

Context

Transport is a major challenge for the European Union, with CO2 emissions rising since 1990, making it the largest single source of emissions¹. Road transport contributes 70% of transport CO2 emissions and the highest share of NOx emissions², contributing to poor air quality that harms people's health.

In 2023, 20,400 people died in road incidents, disproportionately affecting pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

Single occupancy vehicle use leads to congestion, reduced productivity, and sedentary lifestyles.

While 53% of kilometres travelled in C40 EU cities were by walking, cycling, or public transport in 2022, this is lower than 2019 levels³. Addressing transport emissions and safety is crucial for urban sustainability and public health.

Policy Asks

1. ACCELERATE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRANSITION

The European Commission must ensure the deadlines to end sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035 and heavy-duty vehicles by 2040 are maintained or brought forward. This is vital for achieving net-zero road transport emissions by 2050, aligning with global sustainability goals. Accelerating the transition to electric vehicles will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, advancing environmental sustainability and combatting climate change.

2. SUPPORT EUROPEAN ELECTRIC BUS PRODUCERS TO ACCESS EXTERNAL MARKETS

The European Commission should develop a strategy to incentivise European bus manufacturers to expand electric bus (e-bus) production and access external markets. Despite European companies holding around 80% of the overall bus market in Latin America, Chinese counterparts dominate the e-bus sector.

With over 25,000 e-buses expected in 32 Latin American cities by 2030 and a projected 55,000 by 2050, there's significant market growth potential. Encouraging European manufacturers to participate could stimulate economic growth and support sustainable transport solutions, aligning with global emissions reduction targets and promoting regional development.

3. REDIRECT INVESTMENT TO SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The European Commission should redirect funding from road-building projects towards improving walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure. Emphasising rail infrastructure development between cities and investing in urban public transport, walking, and cycling enhances accessibility and reduces carbon emissions. Addressing the shortage of public transport drivers through fair pay and working conditions promotes job creation, gender equality, and green employment opportunities.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

C40
CITIES

4. SUPPORTING LOW AND ZERO-EMISSION ZONES

The European Commission should provide financial support and capacity building for cities to implement low and zero-emission zones, to enable necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures. These zones are crucial for reducing high-polluting vehicle use, aligning with climate and air quality goals. Beyond emissions reduction, they also mitigate noise pollution, enhance road safety, and improve overall quality of life. Upholding stringent air quality targets incentivises the adoption of these zones, safeguarding public health and advancing environmental sustainability.



City Action

GREEN AND HEALTHY STREETS ACCELERATOR:

Eleven C40 cities in the European Union - Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Copenhagen, Heidelberg, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Rome, Rotterdam, and Warsaw - have joined C40's Green and Healthy Streets Accelerator. This commitment includes procuring only electric buses from 2025 and establishing a major zero-emission area by 2030. As of 2024, these cities have over 2,000 electric buses, representing about 14% of their total bus fleets. These efforts aim to significantly reduce transport emissions and improve air quality.

CLEAN AIR ACCELERATOR:

Eleven C40 cities - Barcelona, Copenhagen, Heidelberg, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Warsaw - have signed C40's Clean Air Accelerator. This initiative commits cities to establish baseline air pollution levels and take action to reduce major pollution

sources, including transport. The expected outcomes are cleaner air and healthier urban environments.

ENHANCED LOW-EMISSION ZONES:

Most C40 cities in the European Union have introduced low-emission zones. Paris and Amsterdam plan to strengthen their emission standards by 2025. Stockholm is preparing to introduce a world-leading zero-emission zone by the end of 2024. These measures are expected to further reduce vehicle emissions, improve air quality, and enhance public health. Warsaw plans to implement a low-emission zone in 2024.

¹ T&E. (2024). [State of European Transport](#).

² European Transport Safety Council. (2024). [Road safety priorities for the EU 2024-2029](#).

³ C40 analysis of [Google insights](#).