mobility

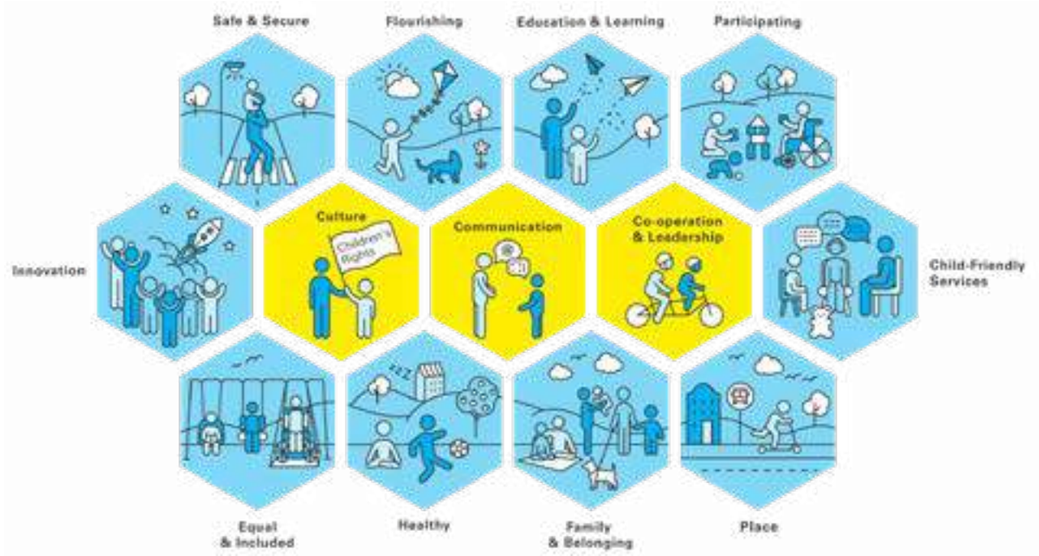


***Figure 3**. UNICEF's building blocks of a child-friendly city.*

Leading scholars in child-friendly urban design, such as Tim Gill, author of Urban Playground, emphasise that designing cities for children not only benefits them but improves the overall quality of life for all residents. Gill defines child-friendly cities as places where children are active participants in urban life, visible and able to interact freely with their surroundings. Marketta Kyttä, a professor of land use planning and expert on child-friendly environments, expert, expands this definition by assessing a city's child-friendliness through two dimensions: children's freedom to move within their neighbourhood and their ability to access various spaces or elements for play.

The link between child-friendly mobility and child-friendly cities

Of the child-friendly city building blocks from UNICEF, we have focused on the highlighted three – they can be directly influenced by the city and relate to mobility. The detailed breakdown of cities' tools and indicators of child-friendly mobility, adopted from Tim Gill, and their connection to our ranking's indicators, can be found below (Figure 4).

Building blocks of child-friendly city (UNICEF)	Indicators relevant to child-friendly mobility (Gill)	Indicators chosen for the city ranking
Safe & secure	Active mobility	School streets
Healthy	Air quality	Low Speed limits
Place	Quiet space	Protected cycling infrastructure
Education & Learning	Outdoor play	
	Green space	
	Well-maintained open space	
	Development of children's autonomy	

Figure 4: From the child-friendly city to indicators of child-friendly urban mobility. Source: Clean Cities

Independent mobility is child-friendly urban mobility

Mobility is a key aspect of child-friendly cities, as it shapes a large part of children's daily lives. How children move around their neighbourhoods or the city – whether to school, leisure activities, or green spaces – has a direct impact on their health, safety, and even academic performance, as outlined in the previous sections. For this reason, mobility is not only a practical concern, but a fundamental part of creating environments where children can thrive.

According to the EU-funded initiative EIT Urban Mobility, "child-friendly cities are those capable of regulating their automobile traffic while enabling children and populations at large to move around safely, sustainably and efficiently." This includes promoting a variety of safe transport options and supporting 'Children's Independent Mobility', "the freedom of children to travel around in their neighbourhood or city without adult supervision". Active and independent mobility for children is an important opportunity to promote their mental and physical development and wellbeing.

Research has linked children's independent mobility to multiple positive outcomes, such as increased physical activity, social competencies, more frequent play and naturally, higher autonomy. Figure 5 further illustrates the significance of active and independent mobility for children's perceptions of their environment, showing that driving children to school not only reduces their engagement in physical activity, but also their potential awareness of surroundings.

Children's drawing of their trip to school

DRIVEN TO SCHOOL WALKING TO SCHOOL

Figure 5: Children's drawing of their trip to school (left: William 7 years, who walks to school; right: Samuel, 7 years, who is driven to school). Source: Marco Hüttenmoser/Forschungs- und Dokumentationsstelle Kind und Umwelt

Gender has been found to influence children's mobility patterns – on average, boys have more independent mobility (for example are allowed to travel alone at longer distances), due to various socio-ecological factors, such as the parents' perception of risk. This is partly reflected in girls performing on average around 17% less total daily physical activity than boys. When it comes to biking, the gender gap gets even bigger – as shown for example on twice as many boys as girls cycling in the UK.

Box 1 summarises the measures that cities can take to make mobility child-friendly. This is the specific focus of this city ranking, which evaluates how urban transport interventions can create child-friendly mobility environments.

Children's Independent Mobility: the freedom for children to travel around their neighborhood or city without adult supervision.

Box 1: How can cities create the conditions for child-friendly mobility?

- (Re)designing streets – through pedestrianisation, **reduced speed**, shared-surface design, or reduced parking space
- **Active mobility (cycling, walking) infrastructure**
- Public transport accessible to all
- **Protected environments around schools**
- Seating and playable elements on the streets
- Improved public transport connectivity and coverage

Box 1. *Summary of key attributes promoting independent mobility. Highlighted attributes are covered by the indicators in this city ranking.*

‘The growth of the car and of car-centric planning over the past 100, 120 years is the single biggest factor behind the loss of children's freedoms.’

Tim Gill, researcher and advocate for children’s play and mobility

There has been a negative trend in children's independent mobility

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of child-friendly mobility, several indicators show concerning trends that highlight a decline in the quality and quantity of children’s independent and active travel. For example, data from the Active Lives Survey (2023) shows that more than half of children in England do not meet the World Health Organization’s recommended levels of physical activity.

At the same time, long-term research reveals a marked decrease in children’s independent mobility. In 1971, 86% of children in England and 91% in Germany were allowed to walk home from school alone. By 2010, that figure had dropped to 25% in England and 76% in Germany. The researchers found that “parents reported fear of traffic as the main reason for picking up children (primary and secondary) from school”. A study from Sheffield has explored the changes in independent mobility over three generations, showing a clear pattern of a dramatic reduction in unsupervised mobility – each successive generation was allowed to move less freely and had less variety in outdoor spaces visited.

