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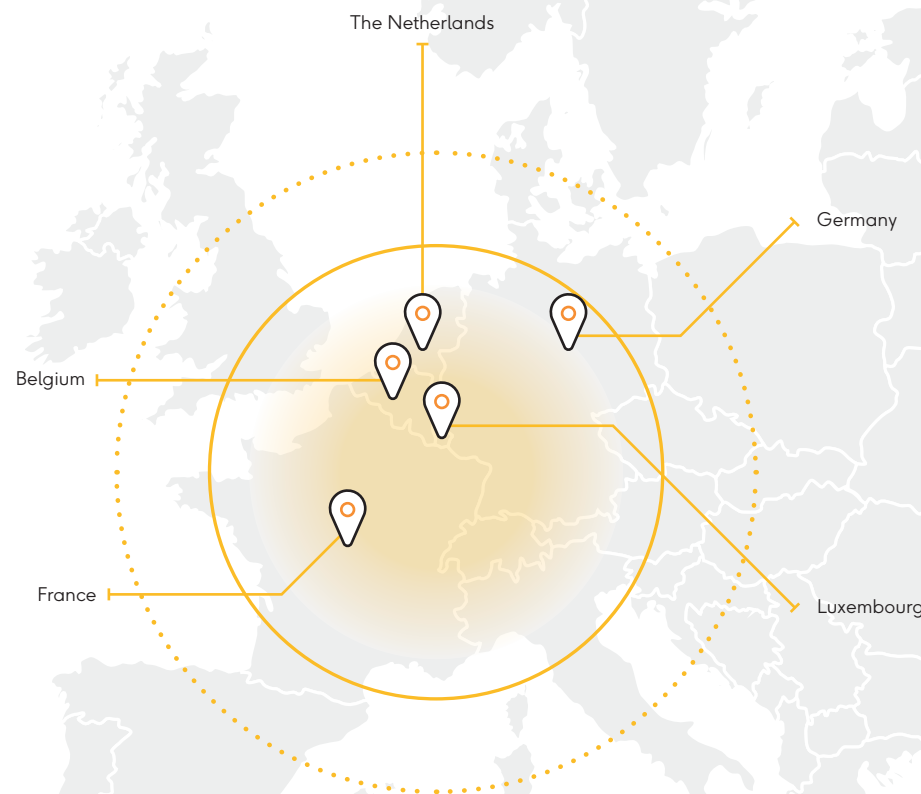
# 8 European Cities That Are Leading The Way In Developing Safe And Sustainable Communities



# Foreword

Europe has long championed green cities, with the Benelux region (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) being home to many of them. Indeed, they're often **calling upon the European Commission** to rethink sustainable transport strategies. But they aren't alone. Neighbours France and Germany have increasingly improved mobility in their cities too, creating sustainable communities and working towards net-zero targets.

For city planners, what these nations are doing can act as a benchmark. Not only do they provide an insight into how you can reduce emissions, but also how you can improve the quality of life and attract greater investment. So, to give some inspiration, this eBook rounds up eight of the most sustainable cities in Europe.



# 01

## The Netherlands



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# The Netherlands: Rotterdam & Amsterdam



The Environmental and Planning Act, or the **Omgevingswet**, is just one piece of Dutch legislation designed to achieve a safe and healthy environment that still meets societal needs. Within it, an obligation is placed on all Dutch citizens to take sufficient care of the environment while mitigating their adverse impacts.

This is also applicable to organisations that will increasingly face scrutiny as the nation aims for net-zero emissions. Deliveries look set to be targeted next. From 2025, there will be a **ban on fossil-fuelled delivery vehicles** in urban areas. The idea? Supermarket shelves will be stocked, waste will be collected, and packages will arrive on time, but it will all be done without any exhaust fumes or CO2 emissions.





## Rotterdam

The Netherlands claims to be the first country in the world to give its cities the freedom to follow in their governance and implement their own zero-emission zones. However, Rotterdam already has **a number of initiatives** to reduce its emissions.

The Luchtsingel, or 'air canal', has been described as the world's first crowdfunded public infrastructure project. It connects three previously

disconnected areas of the city through a building, across roads and over railways to improve mobility. To combat drought, there's also a 'sponge garden' that collects and retains excess water. There's a recycled park that retrieves plastic from the river Nieuwe Maas, too, before using it to make floating platforms. Similarly, there are floating farms where around 40 cows graze on real grass and produce 1,200 litres of milk a day while minimising the impact of agriculture.







## Amsterdam

The capital is no different in its approach to going carbon neutral; the city aims to be completely **emission-free by 2030**. And that starts in the home, with an aim to encourage solar panel installation among residents, as well as install solar panels and **green roofs** on all public buildings. In addition, there'll be more rooftop water storage to reduce the demand on public water supply.

But perhaps the most ambitious aim is to move towards a **circular economy**. That means 100% circular procurement and commissioning, wasting less and using the same raw materials over and over again.

