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Transport and mobility

Transport is a vital sector but our current mobility system is simply not sustainable. Decisive policies, smart investments and changes in demand can trigger a vital shift towards cleaner transport modes and reduce the sector’s impact on the environment, climate and our health.

**Overview**

Transport connects people, cultures, cities, countries and continents. It is one of the main pillars of modern societies and economies, allowing producers to sell their products across the world and travellers to discover new places. Transport networks also ensure access to key public services, such as education and health, contributing to a better quality of life. Connecting to transport helps boost the economy in remote areas, creating jobs and spreading wealth.

There is, however, a downside to our current transport model. The transport sector causes substantial negative impacts on the environment and human health. Transport is responsible for about a quarter of the EU’s total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and causes air pollution, noise pollution and habitat fragmentation.

More concretely, it is the only major economic sector in Europe where GHGs have increased since 1990 and is also the largest contributor to nitrogen oxides emissions, which harm health and the environment. Similarly, road transport is one of the main sources of environmental noise pollution in Europe.

As demand has increased, so has the overall energy efficiency of new passenger cars, vans and trucks, planes and ships, but not at the same pace as total transport emissions. The sheer volume of transport activity has impacted our GHG emissions and demands on all types of transport are expected to increase.

Europe aims to become climate-neutral by 2050. This cannot be achieved without a sustainable mobility system, based on cleaner and more active transport modes, cleaner fuels and, where possible, reducing the need for mobility.

**Key Facts**

In 2022, greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the EU were about 26% higher than in 1990. Relative to other economic sectors, transport accounted for about 29% of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2022. Its share is expected to increase further as the decarbonisation of the European economy progresses faster in other sectors, most notably in energy production.

With current and planned policy measures in the EU Member States, greenhouse gas emissions from transport are projected to decrease by about 14% in 2030 and by 37% in 2050, compared with 2022 levels. Stronger efforts are therefore needed to achieve the EU goal of reducing transport emissions by 90% by 2050.

Our indicators show some of the latest trends:

Average CO2 emissions from all new cars registered in Europe in 2023 continued to decrease and were 1.4% lower than in 2022, according to provisional data published today by the EEA. Similarly, average CO2 emissions from new vans continued to fall, and were 1.6% lower than in 2022. The reductions in emissions from new cars and vans are related to the growing share of fully electric vehicles.

Following six years of steady growth in greenhouse gas emissions from the EU’s transport sector, transport emissions dropped substantially in 2020 because of reduced activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary estimates of emissions in 2021 indicate a rebound of 8.6% in transport, followed by further growth of 2.7% in 2022.

Emissions of air pollutants from transport have decreased, except for NH3 and N2O, in the EU-27 in recent decades, because of policy efforts across several transport modes. Reductions in the road transport sector account for the greatest share of this progress, while emissions from the shipping and aviation sectors increased with some pollutants.

The share of energy from renewable sources used for transport in the EU increased from under 2% in 2005 to 8.7% in 2022 according to preliminary estimates.

The number of electric vehicles is growing in Europe, every year. In 2023, Electric vehicles accounted for 22.7% of new car registrations and 7.7% of new van registrations. In total, 2.4 million new electric cars were registered in 2023, up from 2 million in 2022.

At least 18 million people are highly annoyed and 5 million are highly sleep disturbed by long-term exposure to noise from transport in the EU.

*Source:* “Transport and mobility”. The European Environmental agency. 10 feb 2025. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/transport-and-mobility?activeAccordion=4268d9b2-6e3b-409b-8b2a-b624c120090d>



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