There is, however, a positive trend in road safety: the number of child fatalities from road collisions in the EU dropped by 28% between 2013 and 2023, a steeper reduction than for the entire population. Due to data limitations, it is not possible to ascertain if this is the result of effective policies or due to the aforementioned decline in walking and cycling among children. In any case, the number of children injured or killed on roads in European cities remains unacceptably high, underscoring the continued need for safer, more child-friendly mobility environments.

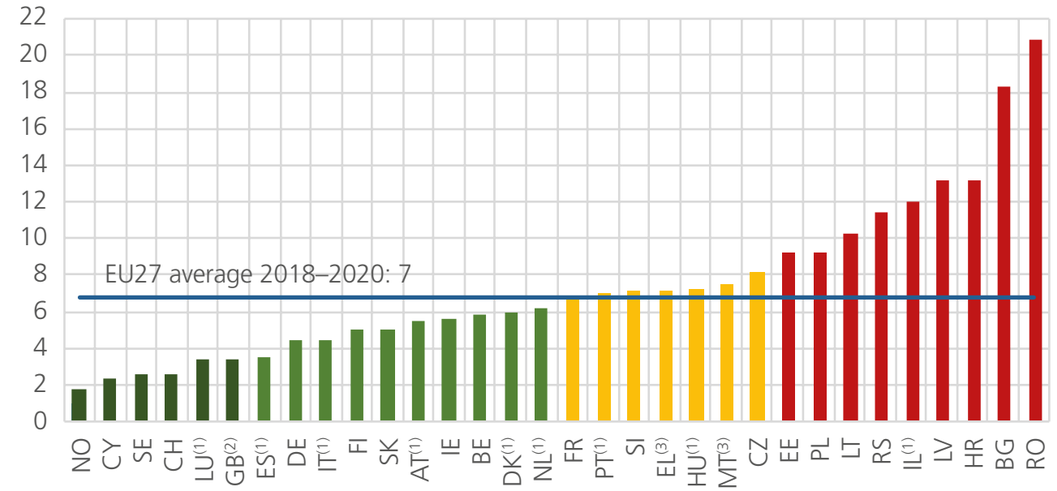


Figure 6. *Child road deaths per million child population. Average number for 2019-2021 or the last three years available. Source: European Transport Safety Council [(1) 2018-2020, (2) 2017-2019, (3) 2018-2019)]*

The need for a city ranking on child-friendly mobility

Many aspects of daily life are directly shaped by the decisions cities make. As highlighted above, this is especially true for children who are particularly susceptible to the negative effects of current mobility patterns, including air pollution, noise, and road dangers. However, research shows that "in the realm of urban infrastructure and policy, the specific needs of young children and caregivers are seldom considered and if they are, it is usually within the health or education sectors."

With this research, the Clean Cities Campaign provides an evidence-based overview of the state of child-friendly mobility in 36 capital and major European cities. By offering a robust and transparent benchmark of cities' performance, we aim to encourage mutual learning among cities and accelerate progress by promoting action that leads to quick, scalable and measurable improvements. It is also designed to help children, families, teachers and others make the case for necessary changes in their respective cities.

The ranking builds upon two previous Clean Cities publications: a 2022 ranking on zero-emission mobility and a 2023 ranking on shared transport options, further strengthening our commitment to sustainable and inclusive urban mobility. It is part of our broader mission to build public support for cities to shift from polluting cars to active, shared and electric mobility. We do so by helping cities become people-centred and climate-friendly by reallocating space to people and greenery, enabling more walking, wheeling, and cycling, improving public transport and shared mobility, and prioritising electric vehicles over those with combustion engines (see Figure 7).

***Figure 7**: Clean Cities' four pillars of action. Source: Clean Cities*

2.

How was this ranking compiled?

The development of this ranking followed a collaborative and transparent process, as summarised in Figure 8. Data collection and analysis were carried out by the Clean Cities core team, with contributions from the Clean Cities network of civil society organisations across Europe. These partners played a key role in shaping the indicators and reviewing the results. The methodology used is described in more detail in Annex 2 and 3.

Each city administration was invited to provide local data and offer feedback on any missing or incomplete information. 34 out of the 36 cities provided data for this ranking. For the two cities which did not provide data and for any incomplete data, public data sources were used instead. Input from both local partners and city representatives helped refine the research approach and inform the final recommendations. The conclusions and policy proposals presented in this report were developed by Clean Cities based on a thorough analysis of the findings.

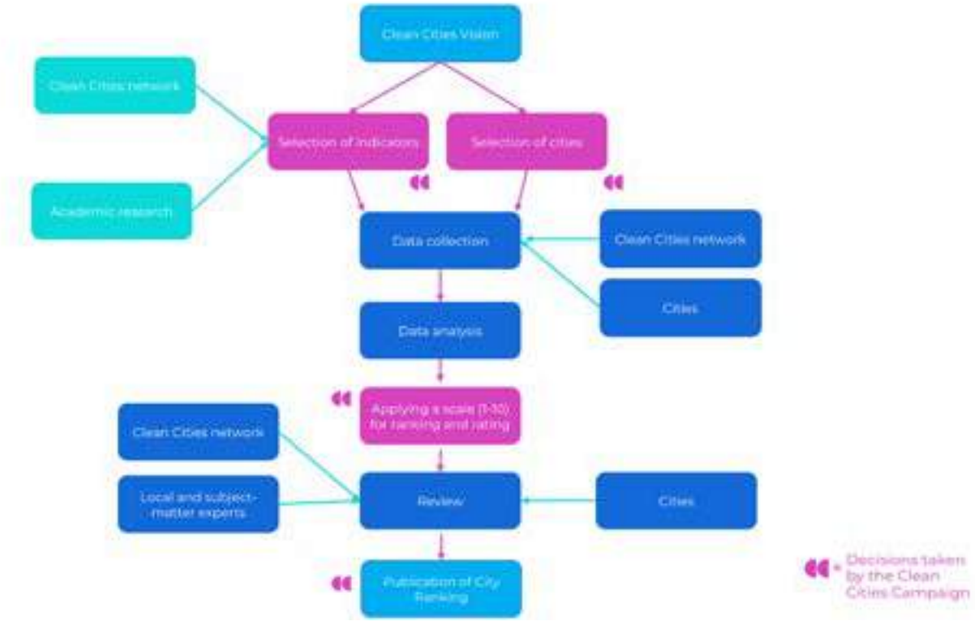


***Figure 8**. Overview of the process followed for the development of the ranking. Source: Clean Cities*

Indicator development

The selection of indicators was guided by the aforementioned definition of child-friendly urban mobility. The chosen indicators reflect priority measures recommended by the EU's European Road Safety Observatory and that can primarily be taken by cities to improve conditions for children in urban transport systems. These are presented in Table 2 below. The measures assessed in this ranking can also help address equity challenges, e.g. higher levels of air pollution in deprived areas. Interventions like school streets, lower speed limits and safer infrastructure can be rolled out city-wide (e.g. like in Paris and Brussels), benefiting all neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the benefits of these policies have been found to extend beyond their immediate area of application.