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# 02

## Belgium



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# Belgium: Brussels & Antwerp



In Belgium, eco-innovation and projects related to circular economies are organised at a **regional level**. However, there are still overall goals the government believes the nation should achieve together. For example, **their constitution** outlines that every federal entity should pursue sustainable development objectives in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

The country accounts for just **3.3% of the EU27 emissions**, and they've decreased the total by 17.2% since 2005. In hopes to further reduce their carbon footprint, they aim to change agricultural practices so that there's more long-term carbon storage in soils and introduce biomass as a replacement for fossil fuels. As for other initiatives, these are determined by the cities themselves...







## Brussels

Belgium's capital isn't known for being green. In fact, it has [a reputation for its traffic.](#)

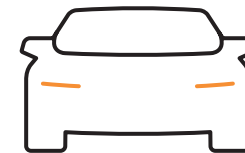
Just 28% of journeys in the city are made by public transport, and in 2018, the European Commission issued Belgium with a formal warning to address its illegal levels of air

pollution. But that is changing. A 10-year plan has been introduced to make private cars less attractive and encourage residents to travel via modes like buses, trains and trams.

The immediate aim is a 25% reduction in car use, and the hope is that this will be achieved by building new tram and

metro lines as well as introducing a 30kph speed limit across the Brussels region. To accompany this, there will be a 100% electric bus fleet in operation and 65,000 parking spots will be removed.

▼ **25%** reduction in car use





## Antwerp

Unlike the capital, Antwerp already has a reputation for being a **smart city**. It has spent the last few years developing solutions to address safety, sustainability and mobility challenges. The city has even encouraged startups to develop traffic and fleet management applications to help city operators adopt new technologies – including autonomous vehicles.

This is where Antwerp has found success: in encouraging innovation among local and national businesses.

The city contains the most important chemical cluster in Europe, and the second most important in the world. Naturally, this creates a logistical issue when it comes to distribution and the sheer number of vehicles on the road. Antwerp addresses this by investing in their startups and growth companies, encouraging them to offer solutions that can create 'citizen-focused smart city initiatives'.



# 03

## France



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# France: Paris & Angers



**Like any other major EU country, France faces emission goals and air quality challenges. But unlike other countries, it's encouraging employers to help improve things.**

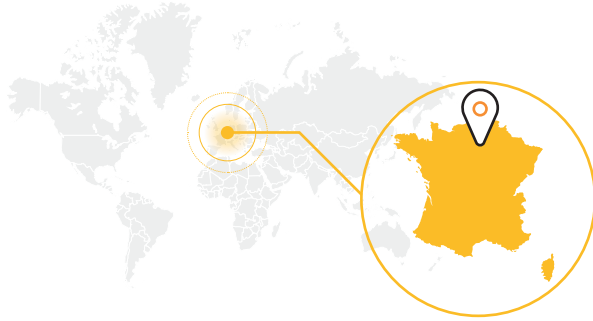
**'Forfait Mobilités Durables'** is the name of the scheme, and it was one of the key measures of the Mobility Orientation Law. Entirely optional, this scheme allows employers to cover all or part of the cost of travel between home and work on one condition: that employees use a 'soft mobility' transport option.

## These include:

- Cycling, with or without electric assistance
- Car sharing as a driver or passenger
- Public passenger transport
- All devices available for rent/self-service such as scooters
- Electric or hybrid means of transport

The compensation granted (up to €500 a year per employee) is tax-free for the employee and exempt from social security contributions for the employer. Already an estimated **20% of French businesses** have implemented the scheme and this number is expected to grow. But there are more specific schemes at work within French cities.





## Paris

Paris might feel incapable of change due to its strict building and infrastructure regulations, but that's not stopping the French capital from aiming to become the **greenest city in the world**. Over the past five years, the city has created around 900 miles of bike lanes. Major roads, including the quais that run alongside the river Seine have been shut off to traffic. And the plazas of Madeleine, Nation and Bastille have already been redesigned with pedestrians in mind.

This is all in an effort to meet their net-zero goals – the first being to ban all diesel cars by 2024, and the second to

ban petrol vehicles from 2030. What's more, there'll be four new 'urban forests' placed next to major landmarks around the city, with mayor Anne Hidalgo pledging to plant 170,000 trees across the capital.

By **2030, 50%** of the city will be covered by planted areas.







## Angers

In contrast to Paris, this relatively small city perhaps faces less of a challenge in creating sustainable initiatives for its citizens. Even so, it is equally determined to improve air quality. Among many other green credentials, Angers has **five monitoring stations** and has swapped fossil-fuelled council vehicles for more climate-friendly substitutes.

The city is also home to the Connected Object City (Cité de l'objet connecté). This is a space that includes coworking facilities, laboratories and other features for startups. The idea is to support local firms who can improve the corporate success in the region.





