

The Urban Road Safety Index

The road safety perception in 32 European cities

Edition 2024



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Vision zero in action

Dear reader,

In 2021, the European Union (EU) took a significant step forward by adopting the 'Vision Zero' policy, aiming for zero fatalities on roadways by 2050. To drive immediate action, the EU also set an ambitious interim goal: halving serious accidents by 2030. Since then, the momentum towards Vision Zero has increased, with numerous countries, cities, and organizations taking up the challenge.

Recent data reveals a 13% decrease in road fatalities across the EU between 2021 and 2023. Nonetheless, the path to zero deaths demands ongoing commitment and collaborative effort at every level. Recent road safety analyses and performance reviews from leading European safety organizations underscore this progress.

At Cyclomedia, we are committed to advancing this mission. By meticulously mapping road infrastructure and extracting insights from that data through Ai, we provide crucial data supporting road safety measures throughout Europe. While government statistics on road safety have improved, our research identifies a vital area needing more focus: the real-world experiences and perceptions of road users.

In partnership with the independent research agency Multiscope, we have examined safety perceptions among residents of major European cities. This research underpins our Urban Road Safety Index for 2024, addressing key questions such as: Are city authorities doing enough to enhance road safety? Would a total ban on alcohol in traffic be beneficial?

This is the third edition of our research into road safety in Europe. It features comprehensive insights, a background article on Vision Zero, and a detailed head-to-head comparison of cities like Paris and London, among others. We hope this whitepaper inspires and motivates action, reinforcing the collective effort needed to achieve zero fatalities on European roads.

Best regards, Serge Lupas CEO Cyclomedia



About Cyclomedia

Cyclomedia is the worldwide leader in digital visualization of outdoor spaces, delivering insights through the most accurate 360° street-level visualizations for over forty years. Using AI-driven analytics, we deliver insights to build a better world in the future. We develop, build, and operate the world's most advanced mobile mapping systems that visualize highly populated urban areas in Europe and North America.

The up-to-date and accurate data that we collect each year is deployed by professional users, supporting both governments and businesses in making cities greener, more accessible, smarter, and safer.

The journey to zero: 2024 insights on urban road safety

The European Union's Vision Zero strategy, which aims for zero traffic fatalities by 2050, is a bold and ambitious goal. But is it realistic? Achieving this target will require not only commitment from the EU but also active participation from all member states. Despite the challenges, there is evidence to suggest that progress is possible, though disparities in road safety across Europe remain significant.

Road safety europe

Over the past decades, the EU has made significant steps in reducing road fatalities. The overall mortality rate in EU countries decreased by 17% from 54 to 46 deaths per million inhabitants between 2010 and 2020. However, the data reveals stark disparities: while Sweden reports only 21 deaths per million inhabitants, Romania has a much higher rate at 86 deaths per million.

Globally, the EU performs relatively well in road safety, especially when compared to countries like the United States, which had 129 deaths per million inhabitants in 2021. Yet, with about 25,000 people still dying on EU roads every year and over 135,000 seriously injured, there is no room for complacency. The recent stagnation in the decline of fatalities, excluding the COVID-19 pandemic years, underscores the need for renewed focus and action.

The vision zero strategy and safe system approach

The Vision Zero concept, which originated in Sweden and the Netherlands, advocates for a system designed to minimize human error and prevent accidents. This approach

contrasts with the traditional practice of blaming road users for accidents. Instead, Vision Zero places responsibility on those who design and manage road systems to eliminate as many risks as possible.

To achieve this, the EU focuses on the following key areas:

Infrastructure

Ensuring roads are designed and maintained to minimize accidents.

Vehicle safety

Setting high safety standards for all vehicles sold within the EU.

Safe road use

Promoting safe behaviors, including responsible speed, avoiding alcohol and drugs, minimizing distractions, and using protective equipment.

Emergency response

Ensuring quick and efficient emergency aid to reduce the severity of accidents.

Most road safety legislation is enacted at the national or local level, but the EU plays a crucial role in setting guidelines and standards that member states must follow. For instance, cross-border traffic enforcement ensures that a driver fined in

another EU country is still held accountable. The EU has also been instrumental in mandating safety features in vehicles, such as anti-lock braking systems (ABS), electronic stability programs, autonomous emergency braking, and intelligent speed assistance.