While focusing on these three practical and quantitative indicators comes with certain limitations, this approach allows for a clear and comparable analysis across a wide range of cities. The indicators provide valuable insights into key components of child-friendly mobility and serve as a solid foundation for identifying progress, challenges, and opportunities for further action.

Indicator	Relevance for child-friendly urban mobility	Metric used	Primary data sources
Indicator 1: School streets 	School streets limit access for motorised traffic in front of schools, at least during drop-off and pick-up times. These measures benefit children by reducing car traffic, improving road safety, and enhancing air quality in the immediate vicinity of schools. They also help create a more welcoming and people-friendly environment, boosting the number of children walking or cycling to and from school. The use of school streets is supported by most parents and recommended by the European Commission's Expert Group on Urban Mobility.	Share of primary schools with pedestrianised or temporarily closed school streets	City administrations
Indicator 2: Safe speeds 	Introducing or expanding 30km/h speed limits in cities helps reduce emissions, fuel consumption, and noise pollution. Lower speeds decrease the number and severity of road crashes, making streets safer for everyone and supporting the Safe System approach to road safety. Leading organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) support an (increased) use of 30km/h limits in urban areas. Safer traffic speeds also make walking and cycling more attractive and accessible, supporting children's independent mobility.	Share of road network with maximum speed of 30km/h or less (20mph in the UK)	City administrations, Openstreetmap (abbreviated OSM, a free, open map database)
Indicator 3: Protected cycling infrastructure 	Cycling networks should be coherent, direct, comfortable, attractive, and safe. Research from Dutch road safety experts highlights the importance of separating cyclists from high-speed motor traffic, using dedicated bicycle paths and safe intersection designs to improve safety, particularly for vulnerable users. Studies show that cyclists across all age groups and backgrounds prefer physical separation from traffic, with children, women, and older people expressing an even stronger preference. Protected cycling infrastructure is also perceived as significantly safer than painted cycle lanes, which some studies have shown to be more dangerous than no infrastructure at all.	Ratio of protected (i.e. physically separated through a barrier, height difference or distance from motorised traffic) cycling infrastructure total vs road network (in km)	City administrations, European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) / Openstreetmap

Table 1. Overview of the indicators, metrics and data sources. Source: Clean Cities

Other important dimensions of child-friendly mobility, such as levels of air pollution, walkability of cities or the accessibility of green space, were explored during the research phase but were not included in the final ranking due to data availability and quality limitations. Additional indicators examined in developing this ranking included the share of trips made on foot (modal split) and levels of toxic air pollution (annual average roadside NO_2 concentration levels), as well as the accessibility of green spaces. Walking is a key part of children's independent mobility, while NO_2 – mainly from road traffic – poses serious health risks to children. There is also strong evidence for the health benefits of green spaces for children.

Despite their importance, these indicators were excluded from the final ranking due to data limitations. Cities use inconsistent methods to collect data on walking and its modal split, making comparisons unreliable. Furthermore, studies indicate that official NO_2 data may not accurately reflect pollution hotspots in a consistent and comparable way across cities. Data on the accessibility of green spaces is only available at metropolitan area level but not at city level. These aspects remain vital for understanding child-friendly mobility and we conducted a correlation analysis (see below), showing that cities that achieve a high overall score also have lower levels of roadside NO_2 pollution and higher levels of walking.

City selection

This research covers 36 capital and major cities across Europe. The ranking includes a cross-section of cities, representing different locations, sizes, and approaches to urban mobility. Only cities with reliable and sufficient data were included (see below). The full list of all cities is provided in Annex 1. Unless otherwise specified, each city refers to the municipality of the same name. We have chosen to focus on the area under the control of local authorities, particularly mayors.

Data sources and quality

To ensure a reliable ranking, Clean Cities only included those cities where robust, transparent, and comparable data was available, based on the defined metrics listed above. We contacted each city to request data and feedback. 34 out of the 36 cities provided at least partial data. Where needed, we supplemented this with publicly available data from cities, government bodies, the European Cyclists' Federation, and Openstreetmap. In cases where only estimates were available, this is clearly indicated. Each city's data quality was rated on a scale from poor to high to highlight potential uncertainties.

Data collection took place from December 2024 to February 7, 2025, using the most up-to-date information. Any significant updates were incorporated only if new data was provided by cities or partners before April 4, 2025. More recent changes or updates were not taken into account.

Scoring and grading

For each indicator, cities were assigned a score between 0 (worst) and 10 (best) based on their performance. Additional details on the scoring and grading approach are provided in Annex 3.

The highest score was given to cities meeting or exceeding a maximum value determined by the research team, considering the distribution of results and relevant research to set an appropriate threshold.

The overall results are presented both as percentages and using a school grading system, with A representing the best performance and F the worst. Further details on the process, methodology and indicators are available in the Annexes.

Data collection took place from December 2024 to February 7, 2025, using the most up-to-date information

What are the main results and what do they mean?

This chapter summarises the results and key findings. The three tables below provide an overview of the results and rank the 36 European cities included in the analysis. An overall grade has also been assigned to each city to reflect its current performance. Detailed results can be accessed on the Clean Cities website.

Indicator 1: School streets

Data from the 36 cities provides the widest snapshot of school streets in Europe to date and contains valuable insights into the prevalence of school streets and highlights the varying implementation patterns across different urban areas. Our analysis found that school streets are increasingly used as a tool to create safer and healthier environments for children:

- **Nearly 1,000 school streets were identified across the 36 cities assessed**, with 26 cities – more than two-thirds – having introduced at least one.
- **The four leading cities have implemented school streets at more than one in five primary schools**, demonstrating strong commitment to child-friendly mobility.
- **However, 10 cities – just under a third – have not introduced any**, highlighting uneven progress across Europe.
- **The vast majority of cities still provide them for fewer than 10% of schools**. In Clean Cities' view, this represents a missed opportunity to deliver safer, healthier streets for all children – not just a select few. To ensure equity and avoid reinforcing existing inequalities, cities should move beyond small-scale initiatives and adopt city-wide programmes that guarantee access to safe school streets in every neighbourhood.

The data also shows implementation varies significantly by country and city:

- **London leads by far with over 500 school streets in place, while Paris has adopted the most ambitious programme**, placing particular emphasis on permanent measures.
- **In cities with a high number of implemented school streets, strong grassroots mobilisation of parents, pupils and teachers has played a crucial role in driving change**. Cities like London, Paris, Brussels but also Milan, Turin and Rome have seen participation and bottom-up pressure from local campaigns and communities, which often led to the adoption of school street programmes at the district or city level.
- **Legal clarity has played an important role in scaling up these initiatives**, whether through national traffic codes (such as in Austria, Belgium, France or Italy) – or pragmatic use of existing legal measures (such as in the UK or the region of North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany).
- **Permanent pedestrianisation remains less common than time-restricted closures with notable national differences:** the UK and Belgium have focused on time-restricted schemes, while France has seen a higher share of permanent interventions.
- **Implementation remains limited overall in countries such as Germany and those in Central and Eastern Europe** (with few exceptions such as Cologne, Warsaw and Prague), where until now legal uncertainty and lack of political momentum have slowed progress.

