

AMSTERDAM IS THE MOST SUSTAINABLE CITY IN THE WORLD



The Sustainable Cities Index 2024, conducted by Arcadis, has ranked Amsterdam as the most sustainable city in the world, a testament to its remarkable achievements in urban sustainability.

The report shows discrepancies between the leading sustainable cities, with Amsterdam in first place, Rotterdam in second place, Copenhagen in third place, Frankfurt in fourth place, and Munich in fifth place. **On the other hand, cities such as New York, Boston, and Washington DC in the US are positioned at 48, 56, and 65, respectively, showing lower sustainability rankings.**

In the sixth edition of the Arcadis Sustainable Cities Index (SCI), 100 global cities are ranked on three sustainability pillars: planet, people, and profit. The index considers 67 different parameters, including air quality, waste management, and economic performance, to highlight the evolution of urban sustainability. This year, a new 'Progress' pillar has been added to measure change over time and demonstrate the impact of sustainability interventions in the last decade. The rankings are based on the analysis of these parameters, providing a holistic view of each city's sustainability.

Key data include air pollution, waste management, investment in low-carbon infrastructure, and factors such as economic performance, social equity, and resilience to natural disasters.

Europe Dominates the Top Spots

European cities dominate the top positions in the Sustainable Cities Index (SCI). Specifically, the four German cities included in the index—Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin—rank in the top ten. Their rankings are driven by their accomplishments in water sanitation and waste management and their low greenhouse gas emissions.

Strong performance in the 'Planet' pillar is linked to overall success. Eight of the top ten cities in the 'Planet' pillar also ranked among the top ten in the overall index.

This section comprises indicators such as sustainable energy systems and low-emission transport. This suggests these are "powerful tools for urban sustainability, which should be key focus points for cities seeking significant change."

North America Demonstrates Progress

This year's index also highlights that achieving high performance in the 'Profit' metric does not necessarily mean sacrificing environmental sustainability.

The report emphasizes that a strong economy should prioritize investment in infrastructure, alternative energy sources, environmental initiatives, and social programs.

Amsterdam, the most sustainable city in 2024, leads in the 'Profit' category, demonstrating excellence in income, living standards, employment, and transportation infrastructure.

Despite Amsterdam's success, there is a significant potential for improvement in North American cities. San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, Houston, New York, and Seattle, among the top ten in terms of benefits, can further enhance their rankings by aligning wage and living standards with economic growth.

The report underscores the power of inclusive development strategies in improving city rankings. It empowers North American and European cities to inspire each other and continue their sustainable progress across all categories.

Significant Progress in Europe

In the past decade, many European cities have made significant progress in sustainability despite already being highly sustainable. Cities like Lisbon, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Warsaw, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin have maintained their momentum, placing in the top third of the progress pillar and the overall index.

Specifically, Lisbon has seen a notable increase in women's education and the number of doctors per 1,000 inhabitants, contributing to its high ranking. Although Asian cities like Jakarta, Wuhan, and Shanghai rank lower overall, they demonstrate that initial sustainable efforts can significantly impact and pave the way for further progress.

Much Remains to be Done

As the 2030 deadline approaches with only 2,000 days to go, **experts emphasize that there is still much work to be done to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.** It is key to continue pushing the innovation boundaries in various areas, such as scaling up renewable energy initiatives, integrating climate considerations into infrastructure planning, improving mobility through intelligent traffic management, and supporting the retrofitting of existing buildings through planning and investment.

Cities must build on their successes, identify areas of progress, and foster collaboration to address challenges with greater urgency and determination.

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