Challenges and disparities

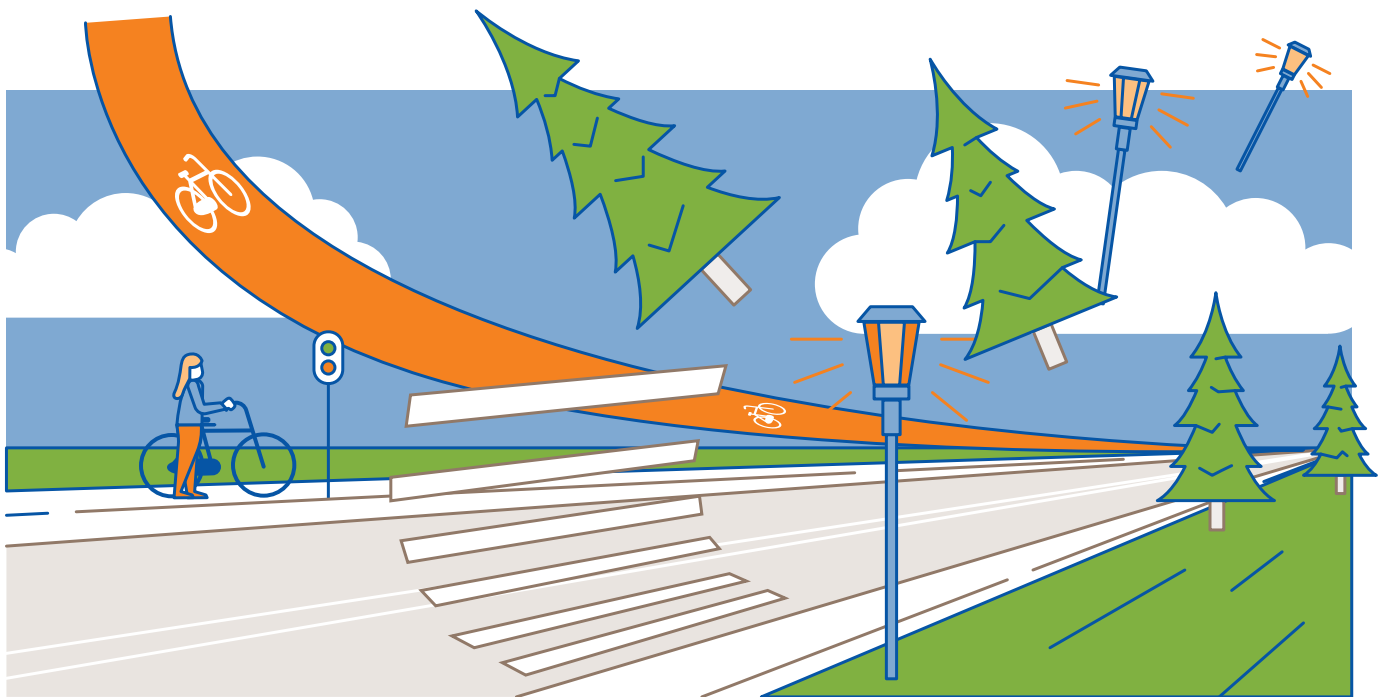
While Western Europe generally leads in implementing the Safe System approach, there are significant challenges in Eastern Europe, where infrastructure may be less developed, and resources scarcer. Countries like Poland have shown commitment at the highest levels, but achieving safer roads requires substantial investment, time, and consistent policy enforcement.

In urban areas, where vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and e-scooter riders are more prevalent, cities are increasingly adopting measures like 30 km/h speed zones and vehicles with pedestrian-friendly designs. Since 2022, all new vehicles in the EU must be equipped with technologies that enhance safety for these groups, such as parking sensors and rear-view cameras.

The path forward

To meet the 2030 interim goal of halving the number of traffic injuries and fatalities compared to 2018, governments must set clear, long-term objectives and align national and local efforts. This includes continued investment in infrastructure, education, and enforcement. European integration and cooperation are also vital, as countries must share best practices and work together to identify and mitigate risk factors.

Programs like the EU Road Safety Exchange and organizations such as the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) and Euro NCAP play a crucial role in fostering cooperation and promoting high safety standards across the continent. These efforts must be supported by political will at the highest levels to ensure that road safety remains a top priority.