School streets with permanent pedestrianisation and re-design

The following five cities are leading on permanent school streets. Each has already implemented more than 10 permanently pedestrianised school streets, in most cases involving a full redesign of the streets:

City
Paris
Lyon
Milan
Barcelona
Rome

***Table 2**: Cities leading on permanently pedestrianised school streets*

Permanently pedestrianised school streets have several advantages over temporary ones. They encourage active travel and discourage motorised through-traffic beyond the school hours and have a stronger impact on children's and residents' health by reducing local air and noise pollution throughout the whole day instead of just during drop-off and pick up times.

Beyond that, they can also enhance the local streetscape, particularly if they are redesigned and greened as part of the pedestrianisation. In doing so, cities can create vibrant public spaces open to the entire local community, giving streets back to other uses beyond traffic, provide space for social interactions, mitigate urban heat island effects and counter the lack of accessible green spaces in cities.

Pedestrianised school streets also provide a showcase for how road space can be reallocated to other uses than motorised traffic and illustrate potential paths to move away from car-centric urban design and towards healthier and more liveable cities in Europe.

The full results can be found in the table right.

◂ ***Figure 9**: Pedestrianised school street Via Beroldo, Milan. Source: Clean Cities*

▴ ***Figure 10**: Pedestrianised school street Monte Ruggero, Rome. Source: Sergio Gatto*

School Streets

Rank	City	Share of primary schools with school street	Number of school streets	Number of primary schools
1	Greater London	26.9%	525	1955
2	Milan	25.9%	37	143
3	Paris	24.5%	125	510
4	Turin	23.8%	34	143
5	Antwerp	23.5%	46	196
6	Lyon	15.4%	23	149
7	Ghent	12.4%	12	97
8	Bristol	11.4%	13	114
9	Brussels-Capital Region	11.4%	56	492
10	Copenhagen	11.1%	13	117
11	Bologna	10.1%	7	69
12	Amsterdam	6.9%	15	216
13	Manchester	5.9%	8	135
14	Oslo	4.6%	6	130
15	Barcelona	4.5%	15	335
16	Rome	3.2%	17	527
17	Vienna	3.2%	10	314
18	Prague	3.1%	9	292
19	Warsaw	2.7%	6	223
20	Cologne	2.6%	4	153
21	Wroclaw	2.3%	3	128
22	Marseille	2.0%	6	305
23	Ljubljana	2.0%	1	51
24	Bratislava	1.5%	2	131
25	Zaragoza	1.5%	2	133
26	Berlin	0.2%	1	462
27	Bucharest	0.0%	0	169
27	Budapest	0.0%	0	408
27	Florence	0.0%	0	74
27	Hamburg	0.0%	0	251
27	Helsinki	0.0%	0	112
27	Krakow	0.0%	0	108
27	Lisbon	0.0%	0	179
27	Madrid	0.0%	0	601
27	Munich	0.0%	0	172
27	Sofia	0.0%	0	96

***Table 3**. Results for Indicator 1: School Streets. Source: Clean Cities*

Case study: The school streets programme in Paris

Paris has demonstrated strong political commitment and a clear strategy for expanding School Streets, with a target of creating **300 School Streets by 2026**. A key aspect of this plan is ensuring that at least **a third** of these streets undergo a full redesign, which includes **greening measures**.

A total of more than 230 school streets – of which 125 are near primary schools – have been implemented so far, with **70 of these featuring extensive green infrastructure**, where an average of **30% of the space is dedicated to greenery**. This approach not only improves safety and air quality but also enhances the overall urban environment for all residents. The city website provides a map of school streets (see also images below) and lists examples of projects implemented to date.

***Figure 11**. Examples of school streets in Paris. Source: City of Paris*

Case study: Heart Zones in Norwegian cities

In Norway, including the capital city of Oslo, a concept known as “Heart Zone” (“Hjertesone” in Norwegian) is being used to improve traffic conditions around schools. While these measures are often similar to school streets or even include school streets as part of a wider scheme, they do not focus primarily on (temporary) regulations for motorised traffic.

A heart zone is defined by the City of Oslo as a geographically designated area around the school where traffic safety is prioritised, and parents are encouraged not to drive. Schools determine how the heart zone is designed based on its location and the local challenges. In some schools, awareness raising is considered sufficient, while others implement physical changes. These measures may include new road markings, signage, speed control measures (such as speed bumps) and improved pavements. Many schools in Oslo have a traffic patrol scheme, where volunteer parents or other adults participate in managing traffic.

***Figure 12**. Logo of the Heart Zone campaign. Source: Trygg Traffik*

Since the initiative was introduced in the early 2010s, it has gained significant traction. As of 2024, 352 of a total of more than 2,700 schools across Norway have implemented a Heart Zone, and this number is expected to grow following its integration into the Norwegian government’s national strategy for traffic safety. Research shows that Heart Zones can help raise awareness of road safety, leading to reduced car use and an increase in cycling and walking.

For this City Ranking, Clean Cities has identified Heart Zones in Oslo that include school street-type regulations as defined above.

Indicator 2: Safe speeds

Our analysis of speed limits across 36 European cities reveals wide disparities in the generalisation of 30 kilometer per hour (20 miles per hour) speed limits, a key factor in creating safer streets for children:

- **Six cities – Brussels, Paris, Amsterdam, Oslo, Lyon and Bristol – stand out as leaders, with more than 80% of their road networks limited to 30km/h**. They demonstrate what is achievable with strong political will and the right regulatory frameworks.
- **At the other end of the spectrum, five cities have less than 10% of their streets covered by 30km/h limits**. These cities are Lisbon, Copenhagen, Rome, Sofia and Marseille.
- **Overall, nearly half of the cities analysed have already set at least 50% of their road networks to 30km/h**, marking progress in making urban mobility safer for all road users.

National regulations play a decisive role in enabling or constraining progress:

- **Giving cities flexibility or mandating default 30km/h speed limits plays a key role in improving urban mobility**. For example, a revision of Austria's road traffic regulations has enabled municipalities to reduce speed limits more easily. Spain (2021) and Wales (2023) have also made 30km/h (20mph) speed limits the default option in urban areas.
- **Conversely, legal restrictions and procedural barriers seem to have slowed momentum in some cities**. For instance, in Denmark the need for police approval in Copenhagen has hindered progress, but a reduction in traffic speed has now been approved and is being implemented in 2025. In Germany, national regulations limit the ability of cities to implement 30km/h speed limits independently. Although recent changes have given cities more freedom, momentum is still constrained by bureaucratic hurdles.

The full results can be found in the table below.