# 04

## Germany



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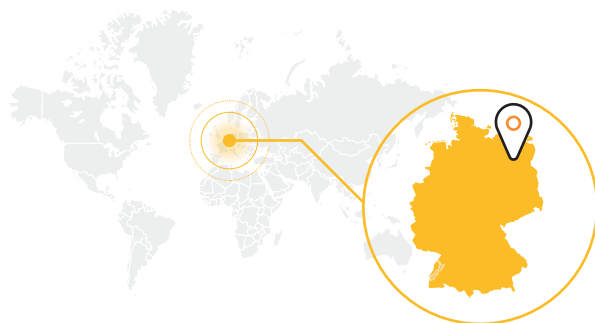
# Germany: Berlin & Hamburg

Despite its contribution to the personal automotive world, Germany has long embraced public transport. By 2030, the country hopes to cut their emissions **by at least 55%**. By 2050, they plan to have achieved greenhouse gas neutrality through carbon sequestration. Theirs is the **third largest economy** in the OECD and has been proactive in developing ambitious environmental policies at home and internationally.

This strong environmental framework not only makes Germany a pioneer but also provides an example of how countries

can achieve net-carbon neutrality without compromising on growth. In its **Energy Concept**, for example, they've proposed guidelines for an environmentally sound, reliable and affordable energy supply. The key elements of this are expanding the use of renewable energies and increasing energy efficiency. In electricity production, Germany aims to raise the share of renewables from 17% today to more than 80% in 2050, while completely phasing out electricity production from nuclear power plants.





## Berlin

With highly developed bicycle lane systems, it's no surprise that there are an estimated **710 bicycles for every 1,000 residents in the city**. Yet this is something they are still trying to improve. As part of the **Mobility Act**, the government hopes to make the city more mobile and more climate-friendly, by improving visibility for cyclists through colour-coded paths and better signage.

As for households, apartments will feature a filter system that recycles greywater for use on rooftop gardens. Similarly, to ease the burden that agriculture places on the environment,

Berlin **no longer grows lettuce in fields**. Instead, there are glass-walled vertical farming units. These spaces are packed with herbs and vegetables in special trays that slowly turn under LED lights. The produce is digitally monitored and has the shortest of food supply chains to the end customer – all without waste packaging.







## Hamburg

While not the capital, Hamburg is one of the biggest cities in Germany. And yet, just over 10 years ago, it became the **greenest city in Europe**. It's easy to see why: almost a fifth of spaces are covered with meadows, woods, parks and water – half of which is under conservation. In fact, it has a greater share of nature reserves than any other German city.

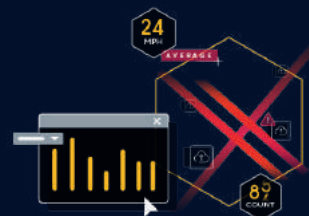
To maintain this quality of life, the government focuses on resource-sparing growth by building on old industrial areas and fallow land. HafenCity, for example, is the biggest inner-city building project in Europe and uses 157 hectares of old port area for urban development. They have a keen focus

on transportation too, with electric **ioki shuttles** and extensive carsharing and public transport services. Thanks to the Hamburger Verkehrsbund route planner and ticket app, there are now over **70 points** throughout the city where users can rent or park vehicles. It's no wonder they became hosts of the wejo.com **ITS World Congress** in 2021 – perhaps the world's largest event on intelligent transport systems, and one that Wejo was proud to attend.

the greenest  
city in Europe.



## How Wejo's products, tools and solutions can help



**To create green cities, local authorities need to tackle rising emissions. But it isn't always straightforward to pedestrianise streets and build more cycle lanes. You need to know how the city moves already in order to find alternative solutions. And that's exactly what smart mobility data does.**

By highlighting where congestion is at its worst, and where there's a lack of EV charging points, city planners can improve infrastructure to ease traffic and encourage energy-efficient alternatives. What's more, local authorities can see where bike lanes will be safest, given that they'll have an overview of all traffic-related incidents across their city.

The same is true for micromobility, such as electric scooters and e-bikes. With mobility insights, you can determine where docking stations for these vehicles should be placed to ensure more widespread usage. Transport hubs – such as 'park and ride' and 'park and cycle' services – can be more strategically placed too.

All of these improvements can be implemented with the right tools. Connected vehicle data enables planners to visualise the way their city moves in granular detail, helping them make informed decisions and capture the outcomes of any emission-reducing initiatives that are put in place. That means you can build cycle lanes, EV charging stations and new roads,

knowing that they'll be as effective as possible at hitting your safety and sustainability targets.

**Contact us to discover how Wejo can help you make lasting changes to your city, without compromising your budget.**



## About Wejo

**Wejo Group Limited is a global leader in cloud and software analytics for connected, electric, and autonomous vehicles, revolutionizing the way we live, work and travel by transforming and interpreting historic and real-time vehicle data.**

Wejo enables **Smart Mobility for Good™** smarter mobility by organizing trillions of data points collected from approximately 13 million vehicles and 76.7 billion journeys to date, across multiple brands, makes and models, and then standardizing and enhancing those streams of data on a vast scale.

Wejo partners with ethical, like-minded companies and organizations to turn that data into insights that unlock value for consumers. With the most comprehensive and trusted data, information and intelligence, Wejo is creating a smarter, safer, more sustainable world for all. Founded in 2014, Wejo employs more than 300 people and has offices in Manchester, UK and in regions where Wejo does business around the world.

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[www.wejo.com](http://www.wejo.com) or connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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