Conclusion

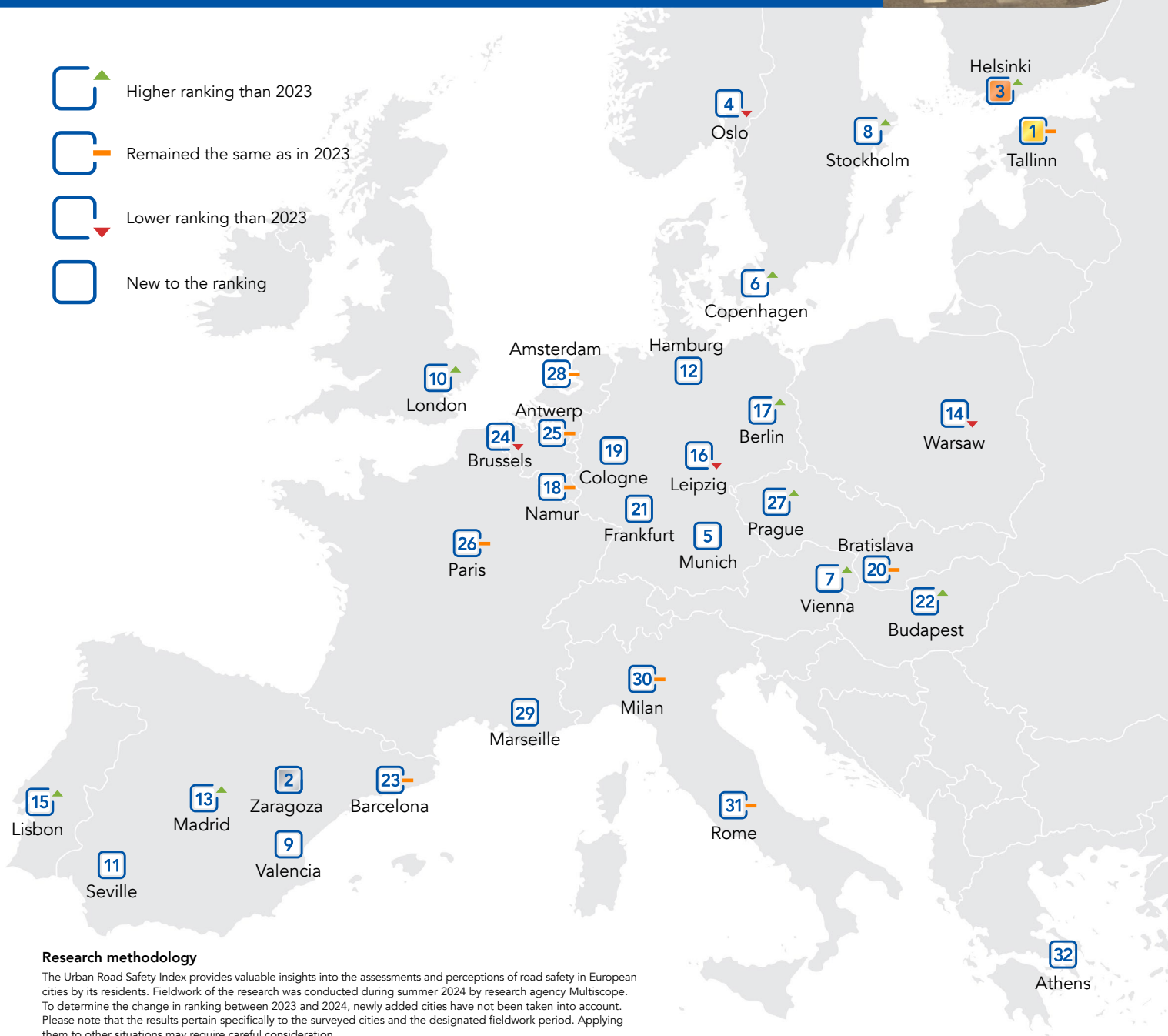
The Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic fatalities by 2050 is challenging but not impossible. The EU has laid a strong foundation with its policy framework and emphasis on the Safe System approach. However, achieving this vision will require sustained effort, innovation, and collaboration across all member states. With a focused and unified approach, Europe can continue to improve road safety and move closer to a future where traffic fatalities are a thing of the past.

The Urban Road Safety Index

How safe do you feel in traffic in the city in which you live?

Road safety varies across Europe, with Tallinn and Zaragoza among the safest cities and Athens trailing behind. In bike-friendly cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen, there's resistance to helmet laws but strong support for alcohol bans in traffic and better road design.

The EU's Vision Zero strategy aims to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2050, but this requires full participation from all member states. Cyclomedia's 2024 Urban Road Safety Index surveyed nearly 11,982 people across 32 cities, showing each city's ranking and its change from last year on the map.



2 Road safety in Europe

“The authorities of the city in which I live do enough to improve road safety in the city.”

Londoners are feeling increasingly confident about their city’s road safety initiatives, with 72% of residents agreeing that local authorities are taking the right steps to improve conditions.

Indicating a strong belief that the city is moving in the right direction. However, this level of confidence is not universal across Europe.

In seven of the surveyed cities, residents generally feel that authorities are falling short in their efforts to enhance road safety. This concern is especially pronounced in cities like Rome and Athens, where scores of 28% and 32% respectively, reveal significant dissatisfaction with the current measures being implemented.

The contrast between London and these cities underscores the varying levels of trust in local authorities’ ability to manage and improve road safety across different urban environments.

Research methodology

The chart shows the percentage of residents who believe their city authorities are doing enough to improve road safety.

	2022	2023	2024
London	50	53	72
Helsinki	64	55	69
Valencia			64
Warsaw	66	60	62
Madrid	49	55	62
Zaragoza			62
Lisbon		49	61
Munich			61
Seville			61
Oslo	47	58	60
Copenhagen	45	56	60
Brussels	48	52	59
Paris	47	48	59
Hamburg			58
Vienna	73	60	58
Stockholm	47	51	57
Bratislava	47	44	57
Frankfurt			56
Tallinn		43	56
Antwerp		56	55
Barcelona		53	55
Budapest	44	43	53
Leipzig		43	53
Prague	58	54	52
Namur		47	52
Cologne			51
Marseille			47
Milan		37	43
Berlin	30	28	40
Amsterdam	55	47	38
Athens			32
Rome	24	26	28

3 City infrastructure

Road safety and infrastructure: insights from European cities

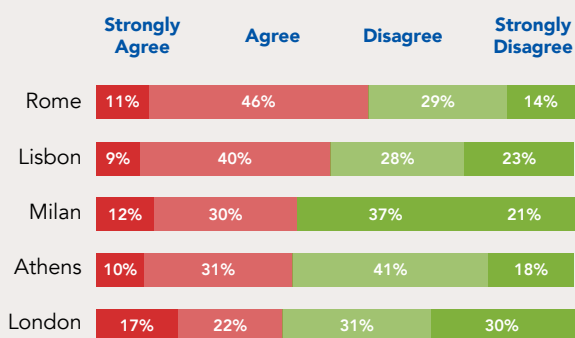
Concerns about infrastructure safety are high in Rome, where 57% of residents worry about bridge or viaduct collapse. Lisbon, Milan, and Athens also show notable concern, while Amsterdam and Vienna express the least anxiety.

