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Access Denied: Transport Poverty in Europe

Estimating levels of transport poverty across the affordability, availability and accessibility dimensions to highlight policy priorities for a socially inclusive and climate friendly transport system

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AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ES	Spain
ETS 2	Emissions Trading System 2
EU	European Union
EU-27	European Union (27 Member States)
EU-LFS	European Union Labour Force Survey
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FI	Finland
FR	France
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg

LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RS	Serbia
SCF	Social Climate Fund
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
TR	Türkiye
UK	United Kingdom

Summary

Transport poverty is broadly defined as a situation in which an individual or household cannot attain socially necessitated levels of mobility. Based on existing research, as well as newly calculated transport poverty indicators, the report estimates the extent of transport poverty across Europe and provides insights into who is affected by it. The empirical results are embedded in a discussion of relevant policy dimensions to help tackle transport poverty.

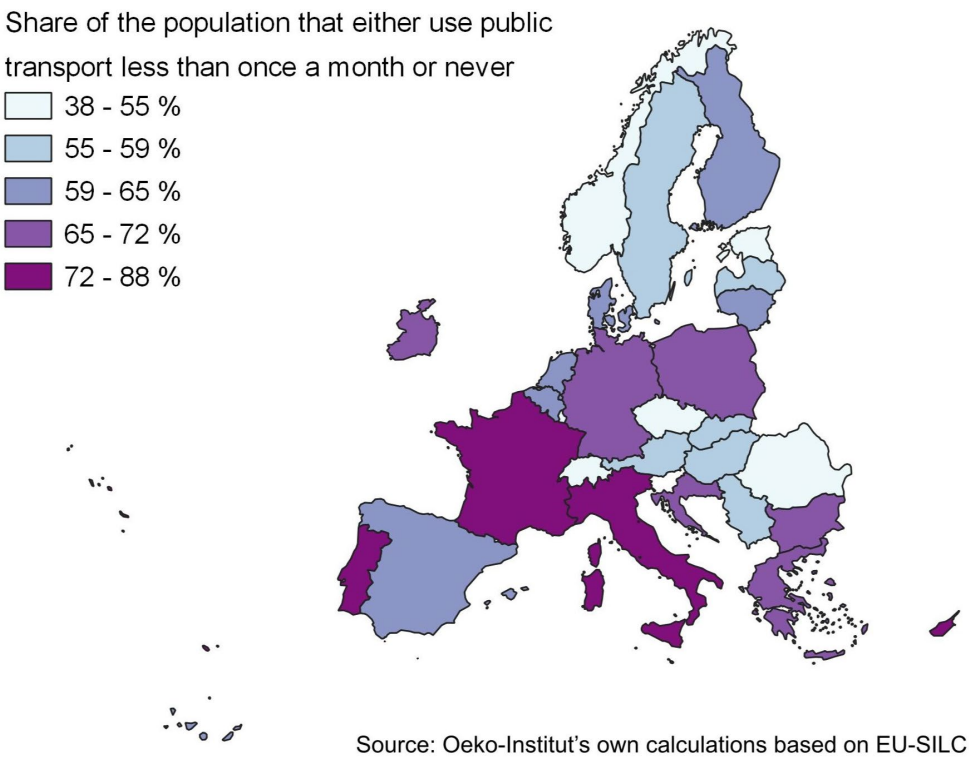
Transport poverty is characterised by three key dimensions. Firstly, there is the issue of **availability,** i.e. whether transport options are available. The second dimension is **accessibility**, i.e. the access to essential services provided by transport services. The third dimension is **affordability**, i.e. the (relative) cost of transport. A fourth dimension, '**adequacy of the transport system**,' is useful for describing the system's usability. **Drivers of transport poverty** that exacerbate these dimensions include:

- Firstly, various forms of socio-economic deprivation, particularly low-income.
- The second driver of the affordability dimension is the cost of transport itself. This applies to both public and private transport costs and, in the case of private transport, also includes insurance, tax, and repair costs.
- A third driver of transport poverty is the lack of connectivity, which is due to poorly designed and inadequate transport infrastructure. This is a spatially determined driver of transport poverty linked to the transport infrastructure more broadly.
- Another driver of transport poverty is a lack of essential infrastructure resulting in high levels of mobility needs in terms of a heightened necessity to travel for essentials.
- Finally, various forms of precarity can be a driver for experiencing low levels of transport adequacy.

The main objective of this report is to estimate levels of transport poverty in Europe and formulate policy needs to address it. For this, 11 key transport poverty indicators, which are available for up to 33 European countries, including all EU Member States, were calculated and analysed. These include a set of novel indicators that address data gaps relating to public transport and transport poverty. The report's main outcome is a set of recommendations for action, combined with an analysis of transport poverty levels for different dimensions, which provide **guidance on setting up a socially inclusive and climate-friendly transport system**.

1. Make public transport more attractive

New data from 2024 shows that public transport usage in Europe is very low. **The vast majority of European countries have populations in which over 50% do not regularly use public transport.**



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

To increase usage and encourage a modal shift away from individual motorised transport, policymakers must understand the reasons behind it. The 2024 data reveal no consistent patterns across countries or European regions, underscoring the necessity of in-depth country-specific analyses. In general, the availability, affordability and adequacy of public transport, as well as the accessibility of essential services and goods, should be addressed.

a. Improve the affordability of public transport.

Up to 6% of the population in European countries do not use public transport because it is too expensive, and up to 15% of the population in European countries use public transport but find it a heavy financial burden.

In an effort to reduce the financial burden experienced by vulnerable transport users in particular, the introduction of social tickets should be a central policy concern, as should more radical approaches such as introducing affordable network subscriptions or even making public transport free.

b. Ensure good availability of public transport.

Up to 56% of the population in European countries do not use public transport because it is unavailable. Beyond lack of servicing, the frequency of connections and suitability of schedules play an important role.

Investments in public transport infrastructure, good regional planning and supporting transport measures that encourage a modal shift are needed to ensure good regional connectivity.

c. **Improve the adequacy and usability of public transport.**

Public transport is not used by a share of between 3% and 5% of the population in most European countries because it is too difficult to access or because they have safety and security concerns.

Security concerns in public transport, such as harassment or thefts, can be addressed through better infrastructure like lighting, surveillance, and alarm buttons at stops. Steps can also be taken to enhance passenger safety and feelings of security (e.g. reporting protocols, awareness campaigns). Additionally, improvements to physical access of public transport are vital to ensure usability of the public transport.

2. Identify societal groups particularly affected by transport poverty and develop targeted solutions

Some societal groups or regions are more affected by some dimensions of transport poverty than others, e.g. the share of the population who does not use public transport due to physical inaccessibility or safety and security concerns is higher among those aged 65 years or older and among women.

A strategic approach to transport poverty should be embedded in existing national and local strategies. Detailed data should be used to identify vulnerable groups, regions and policy gaps. It should also rely on strong cooperation between national, regional and local actors, who can use their networks to provide targeted support and implement small yet effective measures.

3. Ensure that people can access essential goods and services without ending up in time poverty

Up to 9% of the population in European countries do not use public transport because the travel time with public transport is too long. Up to 14% of the population in European countries spend 60 minutes or more on their commute (one-way).

To improve the accessibility of essential services and goods via transport infrastructure, it is important to identify high-need regions for targeted investments using tools like the Joint Research Centre's Transport Poverty Hub for granular data on reachable destinations and prioritize those in spatial planning. This should be complemented by optimising public transport routes based on usage data and urban planning concepts such as the 15-minute city, with the aim of reducing travel demands, particularly in suburban areas.

4. Ensure the compatibility of climate goals and social inclusion in transport policies

Up to 19% of the population in European countries experience 'forced car ownership,' which can make them vulnerable to climate policies aimed at reducing the use of fossil fuel cars.

