Streets for Kids, Cities for All

Ranking Europe's cities on child-friendly urban mobility

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.

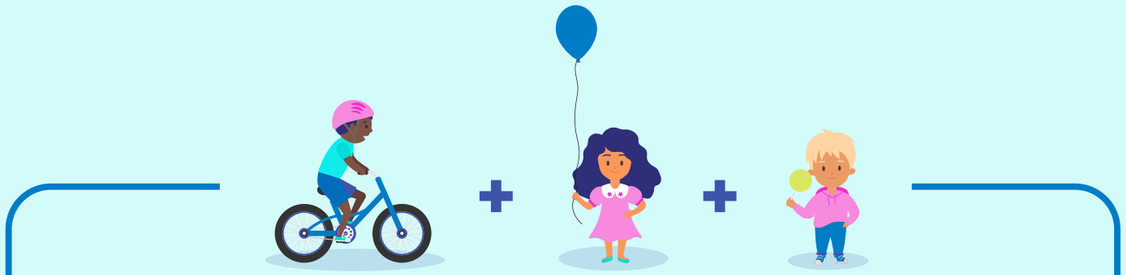
Data was gathered through direct engagement with city administrations, publicly available sources, and input from civil society organisations from across the Clean Cities network. We have made every effort to ensure the data is reliable and comparable, and we are committed to addressing any remaining inconsistencies in future updates.

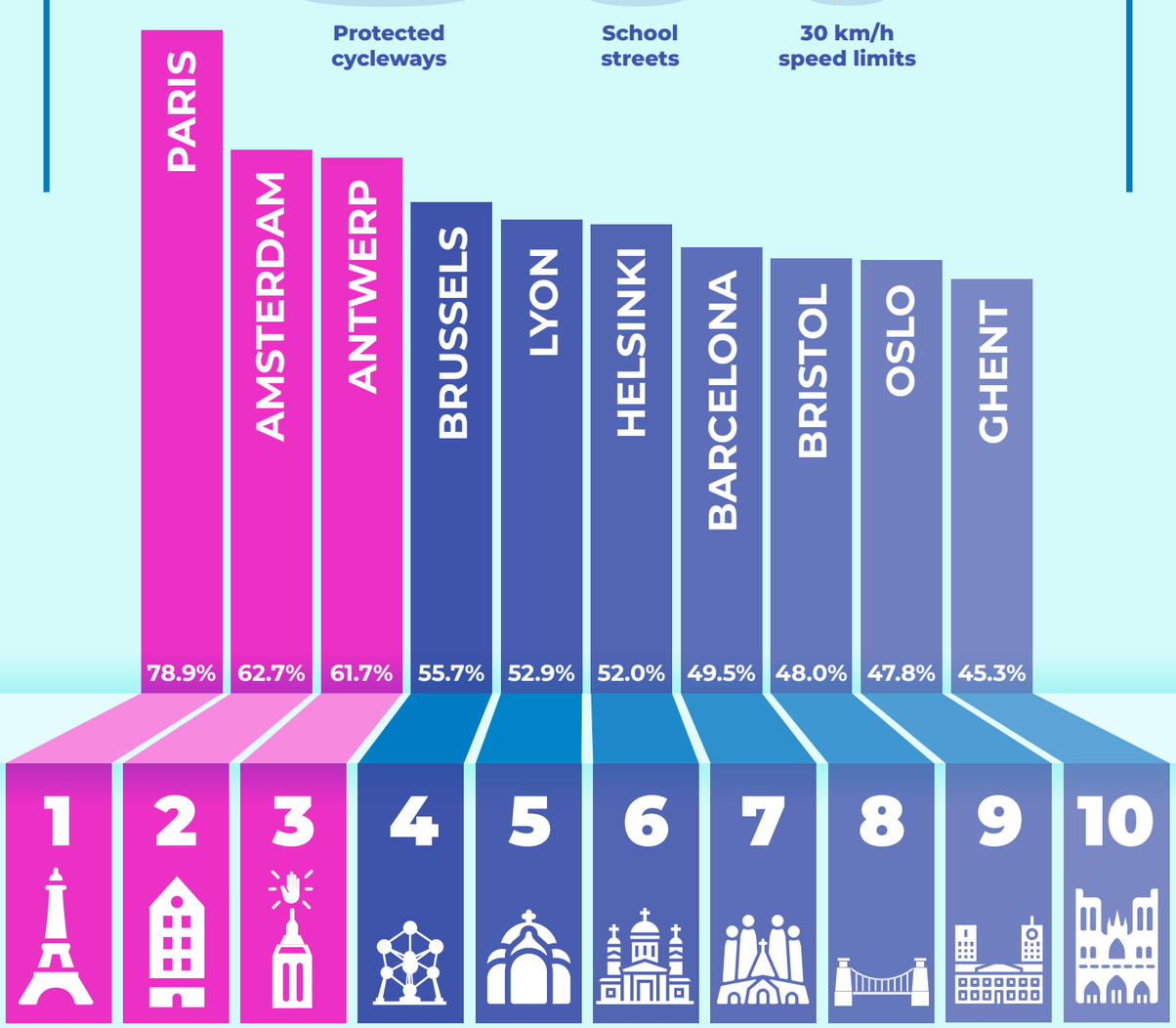
Overall results

- **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.

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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.

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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.

Update July 2025: *The City of Vienna has provided additional data following the launch, which would improve its position in the ranking from 13th to 5th place (see additional details). The update mainly reflects traffic-calming measures equivalent to school streets and a more comprehensive inclusion of protected cycling infrastructure.*

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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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