Views on road preparedness for heavy rainfall vary widely. Cities like Vienna and Munich feel well-equipped, while Rome and Athens lag behind, with few residents confident in their infrastructure.

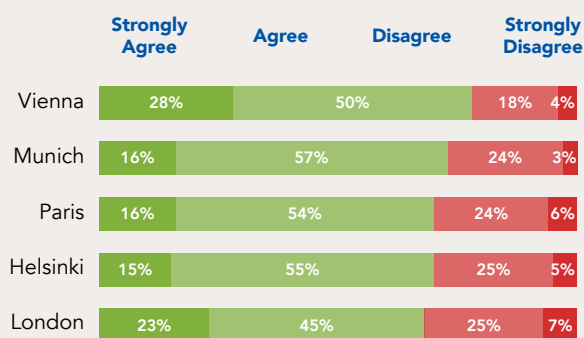
Most cities agree that roadworks are handled safely. However, Rome and Athens again show dissatisfaction, with a significant majority feeling that roadwork safety is inadequate.

A couple of cities excel in bicycle path safety, with London, Helsinki, and Copenhagen leading the rankings. Meanwhile, cities like Athens, Rome, and Marseille face significant concerns from residents regarding the safety of their cycling infrastructure.

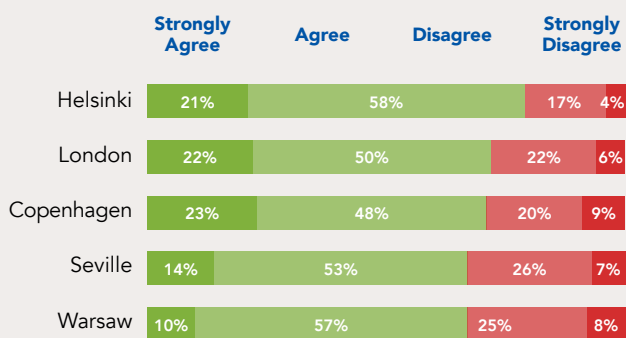
I sometimes worry about collapse of a bridge or viaduct while driving, cycling or walking over or under it



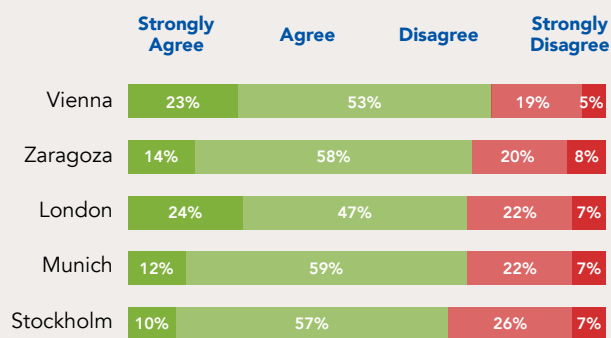
The roads in my city are well equipped for heavy rainfall