Evidence suggests that 30km/h limits contribute to smoother traffic flow and lower overall travel times. A general 30km/h speed limit is considered more beneficial than gradually introducing 30km/h zones.

The introduction of a default 30km/h speed limit in cities has been described as a no-regret policy in a Europe-wide comparative analysis: *"None of the European cities that lowered the speed limit to 30km/h regrets it. It reduces accidents, makes transport safer and gets people using public transport and cycling, thus improving air quality and reducing noise pollution."* Data from Brussels, which introduced the default speed limit of 30km/h in 2021, confirms that average traffic speed has decreased, and the measure has reduced severe collisions and noise pollution.

It is important to note that while setting lower limits is a key step, their effectiveness depends on enforcement through street design, education and controls to ensure real driving speeds are reduced.

Evidence suggests that **30km/h limits** contribute to smoother traffic flow and lower overall travel times.

Safer speeds

Rank	City	Share of road network with maximum speed of 30km/h or less	Road network with maximum speed of 30km/h or less	Total road network length (in km)
1	Paris	88.9%	1,511	1,700
2	Brussels-Capital Region	86.0%	1,732	2,014
3	Lyon	84.1%	576	685
4	Amsterdam	80.0%	2,160	2,700
4	Bristol	80.0%	1,166	1,458
6	Madrid	80.0%	4,014	5,018
7	Barcelona	75.0%	1,025	1,367
8	Oslo	70.0%	1,288	1,840
9	Munich	66.7%	1,555	2,333
10	Antwerp	64.6%	872	1,351
11	Vienna	63.0%	1,792	2,844
12	Manchester	60.6%	1,009	1,665
13	Berlin	60.2%	3,219	5,350
14	Helsinki	60.0%	758	977
15	Hamburg	59.1%	2,317	3,919
16	Ghent	58.0%	814	1,403
17	Greater London	53.7%	8,654	16,111
18	Bologna	45.9%	475	1,034
19	Budapest	43.7%	2,105	4,821
20	Prague	43.6%	1,783	4,093
21	Ljubljana	42.0%	693	1,649
22	Cologne	39.7%	1,112	2,800
23	Wroclaw	38.1%	674	1,769
24	Florence	37.0%	383	1,037
25	Bratislava	36.2%	419	1,159
26	Warsaw	30.2%	1,297	4,300
27	Zaragoza	26.2%	525	2,005
28	Krakow	25.4%	541	2,128
29	Bucharest	25.2%	653	2,594
30	Milan	22.0%	427	1,945
31	Turin	17.1%	305	1,786
32	Lisbon	5.1%	87	1,700
33	Rome	4.1%	350	8,594
34	Copenhagen	2.9%	27	926
35	Sofia	2.9%	173	5,955
36	Marseille	0.8%	11	1,300

***Table 4**. Results for Indicator 2: Safe speeds. Source: Clean Cities*

*** Estimate, [1] Excludes the port of Antwerp, [2] 54.6% of roads managed by the municipality, and 63.3% of roads within built-up areas, [3] Total only includes roads with assigned max speed, [4] Excludes motorways, [5] Only roads managed by the municipality**

Case study: Bologna's bold move for safer streets

In January 2024, Bologna became the first major Italian city to introduce a 30km/h speed limit on a large share of its road network. Spearheaded by the city council and strongly backed by Mayor Matteo Lepore, the initiative aimed to reduce road deaths, improve air quality, and make public spaces safer and more liveable for everyone – especially children, the elderly, and people walking or cycling.

The new speed limit covers more than 60% of all roads controlled by the city within the built-up area (46% of all roads in the municipality) and is part of the "Bologna Città 30" plan, inspired by similar successful initiatives in other European cities. While the initial pushback was fierce, the city did not backtrack, creating Italy's first '30km/h city'.

***Figure 13**: Logo of the Bologna Città 30. Source: Comune di Bologna*

A year later, results of the evaluation are promising:

1. Traffic collisions (-13%), injuries (-11%) and fatalities (-49%) all declined since its introduction, with 9 fatalities fewer than the previous year and no pedestrians killed for the first time since records began
2. At the same time, bicycle traffic, bike and carsharing and public transport have increased
3. Concentrations of NO_2, an air pollutant strongly linked to road transport, has been the lowest in 10 years

Bologna's move is a powerful example of leadership and political courage to reclaim urban space and prioritise people over cars. With this bold step, Bologna joins the growing movement of European cities putting people's health and safety at the heart of urban mobility.

Indicator 3: Protected cycling infrastructure

As mentioned above, studies show that cyclists across all age groups and backgrounds prefer physical separation from traffic, with children, women, and older people expressing an even stronger preference. This is why the share of protected cycling infrastructure as a percentage of the road network offers a useful snapshot of how child-friendly the cycling infrastructure of a city is. It should however be noted that this indicator does not capture network connectivity, design quality or whether routes link key destinations like schools.

The analysis of the 36 cities reveals that protected cycling routes are scarce in many urban areas:

- **On average, protected cycling infrastructure only amounts to the equivalent of 17% of the road network.**
- **Seven cities exceed 30%, while more than two-thirds are below 20%, and over a third are below 10%**.

In practical terms, this means that in most cities, children and families still face challenges when choosing safe, comfortable routes for cycling, limiting opportunities for independent and active travel to school or work.

The type and quality of infrastructure are also important:

- **Shared foot and bike paths, while not ideal, still offer protection from motorised traffic**, helping certain cities perform relatively well. These types of infrastructure are common in countries like Germany, Poland and Finland. Helsinki's protected network covering more than 48% of its road network includes a large proportion of shared foot and bike paths.
- **Paris and Copenhagen showcase different approaches**: rapid rollout in Paris in recent years versus long-term investment in Copenhagen.
- **Cities like Amsterdam, Ghent and Antwerp** may rank lower due to limited physical segregated infrastructure, but their strong cycling culture makes them some of the safest and most accessible cities for cycling overall.
- **In contrast, cities such as Bucharest, Sofia and Rome have almost no protected cycling infrastructure**.
- **The UK as a whole lags behind, too**, with even its more ambitious cities like London and Bristol struggling due to the prevalence of unprotected cycle lanes and a lack of political ambition.
- **Major differences between well and poorly-performing cities in the same country highlight the critical role of local leadership, long-term investment and vision** in building safe, child-friendly cycling networks. For example, compare Bologna and Rome, or Wrocław and Warsaw.

Helsinki's protected network covering **more than 48%** of its road network includes a large proportion of shared foot and bike paths.