To ensure that ambitious transport climate policies do not disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, distributional effects must be considered from the start, with flanking measures like targeted financial support and long-term investments. Key actions include expanding affordable, accessible public transport and providing subsidies for low-emission vehicles tailored to low-income households, minimising upfront costs, maintenance, and administrative burdens.

1 Transport poverty as a (new) policy issue in Europe

Transport poverty is broadly defined as a situation in which an individual (or household) cannot attain socially necessitated levels of mobility (Martiskainen et al. 2021). This includes aspects such as the unaffordability of transport, as well as the lack of transport infrastructures. It is a phenomenon that has been studied extensively, also in the form of mobility poverty (Kuttler and Moraglio 2021), accessibility poverty (Martens and Bastiaanssen 2019), transport-based social exclusion (Lucas et al. 2016) or through more specific lenses of transport affordability (Litman 2021) or forced car ownership (Mattioli 2017).

This wealth of academic research on transport poverty stands in contrast to the fact that transport poverty has only recently become prominent in EU legislation. The introduction of the Emissions Trading System for the buildings and the transport sectors (ETS 2) is accompanied by a Social Climate Fund (SCF) (European Union 2023). The aim of this fund is to support those who are vulnerable to the price increases through the ETS 2 as well as households affected by energy and transport poverty (Eden et al. 2023). Within the SCF Regulation, transport poverty and transport vulnerability are defined for the first time in EU legislation.

This development has brought transport poverty to the fore of discussions among a new set of stakeholders, bringing new perspectives as well as research and policy foci into the field of transport poverty research. Additionally, geopolitical and global economic policy developments, often resulting in volatile energy markets and price spikes for consumers, have further underscored the importance of addressing issues such as transport poverty both in the short-term and in a way that ensures long-term resilience for vulnerable consumers.

This report brings together existing research on transport poverty. These insights are then used to estimate the levels of transport poverty in Europe. This study aims to provide facts and figures that show the relationship between different aspects of transport poverty, including availability, accessibility and affordability. This provides an indication of the extent of transport poverty and insights into who is affected by transport poverty. Finally, these empirical results are embedded in a discussion of relevant policy dimensions in an effort to tackle transport poverty.

2 What is transport poverty: definitions, drivers, and the status quo

This chapter gives a brief overview of the existing literature on transport poverty and develops an understanding of the drivers of transport poverty. Although the interest in transport poverty at EU level is relatively recent, transport poverty as an academic field of study has engaged with and discussed definitions, causes, forms of measurement, and policy interventions extensively.

At EU level, the current Social Climate Fund Regulation includes a definition of transport poverty as well as a definition of transport vulnerability (European Union 2023). This is the first definition of this phenomenon within EU legislation and hence an important starting point for Member States to understand transport poverty and transpose this to their national contexts. The Commission published an accompanying Transport Poverty Recommendation (2025) to provide additional guidance on the matter. Further studies by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) (Mejía Dorantes and Murauskaite-Bull 2022) and the Commission (European Commission 2024) also provide important conceptual background information.

2.1 Transport poverty in the academic literature and policy context

Pioneering research on transport poverty primarily comes from research conducted in the UK, particularly from discussions around transport-related social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit 2003). Since researchers have identified a variety of elements of transport poverty, as summarised by Lucas et al. (2016, pp. 353–356) as a 'lack of available suitable transport, lack of transport to reach necessary destinations, cost of necessary transport puts household below the income poverty line, excessive travel time, or travel conditions which are unsafe or unhealthy'. Other common research strands have included a focus on forced car ownership (Mattioli 2017; Curl et al. 2018), mobility poverty as a lack of access to resources for required mobility (Upham et al. 2022), and interlinkages between transport disadvantage and social exclusion (Lucas 2012; Titheridge et al. 2014). This strong focus on mobility as a means of social inclusion and on how consequently transport poverty leads to social exclusion, is often strongly centred alongside affordability dimensions in this research.

By summarising key literature in this research field and considering recent work on transport poverty at the EU level, three central aspects emerge in most academic literature on transport poverty:

- **Availability**: To what extent are a variety of transport options available?
- **Accessibility**: To what extent do transport options provide necessary access to essential services?
- **Affordability**: To what extent are these transport options affordable?

A fourth dimension, '**adequacy of the transport system**,**'** is useful for describing the system's usability and includes various additional elements such as the reliability, suitability for people who use it for work and/or care duties (such as travelling to and from workplaces and transporting children), safety and security of the transport system, and its availability outside core transport hours, whether it is barrier-free, and whether information about travel possibilities is widely available.

Recent literature reviews conducted by Mejía Dorantes and Murauskaite-Bull (2022) from the JRC and by the European Commission (2024) provide an extensive overview of the state of knowledge on transport poverty. More recent studies primarily focus on evaluating specific transport initiatives, such as the so-called 'Deutschland-Ticket' (Aberle et al. 2025) or the '9-Euro-Ticket' (Rozynek 2024) in Germany. They have also focused on developing innovative indicators for measuring levels of transport poverty through vulnerability indices (Rangel Guevara 2024; Primc et al. 2025), and studying specific transport behaviours e.g. micro-mobility (Xiaodong Guan et al. 2024), suppressed travel (Palm et al. 2024), and evaluating regional policies (Bruno et al. 2024). Several studies on national level have also emerged. These have developed transport poverty indicators using national data sets and discussing national policy specificities (e.g. Galindo et al. (2024) in Spain, Oikonomou et al. (2025) in Greece, or Stark et al. (2025) in Hesse, Germany).

At EU level, the SCF Regulation (2023) and recently published Recommendation on Transport Poverty are the two key documents, which define transport poverty. Article 2 (2) of the SCF Regulation defines transport poverty as follows:

> *'individuals' and households' inability or difficulty to meet the costs of private or public transport, or their lack of or limited access to transport needed for their access to essential socioeconomic services and activities, taking into account the national and spatial context.'*

This centres the affordability dimension but also makes references to the availability of transport options and the accessibility of (other) essential services. The EU Member States are required to transpose this definition to their national context as part of their Social Climate Plans. These plans

must include information on the number of households (or persons) affected by transport poverty and those likely to be vulnerable due to the ETS 2 in the transport sector, as well as outlining measures to tackle transport poverty and address these vulnerable groups.

2.2 What drives transport poverty?

The EU Commission identifies several socio-economic characteristics that influence how transport poverty is experienced. These include income, gender, age, employment (status), housing (status), ethnicity, disability/health, and migration (status). The Commission also acknowledges the spatiality of the phenomenon and locational disadvantages. Based on the current state of research, this study identifies the following drivers of transport poverty as particularly relevant.

1. **Firstly, drivers of transport poverty include various forms of socio-economic deprivation, particularly low-income.**

Low-income households experience a multitude of financial constraints that lead to trade-offs between essentials. This includes housing, energy, food, transport, but also other essentials such as healthcare and social or cultural activities. As households make decisions about their essential spending within their available budget, mobility may be prioritised over other necessities e.g. to reach the place of employment and ensure regular income, or constrained to cover other essential costs. Financial constraints are the key driver for the affordability dimension of transport poverty.

There are, therefore, overlaps between transport poverty and energy poverty. On the one hand, in terms of low-income households struggling to cover both essential services (heating and energy, as well as mobility). On the other hand, research has shown that more affordable housing is usually less energy efficient and located in less connected areas, especially in terms of regular and affordable public transport and accessibility to essential amenities. This leads to longer travel times (time-related transport poverty), a dependence on private transport (i.e. forced car ownership), and a compounding of costs.