I think the cycle paths in my city are safe



Enough is done during road works to guarantee the safety of road users

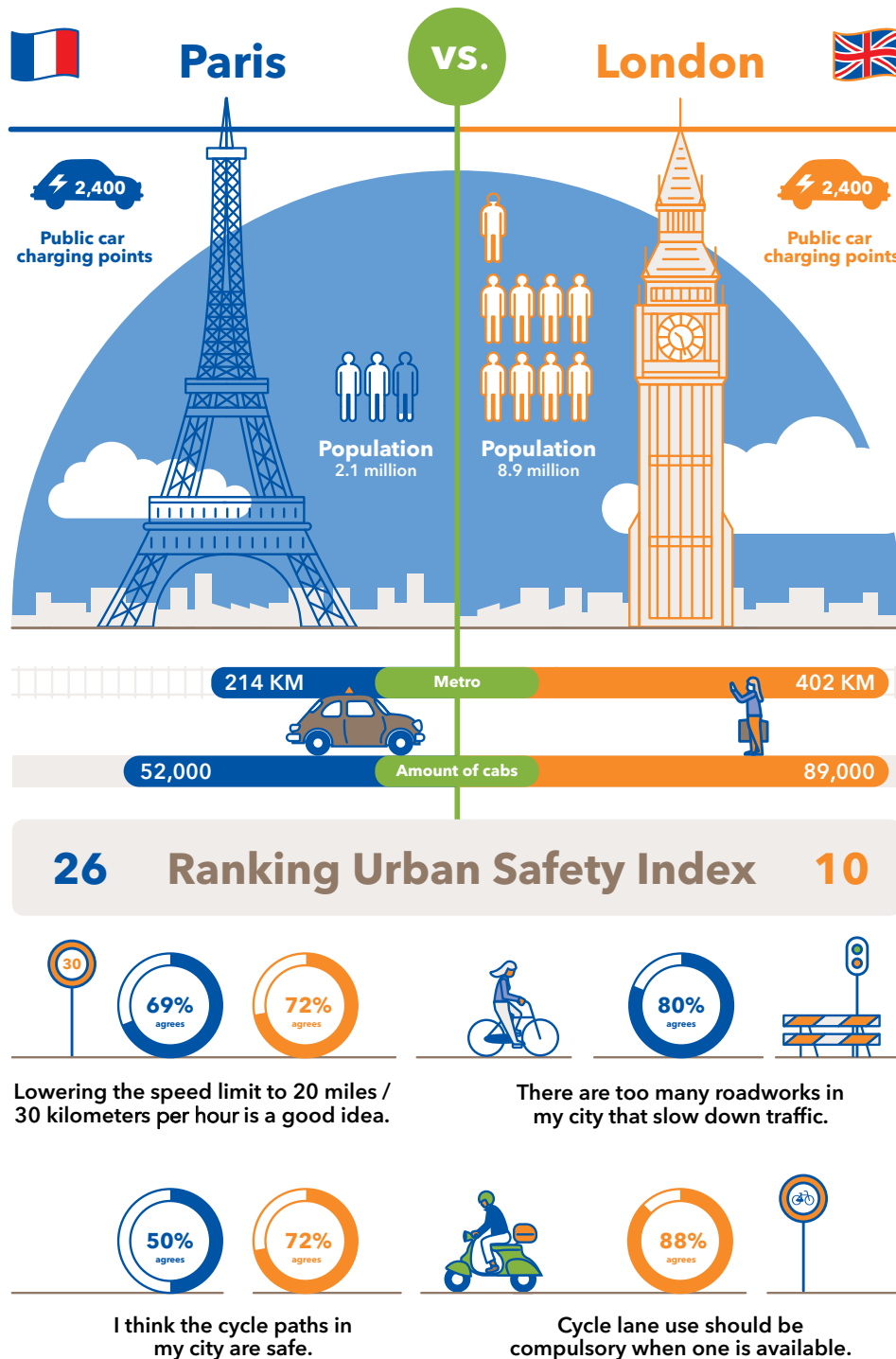


4 Head to head

Paris vs. London

Paris and London showcase distinct urban dynamics. London ranks higher in urban safety (10th vs. 26th) and has a more extensive metro network, while both cities surprisingly share an equal number of public car charging points.

Additionally, public sentiment in both cities is similar on issues like cycle lane use and speed limit reductions, though Londoners show slightly higher levels of agreement.



Behaviour in traffic & road quality

Majority want to ban alcohol from traffic

In many European cities, like Bratislava and Helsinki, a significant majority of residents report not using their smartphones hands-free in traffic. However, in cities such as Budapest, Tallinn, and Palma, the population is more evenly divided on this practice.

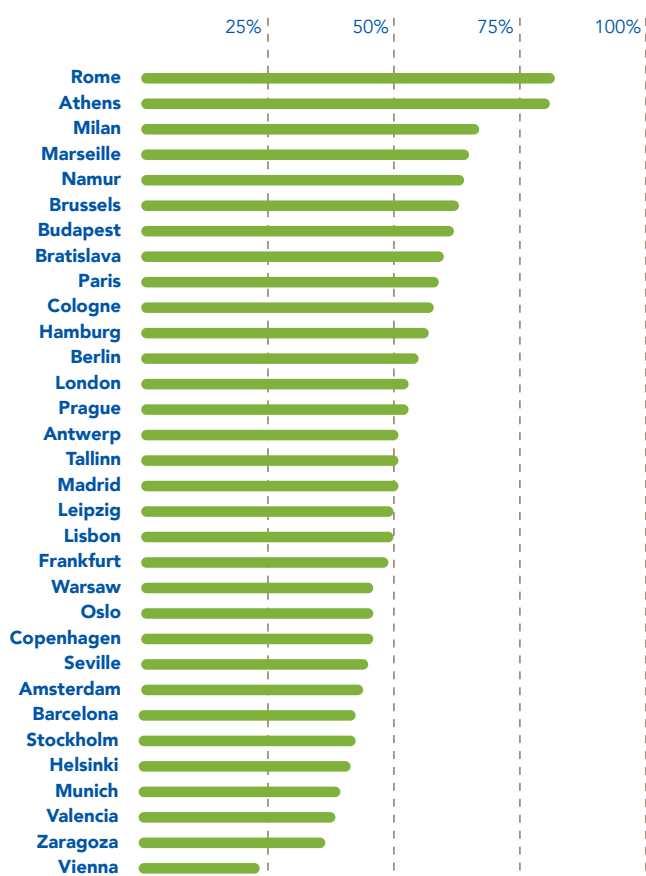
Support for a complete ban on alcohol in traffic is strong across all surveyed cities, with particularly high agreement in Vienna and Madrid.