Protected cycling infrastructure

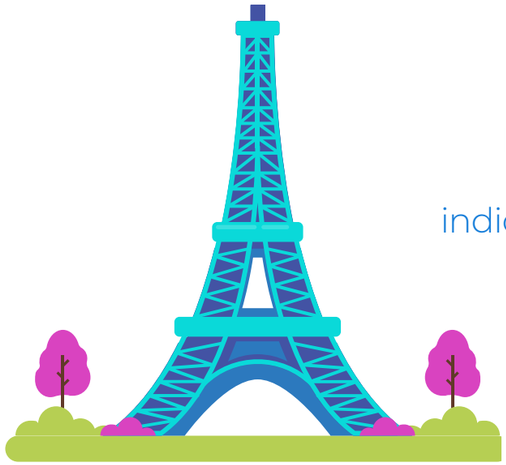
Rank	City	Ratio of protected cycling infrastructure – road network	Length of protected cycling infrastructure (km)	Total road network length (in km)
1	**Paris**	**48%**	**822**	**1,700**
2	**Helsinki**	**48%**	**783**	**1,628**
3	**Copenhagen**	**43%**	**397**	**926**
4	Munich	37%	862	2,333
5	Amsterdam	34%	919	2,700
6	Hamburg	33%	1,291	3,919
7	Antwerp	33%	440	1,351
8	Cologne	24%	663	2,800
9	Wroclaw	20%	355	1,769
10	Barcelona	19%	264	1,367
11	Brussels-Capital Region	19%	375	2,014
12	Ghent	18%	252	1,403
13	Berlin	17%	925	5,350
14	Oslo	17%	307	1,840
15	Bologna	15%	158	1,034
16	Ljubljana	15%	251	1,649
17	Warsaw	15%	631	4,300
18	Lyon	14%	98	685
19	Vienna	14%	384	2,844
20	Turin	13%	234	1,786
21	Bratislava	12%	186	1,490
22	Krakow	11%	229	2,128
23	Florence	10%	108	1,037
24	Milan	9%	180	1,945
25	Marseille	8%	109	1,300
26	Madrid	8%	405	5,018
27	Greater London	8%	1,287	16,111
28	Zaragoza	8%	155	2,005
29	Manchester	8%	128	1,665
30	Bristol	7%	101	1,458
31	Lisbon	7%	114	1,700
32	Prague	6%	248	4,093
33	Budapest	4%	212	4,821
34	Rome	3%	270	8,594
35	Sofia	2%	113	5,955
36	Bucharest	1%	25	2,594

Table 5. *Results for Indicator 3: Protected cycling infrastructure. Source: Clean Cities*

Overall results and insights

Overall, the results of the ranking indicate a broad variation in how cities are performing in terms of child-friendly urban mobility. The findings contain important lessons to accelerate progress across Europe:

- **Paris shows the strongest performance**, with consistently strong results across all three indicators and a total score of 79% (B+), nearly achieving an A grade. This is mostly the result of mayor Hidalgo's efforts to boost the transition of the city over the past decade, from the rollout of school streets and cycling infrastructure to the introduction of a generalised 30km/h speed limit. In overall second place came Amsterdam (63%, B), followed by Antwerp (62%, B), the Brussels Capital Region (56%, C) and Lyon (53%, C).
- **Greater London** leads in school streets and gets a total score of 42% (C), having created more than 500 school streets in less than 10 years. **Paris** ranks first on protected cycling infrastructure and speed limits, having introduced a general 30km/h speed limit back in 2021.
- **'New champions' make rapid progress**. Among the leading cities, some – such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen – are widely recognised as long-standing pioneers in progressive urban mobility, having started the re-design of transport infrastructure decades ago. Others – like Paris, Brussels and London – have achieved remarkable progress in just the past 10 years. This demonstrates that meaningful change is possible within a relatively short period of time.
- **However, no city reaches an A grade (80% or more of the total score)**, with the absence of city-wide roll-out of school streets emerging as a common shortcoming. Eight cities, primarily in Southern and Central and Eastern Europe, are underperformers, receiving grades of E or F.
- **Cities in the same countries achieve very different scores**, highlighting the critical role of local leadership, vision and long-term commitment and investment.



Paris shows the strongest performance, with consistently strong results across all three indicators and a **total score of 79%**

Rank	City	Points	%	Grade
1	**Paris**	**23.7**	**78.9%**	**B**
2	**Amsterdam**	**18.8**	**62.7%**	**B**
3	**Antwerp**	**18.5**	**61.7%**	**B**
4	Brussels-Capital Region	16.7	55.7%	C
5	Lyon	15.9	52.9%	C
6	Helsinki	15.6	52.0%	C
7	Barcelona	14.9	49.5%	C
8	Bristol	14.4	48.0%	C
9	Oslo	14.3	47.8%	C
10	Ghent	13.6	45.3%	C
11	Copenhagen	13.6	45.2%	C
12	Munich	13.4	44.6%	C
13	Vienna	12.7	42.3%	C
14	Greater London	12.6	42.0%	C
15	Berlin	12.5	41.5%	C
16	Bologna	12.1	40.2%	C
17	Cologne	11.7	39.1%	D
18	Hamburg	11.6	38.6%	D
19	Manchester	11.5	38.4%	D
20	Wroclaw	11.0	36.7%	D
21	Ljubljana	10.0	33.5%	D
22	Warsaw	9.9	33.1%	D
23	Milan	9.9	32.9%	D
24	Turin	9.6	32.1%	D
25	Prague	9.2	30.7%	D
26	Madrid	8.6	28.7%	D
27	Bratislava	8.5	28.3%	D
28	Zaragoza	6.5	21.8%	D
29	Florence	5.1	16.9%	E
30	Budapest	4.9	16.3%	E
31	Marseille	4.7	15.6%	E
32	Rome	4.6	15.4%	E
33	Krakow	4.2	13.9%	E
34	Bucharest	2.2	7.3%	F
35	Lisbon	1.3	4.5%	F
36	Sofia	0.4	1.3%	F

***Table 6**. Overall score and grade. Source: Clean Cities*

Analysis of the correlation with air quality and walking modal split

Air quality and the share of trips on foot – two relevant indicators for assessing child-friendly urban mobility – could not be included in the ranking due to the lack of reliable data (see above). However, we analysed their correlation with the ranking results and found a relationship that suggests our selected indicators indirectly reflect these aspects as well.

The scatter plot below (Figure 14) shows the relationship between air quality, measured by NO_2 roadside pollution levels, and the total score. A weak negative correlation (-0.136) suggests that cities with higher child-friendly mobility scores tend to have lower NO_2 levels. This is plausible given that the measures assessed in this ranking can have a direct impact on air quality (see Table 1).