2. **The second driver of the affordability dimension of transport poverty is the cost of transport itself. This is relevant with regard to both public and private transport costs and, in the case of private transport, also includes the costs of insurance, taxes, and repairs.**

The cost burdens that households face to meet their transport needs is determined both by households or individual income and the costs of both public and private transport. Lower income often means that the relative cost burden is higher for low-income groups, but other factors also play a role. If individuals are reliant on private transport and car ownership for travel, e.g. due to a lack of public transport services in certain areas, increases in the cost of gas and diesel will likely make a stronger impact, if these individuals do not have alternatives available to them. Conversely, a reliance on the public transport system because car ownership is too expensive, means that price increases in public transport ticketing or any reduction of social tickets these transport users may be reliant on, will have a significant effect.

Climate policies that aim to reduce the use of fossil fuels in the transport sector, such as the ETS 2, can sometimes lead to significant increases in the costs of certain transport options, primarily conventional fossil-fuel cars. These effects will be felt most acutely by those with high cost burdens and those who do not have the means to switch to other transport options. Particularly low-income households or those lacking financial assets cannot easily make technological switches to electric vehicles and those living in areas with poor public transport availability will not be able to switch to public transport easily. Additionally, investments in the transport sector, especially improvements to the public transport infrastructure, in the form of new rail connections or expansion of bus routes,

are expensive and time-intensive. If these costs are transferred to transport users and no compensatory measures are implemented, the cost of alternatives to private transport may also increase.

3. **A further driver of transport poverty is the lack of connectivity in terms of poorly designed and lack of adequate transport infrastructure. This is a spatially determined driver of transport poverty linked to the transport infrastructure more broadly.**

A lack of transport options can make it more difficult for individuals to be mobile simply because transport is not available to them. This is often the case in rural areas, where public transport only covers a limited area and/or because the schedules are reduced significantly, also reducing flexibility of travel. Additionally, a lack of transport options increases the likelihood of forced car ownership. This means that individuals are “forced” to own a car to ensure that they are mobile, and they must be able to cover and prioritise the related costs in their household budget. This is, therefore, a compounding driver of transport poverty in both the availability and affordability dimension.

Additionally, bad transport infrastructure can also mean that more complex routes are necessary, particularly with public transport, and more time needs to be invested. This is commonly referred to as time-related transport poverty, where a lack of connectivity and high levels of mobility needs result in long travel times.

On the other hand, inadequate transport options, particularly in terms of public transport, could result in a lack of connectivity. This could include transport users with limited mobility who are not able to access train stations, older populations who have additional accessibility requirements that are not met by the transport infrastructure, or language barriers that make using the public transport system more difficult. This merges with the adequacy dimensions of transport poverty.

4. **Another driver of transport poverty is a lack of essential infrastructure resulting in high levels of mobility needs in terms of a heightened necessity to travel for essentials.**

This is primarily due to a lack of essential services being available in the immediate vicinity, meaning that individuals must travel more often, farther, and/or longer for essentials. This includes travel to places of employment, education, healthcare, social and cultural activities, but also one-off activities such as voting. As frequency, distance to destinations, and time spent on mobility are higher, this can also be associated with higher costs, meaning that it compounds aspects of accessibility and affordability.

Having access to essential services is necessary and ensures social inclusion. Especially rural areas, but also some suburban or otherwise peripheralised regions are particularly affected due to a relative lack of infrastructure and/or a specific lack of transport infrastructure making travel more complex or time-consuming. Car-centric urban planning, which prioritises private transport resulting in a sectorised city model without mixed uses, plays a significant role in these accessibility issues in cities.

5. **Finally, various forms of precarity can be a driver of experiencing low levels of transport adequacy.**

Groups with accessibility requirements are more likely to experience transport poverty, because of poorly designed or inadequate transport infrastructure. Migrant populations may experience language barriers reducing the usability of public transport or the lack of easily accessible information may reduce the usability of the service for certain groups. Particularly along gender dimensions, differences in public transport usage, feelings of safety, and time spent travelling due to additional care work being carried out by women, differences in transport poverty can become evident.

Additionally, other precarious populations, such as migrants and persons of colour, also tend to experience heightened insecurity on public transport, potentially reducing the usability of the transport system for these groups.

3 Estimating levels of transport poverty in Europe

To provide an indication of the extent of transport poverty in Europe and to shed light on who is affected by it, a set of eleven transport poverty indicators has been calculated. At least one indicator is available for each of the four dimensions of transport poverty: availability, accessibility, affordability and adequacy. The most recent available data for each dataset is used in the calculations, providing transport poverty figures that have not yet been calculated or published. To achieve wider country coverage, data from additional years is presented for some indicators. New transport poverty indicators relating to public transport use, based on the 2024 EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) dataset are also constructed. These indicators can help address the EU-wide data gap on transport poverty caused by insufficient public transport. Calculations are performed for all countries included in the datasets, including EU Member States, candidate countries, and European Free Trade Association countries. Table 1 provides an overview of the calculated indicators, the datasets used, the years and countries covered, and the transport poverty dimensions addressed.

The analysis is based on data from the following EU-level datasets: the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the Household Budget Survey (HBS), the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the European Quality of Life Survey by Eurofound (EQLS). For detailed information on the datasets and methodology used in this report, see Annex I. A detailed explanation of each indicator, alongside the corresponding result, can be found in Annex II.

Table 1 Indicators used in the analysis

Indicator	Dataset	Years presented	Countries*	Transport poverty dimension	Figure in the report
Share of the population that is both materially and socially deprived (MSD) and owns a car (Forced Car Ownership)	EU-SILC	2024, 2018	2024: EU-27 + NO, CH, RS 2018: EU-27 + NO, CH, RS, IS, UK	Availability	Figure 4-11; Figure 5-1; Figure 5-2
Share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in the area, the frequency is too low, or the schedules are inconvenient	EU-SILC	2024	EU-27 + NO, CH, RS	Availability	Figure 4-5; Figure 5-3; Figure 5-4
Share of the population with 'very difficult' access to public transport	EQLS	2016	EU-27 + UK	Availability	Figure 5-5
Share of the population that does not use public transport because the travel time with public transport is too long	EU-SILC	2024	EU-27 + NO, CH, RS	Accessibility	Figure 4-9; Figure 5-6; Figure 5-7
Share of the population with a one-way commute to work of more than 60 minutes	EU-LFS	2019	EU-27 + CH, IS, NO, UK, TR	Accessibility	Figure 5-8
Share of the population that does not use public transport because it is too expensive	EU-SILC	2024	EU-27 + NO, CH, RS	Affordability	Figure 4-3; Figure 5-9
Heavy financial burden of public transport	EU-SILC	2024	EU-27 + NO, CH, RS	Affordability	Figure 4-4; Figure 5-11; Figure 5-12
Share of the population facing enforced lack of a car (answering 'No-cannot afford' to the question of whether they own a car)	EU-SILC	2024, 2018	2024: EU-27 + NO, CH, RS 2018: EU-27 + NO, CH, RS, IS, UK	Affordability	Figure 5-13
Share of the household population that spends more than 6% of total expenditures on transport and the household is in the bottom half of the expenditure distribution	HBS	2015	EU-27 (except AT)	Affordability	Figure 5-14

Indicator	Dataset	Years presented	Countries*	Transport poverty dimension	Figure in the report
Share of the household population for which the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures exceeds twice the national median and the household is in the bottom half of the expenditure distribution	HBS	2015	EU-27 (except AT)	Affordability	Figure 4-12; Figure 5-15
Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult, or they have safety and security concerns	EU-SILC	2024	EU-27 + NO, CH, RS	Adequacy	Figure 4-6; Figure 4-7; Figure 4-8; Figure 5-16; Figure 5-17; Figure 5-18

Source: Oeko-Institut's own compilation.

Notes: * Following country abbreviations are used: AT = Austria, CH = Switzerland, IS = Iceland, NO = Norway, RS = Serbia, TR = Türkiye, UK = United Kingdom

4 Setting up a socially inclusive and climate-friendly transport system

Establishing a socially just and inclusive transport system means ensuring that it is accessible to all and enables social inclusion. As climate policies are implemented in the transport sector to reduce emissions and meet ambitious climate targets, the central role that mobility plays in participation in everyday life must remain at the forefront of policy decisions.