A total ban on alcohol in traffic is a good idea



I do not use my smartphone hands-free in traffic



● I think the quality of the roads in my city creates dangerous traffic situations

"I think the quality of the roads in my city creates dangerous traffic situations."

Residents in European cities have different views on whether road quality causes dangerous traffic situations. In about half of the cities, people agree that poor road conditions are a safety risk, while in the other half, most residents do not see it as a problem.

Athens is a clear example where many residents (62%) believe bad roads lead to dangerous traffic. On the other hand, in Vienna, only 24% of people think road quality is a safety concern. This shows how opinions on road safety can vary widely from city to city.

Moving around in the city

Almost everyone sticks to the speed limit

In most European cities, residents don't think councils prioritize motorists over safety, except in Madrid, London, and Turku. Spanish cities favor lowering speed limits, while Prague and Budapest oppose.

Despite differences, most Europeans follow speed limits, especially in Tampere and Stockholm. Rome's residents fear accidents, while Vienna's feel safer.



+66%

I think lowering the speed limit to 30 kph/20 mph in inner cities is good for road safety



+85%

In the city centre, I always stick to the speed limit



+29%

I am afraid to use the roads in my city because of the danger of accidents



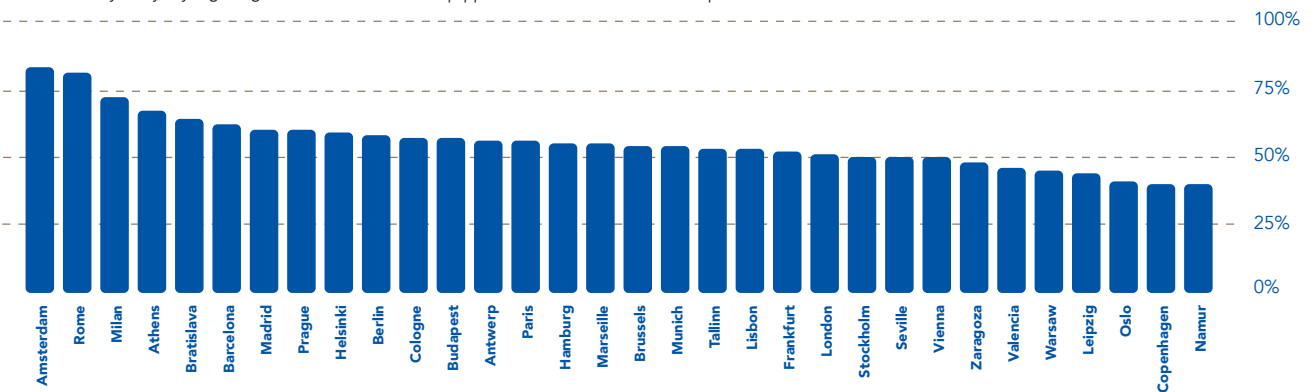
+44%

My city council prefers improving the infrastructure of motorists over the safety of other road users (cyclists, pedestrians)

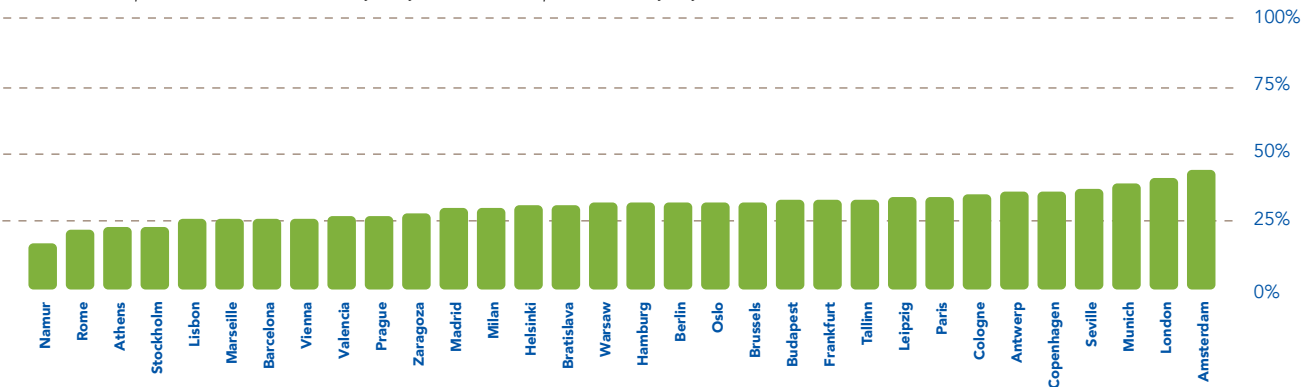
Amsterdam and Rome struggle with new transport needs

Residents of Amsterdam and Rome are highly concerned about road safety due to inadequate infrastructure for new urban transport, with over 80% strongly agreeing. In bicycle-friendly cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen, many residents also oppose an adult helmet requirement, fearing it would reduce cycling, with 44% of Amsterdam and 36% of Copenhagen residents saying they would cycle less if helmets were mandatory. Other cities show more divided opinions on these issues.