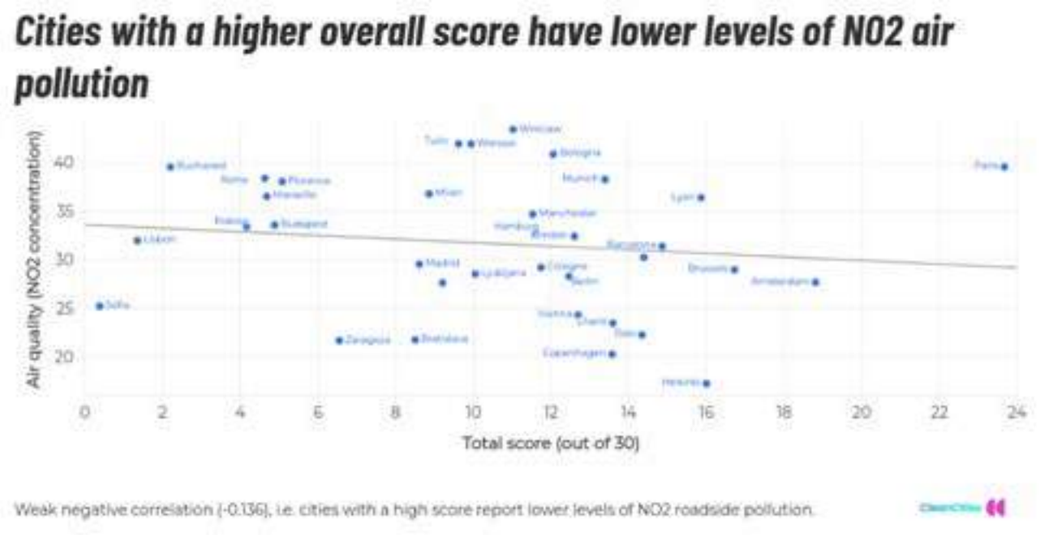


***Figure 14**. Correlation between NO2 concentration levels and total score. Source: Clean Cities*

The second scatter plot (figre 15) compares the total score with the proportion of walking in a city's modal split, showing a clear positive correlation (0.522). This indicates that cities with higher child-friendly mobility scores also tend to have a greater share of trips made on foot. While walkability is a key component of child-friendly mobility, it was not included in the ranking due to the lack of comparable data. However, the correlation demonstrates that walking is indirectly reflected in the ranking, as cities that do well on the indicators included in the ranking tend to have a higher share of walking, too.

Figure 15. Correlation between modal share of walking and total score. Source: Clean Cities

The correlation demonstrates that walking is indirectly reflected in the ranking, as cities that do well on the indicators included in the ranking tend to have a higher share of walking, too.

4. Conclusions and policy recommendations

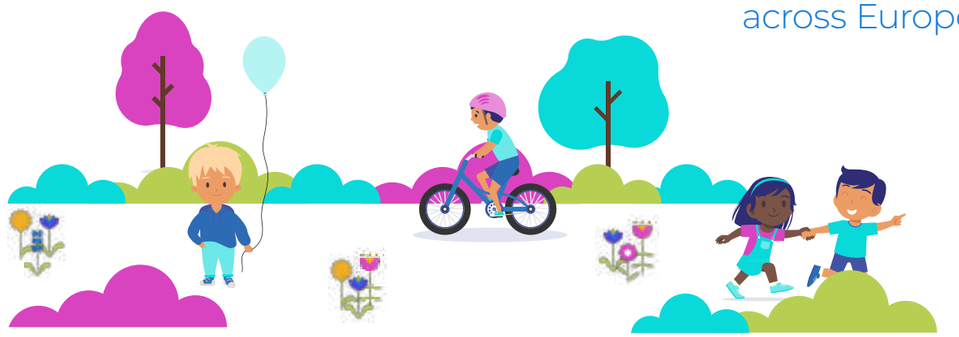
Conclusions

The findings of this report reveal a wide range of performance in child-friendly urban mobility across the 36 cities. 28 out of 36 cities received a pass grade of D or better, reflecting a score of at least 20% of total points. Both established leaders in urban mobility, such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen, and emerging champions like Paris, Brussels, Barcelona, and London, demonstrate strong performance. Paris stands out as the top performer, excelling across all three indicators and nearly reaching an A grade, while London shines as a leader in school streets.

Across the 36 cities analysed by Clean Cities, nearly 1,000 school streets have been implemented, with over two-thirds of cities (26 out of 36) having at least one in place. In the highest-ranking cities, school streets are becoming a common feature, with one in five primary schools benefiting from them. Many of the necessary measures, such as school streets, also enjoy high levels of public support despite increasingly polarised debates about transport policies across Europe. For instance, a survey of 1,000 Italian schoolchildren revealed that 88% would like a school street outside their school. Similarly, more than two in three (71%) people polled in a representative survey across 5 European cities – Brussels, Barcelona, Paris, London and Warsaw – support the introduction of timed restrictions to traffic movements outside schools.

Many cities have also introduced 30km/h speed limits across large portions of their road networks, with six cities applying low-speed limits on more than 80% of their road networks. Additionally, protected cycling infrastructure is being rolled out on a large scale, with seven cities providing such infrastructure on over 30% of their roads.
Good performance is not limited to a specific region. Leaders in child-friendly mobility can be found across Europe. The findings highlight positive developments in Central and Eastern

Leaders in child-friendly mobility can be found across Europe.



Europe, where cities such as Wrocław, Ljubljana, and Warsaw are leading the way in implementing child-friendly urban mobility. There are strong differences between cities within the same countries, highlighting the importance of local action.

Importantly, many of these changes have been introduced relatively recently, showing that meaningful improvements can be achieved in a short period. For instance, while the first school streets were set up in Bolzano, Italy, in 1989, their widespread adoption only began in the 2010s and expanded significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, large-scale 30km/h speed limits were recently introduced in cities such as Brussels and Paris (2021) and Bologna (2023). Some countries, including Spain (2021) and Wales (2023) have also made 30km/h speed limits the default option in urban areas. The rollout of segregated cycle lanes has been a longer-term effort in many European cities, but some cities have made notable progress over a short period of time. Paris, which has the highest ratio of protected cycling infrastructure in our ranking, has been transformed into a cycling-friendly city over the past decade, and recently added another 60km of new lanes in preparation for the 2024 Olympic Games.

Any city can create the conditions for child-friendly mobility, as demonstrated by the rapid transformations in many of the leading cities. The common denominator among the leading cities is political leadership.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, Clean Cities propose the following policy recommendations:

Cities:

- **School streets for every child**: Launch a city-wide school streets programme to equip all schools with permanent school streets by 2030, prioritising primary schools and nurseries, with temporary measures where necessary. Reduce motor vehicle traffic around schools and childcare facilities.
- **Follow a 'Safe System' approach to road safety and adapt the infrastructure with traffic calming to support area-wide urban safety management**: A holistic approach integrates the different elements of the traffic system, taking human vulnerability and fallibility into account. Reducing vehicle speeds in residential and core urban zones to 30km/h is key, alongside enforcement plans with yearly targets for checks and compliance with traffic laws.
- **Create 'living districts' that prioritise emission-free transport**. One major way in which cities are building healthier and safer environments is by creating 'living districts'. In Europe, 35 cities have already adopted plans that designate specific areas exclusively for pedestrians, cyclists, and zero-emission vehicles, creating safer and more liveable streets. These measures – also referred to as "zero-emission zones" – often begin with freight transport regulations and have already been implemented in 16 Dutch cities.
- **Adopt a new paradigm**: Review mobility and urban planning policies through the lens of child-friendliness. Involve children and families in planning and decision-making, for example, through workshops at school.
- **Monitor and evaluate the impact**: Policies and interventions should demonstrate their impacts. This is vital for making corrections and improvements, communication, ensuring equity and transparency. Monitoring and evaluation are an essential part of good practice.