This chapter couples estimations of transport poverty, i.e. the inaccessibility, unaffordability, unavailability, and inadequacy of the transport system, with broad policy recommendations to overcome these challenges. This does not cover the specifics of results for each individual country and instead highlights the heterogenous character of transport poverty.

Setting up a socially inclusive and climate friendly transport system means:

- Making public transport more attractive by
  - Improving affordability
  - Ensuring good availability
  - Improving adequacy and usability.
- Identifying societal groups particularly affected by transport poverty and developing targeted solutions
- Ensuring that people can access essential goods and services without ending up in time poverty
- Ensuring the compatibility of climate goals and social inclusion in transport policies.

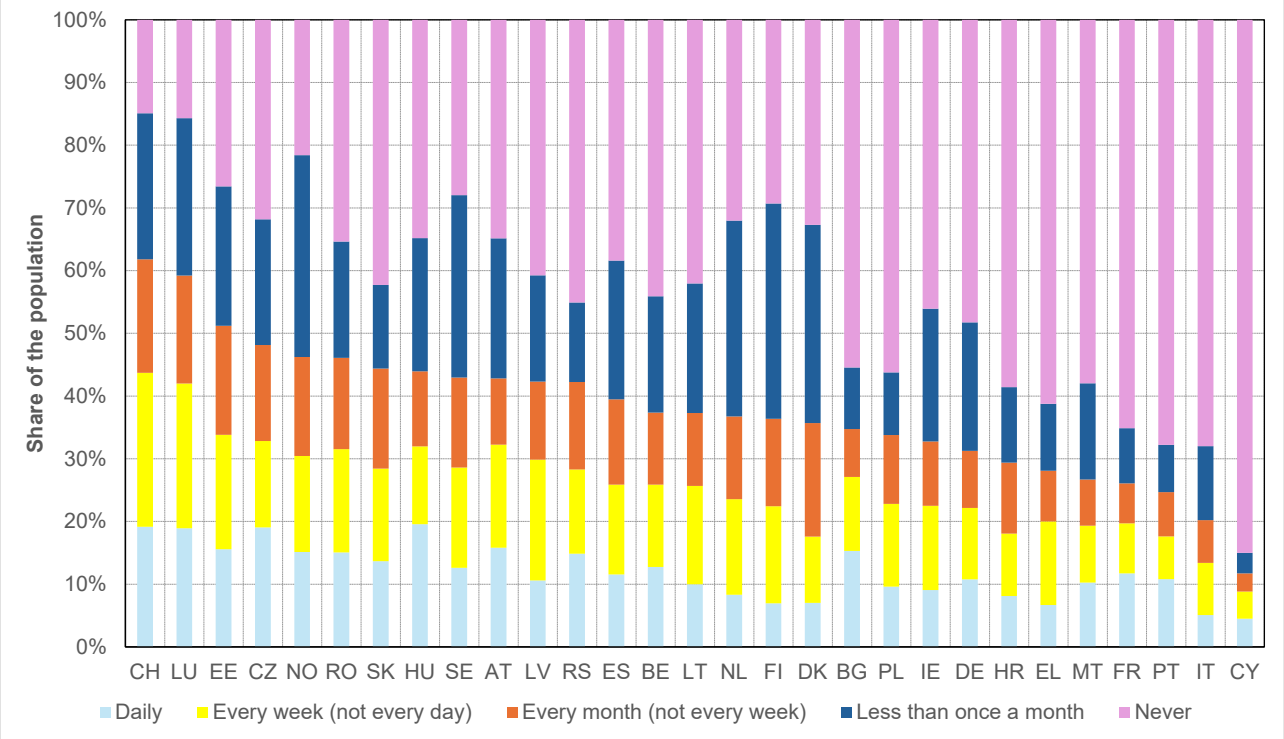
4.1 Make public transport more attractive

The backbone of a socially inclusive, climate-friendly transport system is an attractive, affordable, and accessible public transport network. However, new data from 2024 shows that public transport usage in Europe is very low.

Figure 4-1 illustrates the frequency of public transport usage across the population in European countries. The figure shows countries sorted by the share of the population that either use public transport 'less than once a month' in dark blue or 'never' in purple.

With the exception of Switzerland (CH), Luxembourg (LU) and Estonia (EE), over 50% of the population in all countries use public transport less than once a month or never. Cyprus (CY; see Box 1), Italy (IT) and Portugal (PT) have a particularly high proportion of people who never use public transport (over 75%).

Figure 4-1: Distribution of public transport usage across the population, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: According to Eurostat rules, SI cannot be displayed, because non-response for the item concerned exceeds 50%.

Box 1: Transport infrastructure on an island – Cyprus

The public transport system in **Cyprus** is limited to a bus network that services primarily city centres and tourist areas, as well as some intercity and rural bus lines that connect major towns. While these services are generally reliable, bus services are often reduced in the evenings and on the weekends and coverage in the north of the island, for example, is limited. This helps to account for the low public transport usage seen in the data. A study based on representative survey data conducted in 2024, also shows that car usage is the most predominant mode of transport for residents, followed by walking as the second most common mobility option (Philip Fayad et al. 2024). Buses are the third most common mode of transportation, primarily for school-related travel and some travel outside of the district of residence. This coincides with high car ownership rates in Cyprus where 32% of the population living in a household with more than three cars, compared to the 3% EU average. Driving accounts for around 70% of travel time on workdays and in comparison to other EU Member States, Cyprus stands out with the highest percentage of car trips under 3 km at 26% (European Commission et al. 2022).

In order to increase public transport usage and encourage a modal shift away from individual motorised transport, policymakers need to understand the reasons behind low usage. Figure 4-2 reveals the reasons why people do not use public transport. Countries are sorted in the same way as in Figure 4-1. The possible answers in the underlying questionnaire reflect the four dimensions of transport poverty:

- availability ('Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules,' 'No public transport in area'),
- affordability ('Too expensive'),
- accessibility ('Too long travel time'), and
- adequacy ('Physical access too difficult', 'Safety or security concerns').