● Road safety in my city is getting worse because it is not equipped for new forms of urban transportation



● If a helmet requirement is introduced in the city for cyclists over 18, I expect I will use my bicycle less often



Improving urban road safety

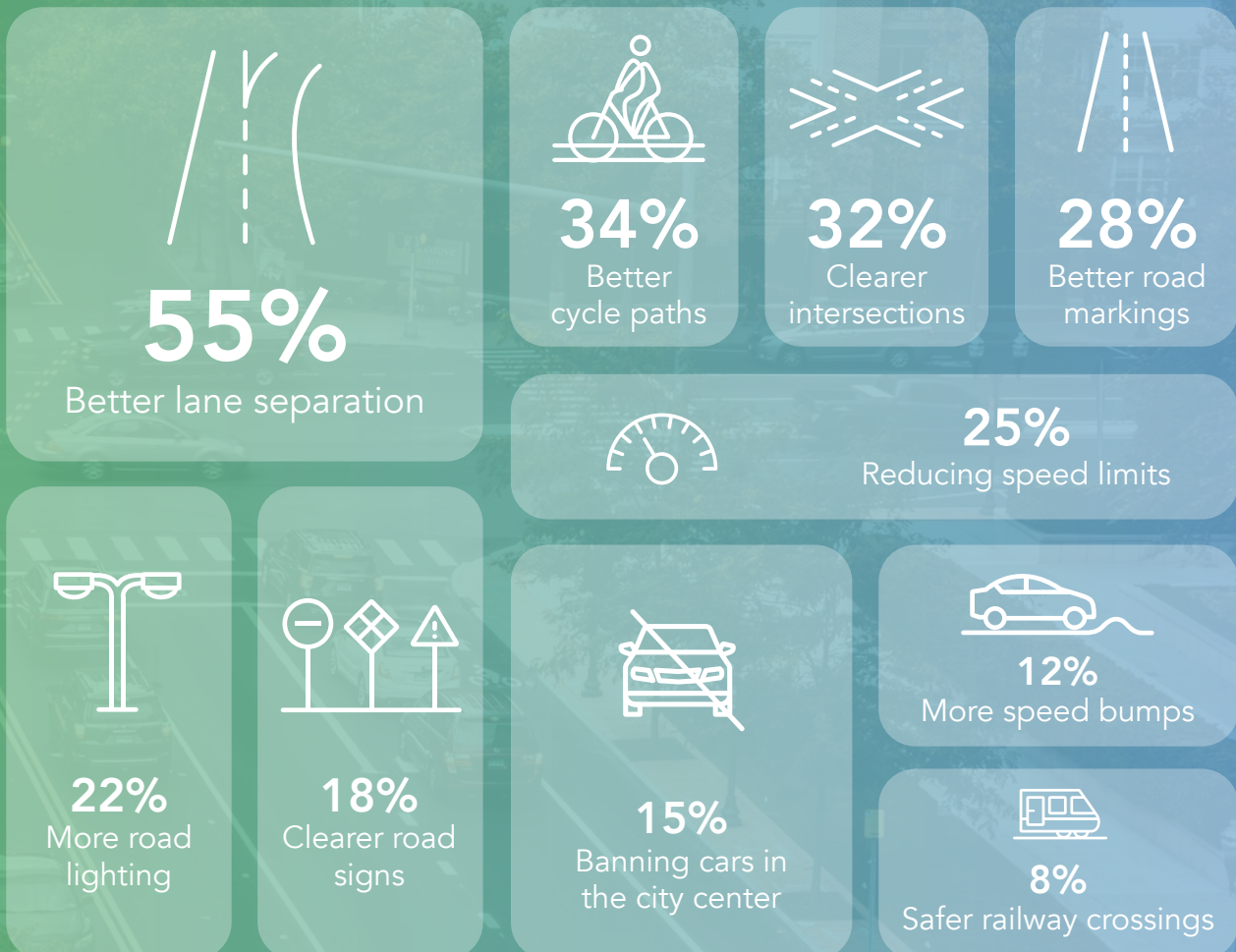
What to do to improve urban road safety?

In the survey of European cities, better separation emerged as the top priority for improving road safety, with 55% of respondents identifying it as the most important action.

This need is especially pronounced in Amsterdam, where a notable 70% of residents emphasize its importance. Conversely, the safety of railway crossings is the least mentioned concern across all cities.

While only 2% of Copenhagen residents see this as a priority, it's a more significant issue in Tallinn and Milan, where 20% of residents highlight the need for safer crossings.

The contrast between these priorities underscores the varying road safety concerns across different cities.