National governments:

- **Adapt national laws to empower cities:** Cities should be empowered to adopt road traffic regulations that are appropriate for their local context, such as school streets or lower speed limits. Where this is currently not the case, the laws should be modified to grant this authority to cities or else set ambitious national rules.
- **Establish National Guidelines for Child-Friendly Mobility:** Develop comprehensive policies that set standards and best practices for creating safe urban environments for children.

European Union:

- **Support the roll-out of safe infrastructure for children**: The revised Directive on road infrastructure safety management mandates that the European Commission provide guidance for designing "forgiving roadsides" (roads designed with features that reduce the consequences of mistakes by mitigating crash impacts), "self-explaining roadsides" (that intuitively guide drivers toward safe behaviour) and "road design quality requirements for the protection of pedestrians and cyclists". This guidance should also include recommendations for school streets and protected cycle lanes.
- **Encourage Member States to adopt lower speed limits**: Use all available instruments, such as a European Commission Recommendation, to promote the adoption of 30km/h speed limits on urban roads.
- **Help Member States use structural funds for investments in safe and healthy urban mobility**: Include dedicated budget lines within EU structural funds to support Member States to finance urban mobility projects – particularly the development of safe, high-quality infrastructure.
- **Better data for better decisions**: Implement the new Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) as planned by 2030 to ensure more reliable and consistent air quality data across all cities. Revise the EU's Urban Mobility Indicators (UMI) in line with the recommendations of the EU's Expert Group on Urban Mobility to include robust and comparable data on the number of trips and distance travelled per mode of transport, as well as the number of persons fatally or seriously injured in road crashes by age category and vehicle type.

Beyond this ranking: Actions and resources for child-friendly urban mobility

- **Streets for Kids**: Clean Cities' campaign to multiply the number of School Streets across Europe, launched in 2022.
- **Help us find school streets**: Clean Cities' crowdmapping effort to identify and map all school streets in Europe.
- **School streets to shape child-friendly cities**: a brief review of the impact and benefits of school streets, published by BYCS and Clean Cities.
- **Protocol for monitoring air quality around schools**: a simple method for citizens to monitor NO_2 levels to measure air quality in school environments. Developed by ISGlobal and Clean Cities.
- **Streets for Kids: Urban Spaces for Children to grow**: A free online course by ISGlobal, exploring how streets can transform into vibrant, inclusive spaces that prioritise children's safety and well-being over car dominance

The common factor among the leading cities is political leadership.

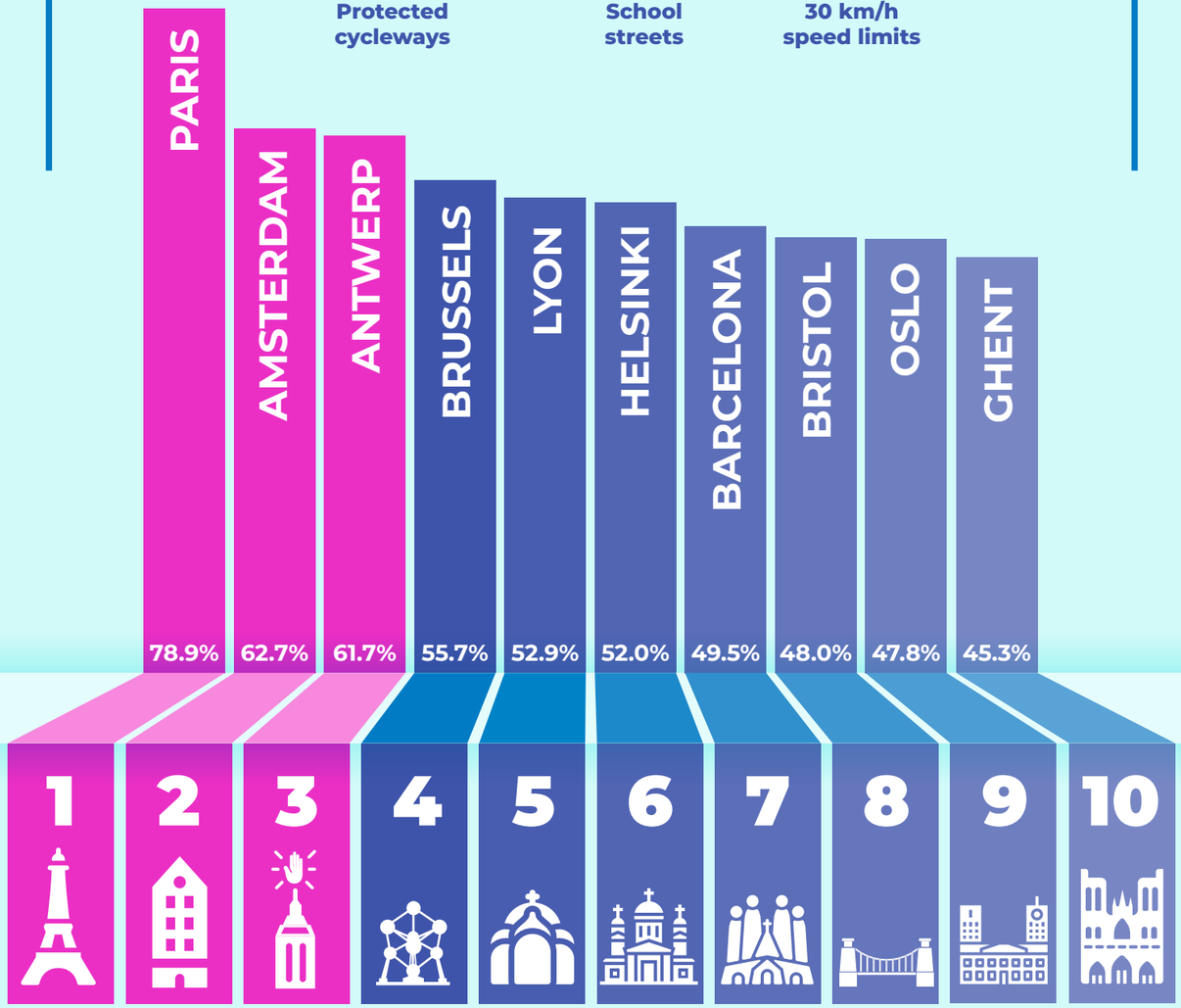
Top 10 cities in Europe for child-friendly mobility

We assessed 36 cities on how they support child-friendly mobility - one way to make urban life better for everyone.

Protected cycleways

School streets

30 km/h speed limits



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Find out more

Clean Cities is Europe's largest network of organisations on a mission to build public support for cities to shift from polluting cars to active, shared and electric mobility.
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