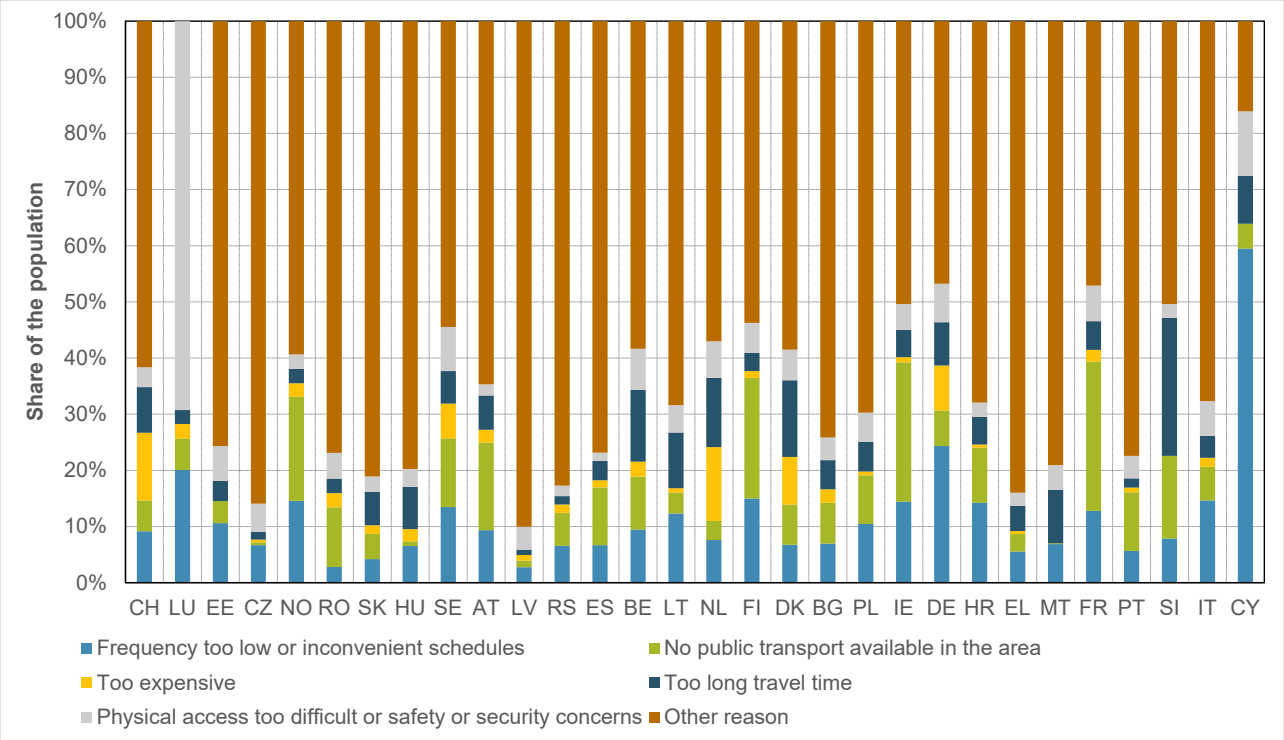
Additionally, individuals could also select 'Other reason', which could indicate the preference for other transport options, most commonly the use of a private car, although reasons such as low comfort levels, lack of punctuality, and public transport being unsuitable for carrying things are also frequently cited in other surveys (Suder and Pfaffenbach 2021; Thelen 2017). 'Other reason' was the most frequent answer in all countries except Cyprus (CY) and Luxembourg (LU)[1]. No clear pattern of reasons can be observed among the other answer options, and these reasons do not correlate with the distribution of public transport usage in Figure 5.1.[2] It should be noted that individuals could only give one answer, even though several answers may have applied. We interpret the given answer as the reason that is most relevant to the individual.

[1] Even though the option 'Other reason' was given in LU, none of the respondents in the dataset chose this answer. This seems curious to the authors. It is not evident from the dataset why this is the case. Data publications from Eurostat that use the same EU-SILC 2024 microdata variables do not display data for LU (Eurostat online database, online data code ilc_atst04, 29/04/2026). This also suggests that the data is unreliable.

[2] CY, DE, LU, IT and NO have the highest proportion of the population who answered 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules'. FR, IE, FI, NO and AT have the highest proportion of the population who answered 'No public transport available in the area'. LU, CY, BE, DE and NL have the highest proportion of the population who answered 'Physical access too difficult' or 'Safety or security concerns'. SI, DK, BE, LT and MT had the highest proportion of people who answered 'Too long travel time'. The countries with the highest proportion of people who answered 'Too expensive' are NL, CH, DK, DE and SE.

The fact that the reasons do not reveal any patterns between countries and European regions emphasises the need for in-depth, country-specific analyses to identify the most pressing problems and the corresponding measures to make public transport more attractive. There also seems to be a cultural acceptance of car use in European societies that prioritises private car use over public transport, possibly without considering the state of the public transport network, sometimes referred to as 'car stickiness' (Innocenti et al. 2013). The following sections highlight the reasons why individuals do not use public transport, in relation to transport poverty rates in European countries, and present policies that could make public transport more appealing.

Figure 4-2: Reasons for not using public transport, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: According to Eurostat rules, the following countries should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations): CZ and MT for the shares in the category 'No public transport available in the area'. LV for the share in the category 'Too long travel time'. CZ, LT, FI, IE for the shares in the category 'Too expensive'. For EE, MT, SI and CY the share in the category 'Too expensive' is included in 'Other reasons' as the number of observations is too small to be displayed (<20 observations). Consequently, the share of the population answering 'Too expensive' is very low in these countries.

Even though the option 'Other reason' was given in LU, none of the respondents in the dataset chose this answer. This seems strange to the authors, but it is not evident from the dataset why this is the case. Data publications from Eurostat that use the same EU-SILC 2024 microdata variables do not display data for LU (Eurostat online database, online data code ilc_atst04, 29/04/2026). This also suggests that the data is unreliable.

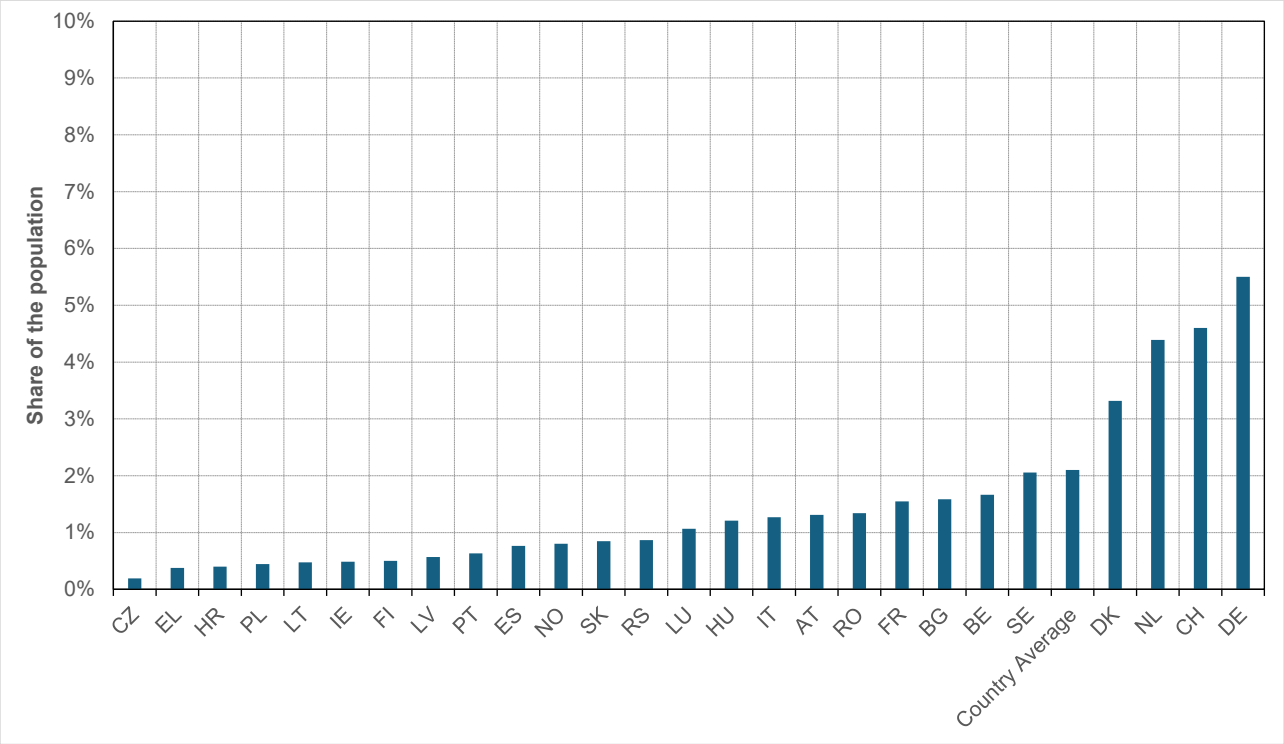
4.1.1 Improve the affordability of public transport

To ensure accessibility of public transport for all, the public transport system must be affordable. The affordability of public transport depends on the budget available to households to pay for tickets, as well as the ticket prices themselves.

Figure 4-3 shows that 6% of the population in Germany (DE), 5% in Switzerland (CH) and 4% in the Netherlands (NL) do not use public transport because it is too expensive. This problem is also

present in other European countries, albeit to a lesser extent. It should be noted that Luxembourg introduced free public transport in 2020 and that indications of public transport as too expensive made here likely refer to high costs of public transport in adjacent countries, as cross-border commuting is very common.