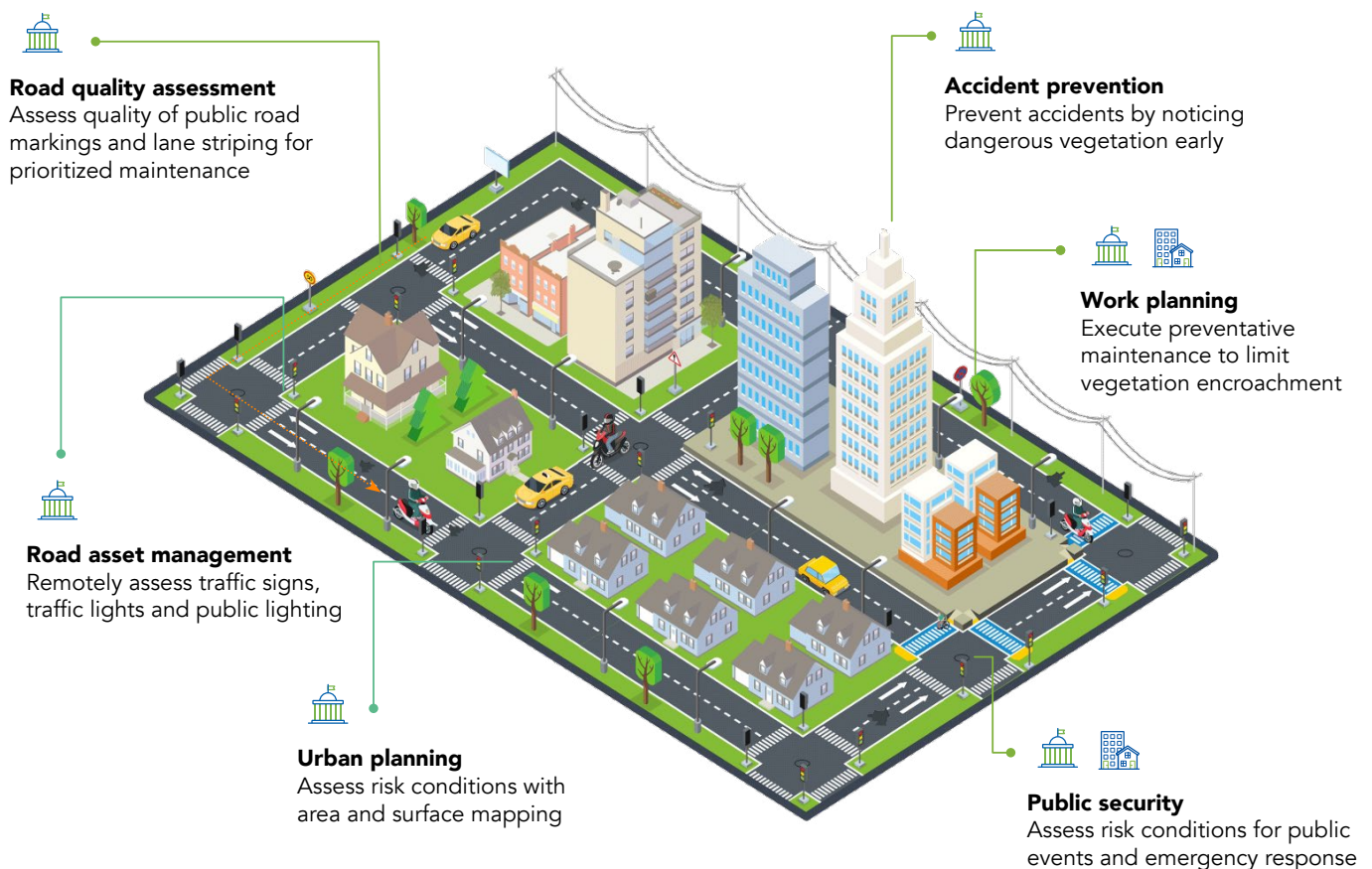
Cyclomedia's mobility solutions

How Cyclomedia can help

At Cyclomedia, we specialize in providing precise geospatial data and insights that help cities and businesses navigate the complexities of urban mobility and safety. By leveraging our advanced 360° street-level imagery and comprehensive mapping technology, we enable governments and corporations to make data-driven decisions that improve the quality of life for their communities.

Our solutions empower urban planners to visualize and assess risk conditions, prioritize maintenance of roadways, and manage assets like traffic signs, lighting, and public infrastructure with unparalleled accuracy. We also play a critical role in accident prevention, allowing municipalities to identify and mitigate hazards such as overgrown vegetation that could obstruct road visibility.

In addition to supporting urban planning and public safety, our tools help streamline operations by enabling remote inspections, reducing the need for on-site visits, and facilitating preventative maintenance. Whether it is ensuring clear road markings, planning for future infrastructure needs, or enhancing the safety of public spaces, Cyclomedia delivers the detailed, actionable data needed to keep cities running smoothly and safely.



Government use case



Corporate use case

Get in touch



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 Check our LinkedIn page

To find out more about the results visit the Urban Road Safety Index website [🔗](#).

Curious on how Cyclomedia's visual data can help with improving road safety, contact us at info@cyclomedia.com or visit cyclomedia.com.

Local governments already working together with Cyclomedia on mobility challenges:



Stockholms
stad



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