Figure 4-3: Share of the population that does not use public transport because it is too expensive, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, CZ, LT, FI, IE should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). Results for MT, SI, EE, CY cannot be shown because the number of observations is too low.

In all the four countries, where the share of the population reporting high costs for not using public transport is higher than the country average, overall income levels are relatively high and prices for public transport are also high by comparison. This identified group, however, does not necessarily and primarily include vulnerable or low-income households, as those reporting not using public transport due to high costs will likely have alternatives available to them. In other instances, the high cost might not be an issue where other sustainable and climate-friendly transport modes are readily accessible, such as cycling (see **Box 2**). Regarding this data, further information is needed about who has alternatives and who does not, and on the role of cost perception of public transport in relation to car usage, convenience, and behavioural change.

It should be noted that public transport ticket prices have increased significantly since 2024 in some instances e.g. the Deutschland-Ticket in Germany from €49 in 2024 to €63 in 2026, the daily tickets in the city of Prague, Czechia were increased between 15-35% in January 2026, or in Ireland, where bus fares in particular have increased. Overall, however, changes in ticket prices are regionally differentiated and tend to increase in relation to the inflation rate.

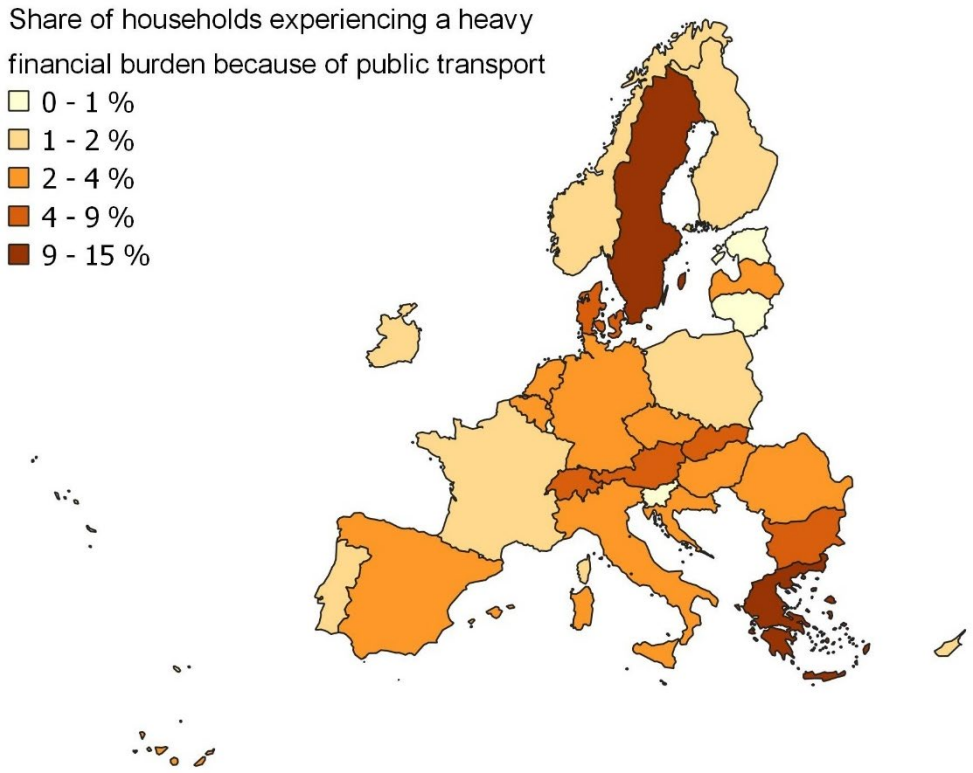
Box 2: Public transport vs. cycling – considering relative costs

In **Denmark**, discounted public transport is reserved for young adults, persons with disabilities, and those over the age of 67. The prevalence of cycling as a mode of transport coupled with good cycling infrastructure particularly in cities, is likely also a contributing factor to public transport being considered too expensive in comparison to cycling, which can cover similar distances.

This is likely also the case in the **Netherlands**, where cycling is popular, discounts or social tickets are limited, and the public transport is considered very expensive.

At the same time, we see that some people who use public transport experience a 'somewhat' or 'heavy' burden because of the costs involved. Figure 5-10 in Annex II shows how the cost burden of public transport is distributed across the population. Serbia (RS), Greece (EL) and Sweden (SE) have the highest proportion of people experiencing a heavy burden due to public transport costs, at 15%, 15% and 11% respectively (Figure 4-4). The share is even higher among those below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (AROP)[3] (Eurostat 2025a): 27%, 25% and 16% for RS, EL and SE, respectively (Figure 5-12, Annex II).

Figure 4-4: Heavy financial burden of public transport, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

[3] The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers. This indicator measures low income in comparison to that of other residents of the same country.

There is a marked difference between those countries in which a larger portion of the population reports not using public transport because they feel that it is too expensive, including Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and the Netherlands, and those countries in which a large share of the population reports a high cost burden due to public transport costs, especially among those at risk of poverty, particularly Serbia and Greece.

This is likely because, in this first group of countries, individuals have more alternatives to public transport, e.g. cycling, while in the other group more vulnerable transport users are reliant on public transport. These high cost burdens in Greece and Serbia also reflect the relative lack of social ticketing in these countries coupled with lower income levels. A significant exception to this, however, is that Athens offers free public transport to those who are currently unemployed (gov.gr 2023), which is a good example of providing targeted support to vulnerable individuals.

Indeed, in an effort to reduce the cost-burden experienced particularly by vulnerable transport users, the introduction of **social tickets** should be a central policy concern.

This means:

- expanding existing social ticketing systems, i.e. expanding the targeted groups beyond the elderly and students, primarily to low-income individuals and those receiving welfare payments. Linking these tickets to existing social welfare structures can help to reduce administrative efforts.
- Where necessary, expanding and consolidating social ticketing across regions and transport providers to ensure broad coverage of support. The Deutschland-Ticket in Germany is a particularly good example of this (Box 3). A similar nation-wide public transport ticket was introduced in Spain in January 2026 (‘Abono Único Joven’), simplifying the use of public transport and offering reduced prices for those under 26 (€30; normal price €60 per month).
- Ensure a consistency in funding so that lower ticket prices can be sustained over time and thus providing dependability and planning security to already vulnerable households.
- Finally, it is important to ensure that information about these offers is easily accessible to the target group. This can be achieved through public campaigns or by engaging actors in the social sector and working locally with the target group.

Box 3: Broad coverage, but steadily increasing prices – the case of the Deutschland-Ticket

In **Germany,** the offers for reduced public transport tickets have undergone significant changes in recent years. A limited ‘9-Euro-Ticket’ was introduced in summer 2022 and was valid in all regional and city networks of various public transport providers. Although it was not specifically for any sub-group of the population and only in place for three months, it provided extremely cheap public transport during this period. Although the ticket was discontinued, it was followed by the ‘Deutschland-Ticket’. This was initially priced at €49 but its price has since increased and is currently available for €63. The additional value of these tickets being valid for all public transport services regardless of provider is one of the most significant benefits beyond the price.

Social tickets for low-income and other groups are primarily available in certain regions and municipalities. In Berlin, for example, a reduced public transport ticket (Berlin-Ticket S) (BVG n.d.) is available for those receiving a variety of welfare benefits. Unifying social ticketing in the same manner as the Deutschland-Ticket would simplify the current fragmented social ticketing landscape in Germany.

Beyond social ticketing initiatives that provide direct financial support to certain groups, other countries have taken more radical approaches and made **public transport free to use**. Unlike social tickets that reduce travel costs, this approach, immediately and with low administrative burden, addresses those experiencing transport poverty by default:

- This is the case in Luxembourg, for example, which was the first country in Europe to make all public transport free of charge in 2020. Due to the fact that many commute in and out of the country to Germany, France, and Belgium, car ownership rates have remained among the highest in the EU.[4]
- Similarly, 11 of 15 counties in Estonia offered free public transport for registered residents, which we see reflected in the data. Although it did lead to a higher social acceptance of the use of public transport in Tallin, for example, it did not necessarily lead to a modal shift away from car usage (Corporate Leaders Group 2022). With the exception of Tallinn, these free public transport offers have been discontinued.[5] Free transport is, however, still available for certain groups (elderly and those with disabilities). Reasons for the discontinuation may be related to the uneven funding structures of public transport between the counties and that little to no reduction in car journeys was registered.

Nonetheless, reduced or free public transport is only relevant for those who can access essential services via public transport that is adequate, has frequent schedules, easy and direct routes, and is safe for all transport users.

4.1.2 Ensure good availability of public transport

For public transport to be incorporated into everyday lives, it is crucial that it is readily available. The physical presence of stops, the frequency of connections, and suitable schedules all play an important role.

Figure 5-3 in Annex II shows the subset of the share that does not use public transport because it is unavailable. The highest share is in Cyprus (CY) at 56%, followed by France (FR) at 29% and Germany (DE) at 21% in 2024. Data from 2016 show that the highest share of people reporting 'very difficult' access to public transport are in Finland (FI) at 14%, followed by Ireland (IE) and France (FR) at 13% each, emphasising the accessibility of public transport availability in an area (Figure 5-5, Annex II).

When disaggregating the data by degrees of urbanisation[6], we see that the share of the population who does not use public transport due to missing public transport, the frequency of services or inconvenient schedules is generally highest among those living in rural areas compared to those

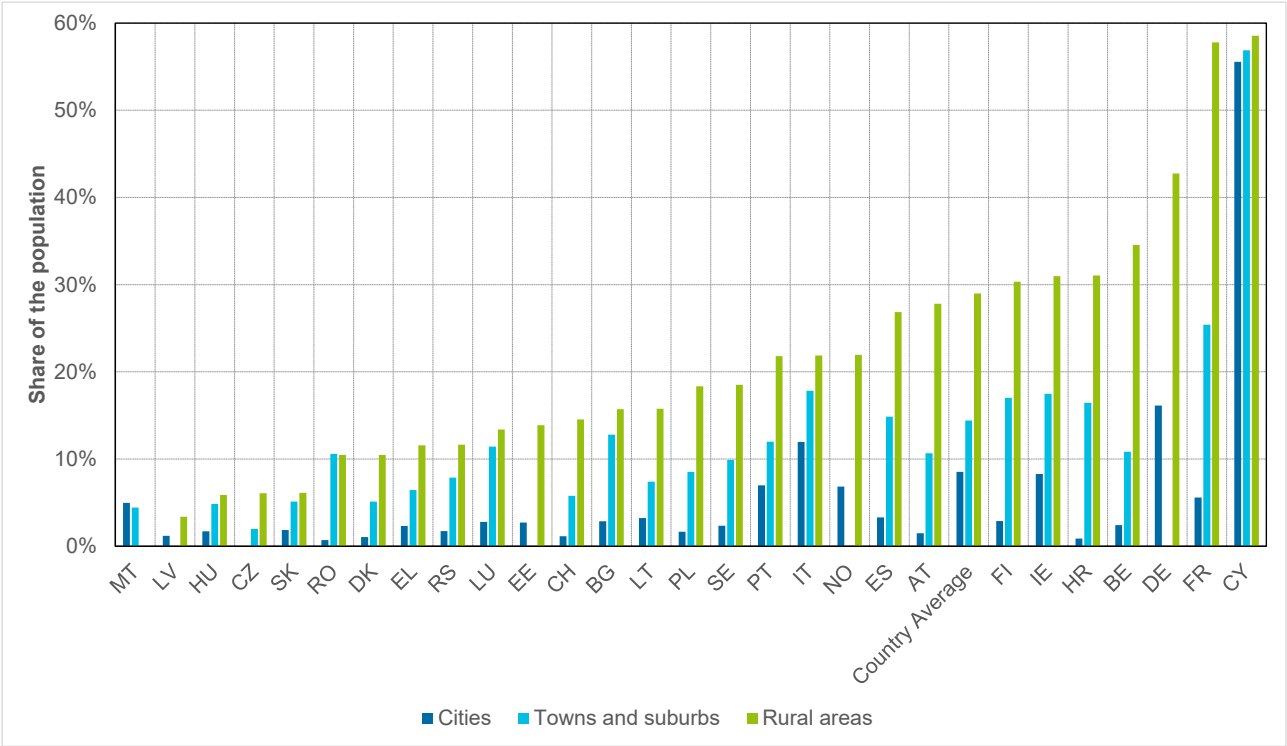
[4] Eurostat, 2024, Passenger cars - per thousand inhabitants, road_eqs_carhab

[5] See https://news.err.ee/1609112576/regional-affairs-minister-free-county-public-transport-to-end-next-year

[6] 'This variable reports on the degree of urbanisation in the area where the usual residence of the person or the household is located. […] [T]he variable classifies LAU2 into three types of area: 1. 'Cities' - densely-populated areas where at least 50% of the population live in an urban centre. 2. 'Towns and suburbs' - intermediate density areas where at least 50% of the population live in urban clusters, but which are not 'cities'. 3. 'Rural areas' - thinly populated areas where more than 50% of the population live in rural grid cells. This classification is based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and minimum population threshold applied to 1 km2 population grid cells.' Eurostat 2025b, p. 114.

living in cities, towns or suburbs (Figure 4-5). The difference is particularly high in Croatia (HR), where the share of people living in rural areas who do not use public transport due to availability issues is more than 30 times higher than the share of people living in cities who do not use public transport for the same reason. This is followed by Austria (AT), Romania (RO) and Belgium (BE), where the difference is more than 10 times higher. With the exception of Cyprus, where availability issues are high regardless of degrees of urbanisation, stark differences can also be seen in the highest ranking countries, France and Germany.

Figure 4-5: Share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in area, the frequency is too low or the schedules are inconvenient by degree of urbanisation, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, the following countries should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations): LU, AT, DK for the category 'Cities'. Results for CZ for the category 'Cities' and for MT for the category 'Rural areas' cannot be shown, because the number of observations is too low (<20 observations). In the microdata set, towns and suburbs are included in the 'Cities' category for DE, EE, LV and NO, and in the 'Rural areas' category for MT. The degree of urbanisation is not available for NL in the microdata.

'This variable reports on the degree of urbanisation in the area where the usual residence of the person or the household is located. […] [T]he variable classifies LAU2 into three types of area: 1. 'Cities' - densely-populated areas where at least 50% of the population live in an urban centre. 2. 'Towns and suburbs' - intermediate density areas where at least 50% of the population live in urban clusters, but which are not 'cities'. 3. 'Rural areas' - thinly populated areas where more than 50% of the population live in rural grid cells. This classification is based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and minimum population threshold applied to 1 km2 population grid cells.' (Eurostat 2025b, p. 114).

Of all the reasons mentioned (in this dataset), the main barrier for public transport usage is the relative unavailability of public transport, ranging from infrequent or inconvenient schedules to a lack of servicing altogether. Unsurprisingly, this is particularly prevalent in rural areas where a reliance on car travel is thus high. It should be noted, however, that regional rail transport infrastructure is not typically included in these questions but plays a significant role in the mobility of rural populations.

In those countries in which the public transport network is relatively expansive, e.g. in Germany, availability issues are more likely to be related to scheduling and frequency. While in countries such as Austria, Croatia, and Romania we see large differences between rural and urban areas, availability issues are likely linked to the overall lack of rural transport infrastructures.

In terms of policy, this is where investments in public transport infrastructures, alongside good regional planning and flanking transport measures that support a partial modal shift, come into play to ensure good connectivity of regions:

- In urban and suburban areas, this means targeted development of public transport infrastructures and ensuring that urban planning is holistic, i.e. that new housing developments are accompanied, or better, preceded by public transport development (Box 4).
- In more rural areas and smaller settlements, significant investments in public transport infrastructure are needed, which typically take time and require large sums that may be difficult to obtain or politically contentious. Hence, in the short to medium term, the focus needs to be on making multi-modal transport options available such as on-demand transport systems or park-and-ride options.
- An additional focus on vulnerable transport users must be maintained and is rarely integrated into these types of measures. If costs for additional transport options are high or infrastructural investments are levied on transport users, increasing costs of services, then compensations need to be implemented to ensure that the transport-poor can make use of these new services and infrastructures.
- It also means prioritising regions with high shares of transport poverty, which may have already been identified within Social Climate Plans, for example, ensuring that services are fit-for-use and that information for additional transport options, such as on-demand transport, are easily accessible.

Box 4: Social housing and sustainable mobility – public transport planning in Vienna

In an effort to ensure that new social housing developments in **Vienna, Austria** are well connected to the rest of the city, transport planning and infrastructural development has become an integral part of the Sozialbau AG in Vienna working together with the municipality.

As part of a new social housing development, the Sozialbau AG integrated a variety of e-mobility options into their planning (Sozialbau AG 2018). This includes charging infrastructure for EVs, as well as bringing EV car-sharing into the neighbourhood. Nine EV vehicles are available exclusively to those living in the quarter at a low price, as well as two larger EV trucks available to the Sozialbau-Community.

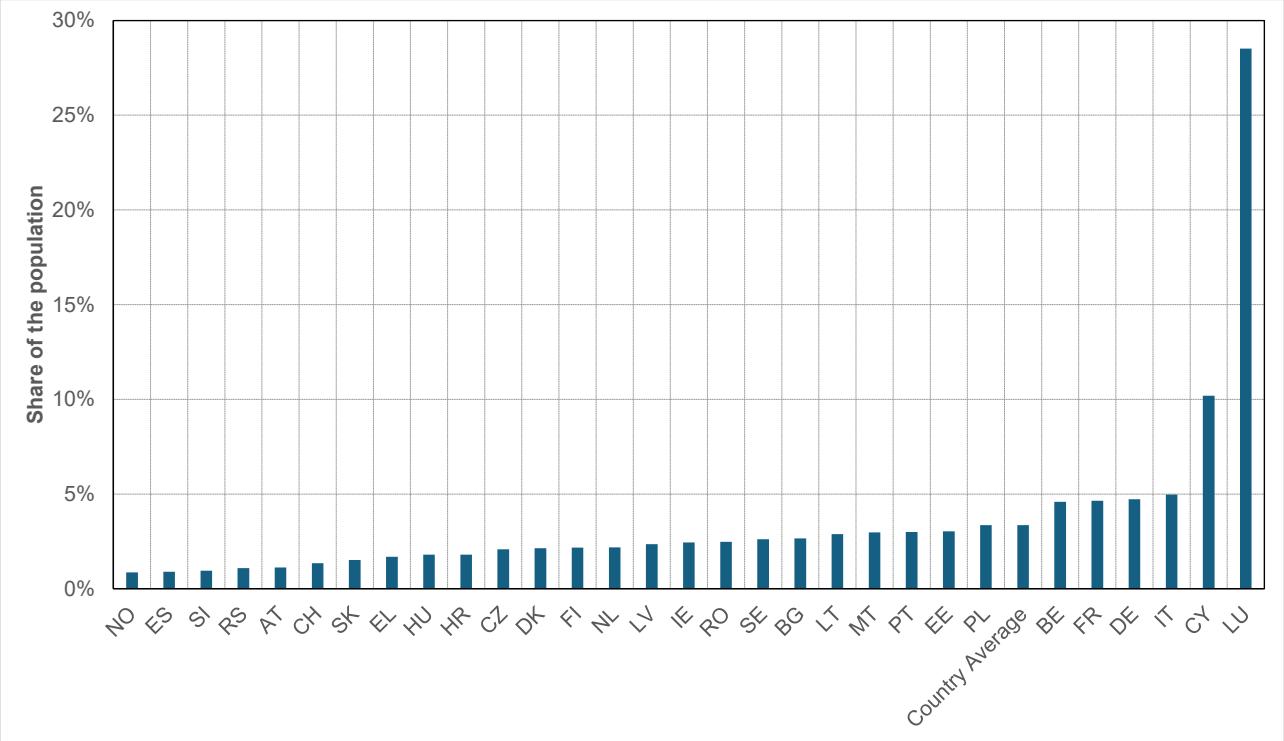
This integration of social housing and transport planning ensures accessibility to sustainable transport options, as well as ensuring that new housing developments are well connected and accessibility to essential services is provided.

4.1.3 Improve adequacy and usability of public transport

Particular attention should also be paid to ensuring that the public transport infrastructure is accessible to large sections of the population. The needs of people with reduced mobility must be considered when updating or renewing the system. Concerns about safety and security can also stop certain groups from using public transport. This can stem from unsafe roads and walking conditions, or from crime, harassment, and discrimination that people may experience when using

different transport services. Figure 4-6 shows that the share of the population who does not use public transport because it is physically inaccessible or due to safety and security concerns is particularly high in Luxembourg (LU) (29%)[7], followed by Cyprus (CY) (10%), Italy (IT), Germany (DE), France (FR) and Belgium (BE) (all 5%).

Figure 4-6: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Barrier-free access to public transport is crucial as it also increases accessibility for all other transport users including for persons with reduced mobility (PRMs). Public transport infrastructure needs to be constructed and continuously upgraded in a way that ensures accessibility. For older transport systems or where stations have a listed building status, this can be incredibly difficult and costly. Regulations and guidelines for good barrier-free access that set targets and provide guidance for providers are important, but also need to be followed up by funding, investments, and gradual improvements to the system, as well as ensuring that the infrastructure that is available to support PRMs is in working order (e.g. broken lifts or obsolete information) (Box 5).

[7] Data publications from Eurostat that use the same EU-SILC 2024 microdata variables do not display data for LU (Eurostat online database, online data code ilc_atst04, 29/04/2026). This suggests that the data is unreliable.

Box 5: Comprehensive barrier-free access to public transport – the case of Vienna

At the national level in **Austria**, the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure developed guidance for designing accessible and barrier-free public transport in 2009 (Bundesministerium für Innovation, Mobilität und Infrastruktur 2009). This included guidance for bus and tram infrastructure, long-distance train travel, as well as on customer information and services. An updated version of this guidance is currently underway.

In Vienna the public transport provider 'Wiener Linien' has been able to provide extensive barrier-free access to the public transport services (Wiener Linien n.d.). The entire bus and metro service is barrier-free as a result of ramps, lifts, and raised road surfaces. A dedicated website provides additional information for passengers and aids in planning trips. Several additional services are also available, including, for example, a separate navigation system to those with visual impairments and a pilot was implemented in winter 2024 to provide additional information in sign language. This wide array of measures providing barrier-free access to the public transport system in Vienna helps to ensure that PRMs can take advantage of that system.

Safety and security concerns in the use of public transport also need to be addressed, are a central concern for EU Transport Policy (European Commission n.d.), and included in the SDG 11.2 calling for 'safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable' transport for all by 2030.

Safety refers to the protection against unintentional, accidental, or structural hazards, such as road accidents. In policy terms, this means ensuring good and regular maintenance of the public transport infrastructure and upgrading old transport infrastructures, e.g. upgrading bus-fleets.

Security concerns are related to intentional or malicious harm caused, for example through harassment. There are a variety of steps that can be taken to improve security in public transport:

- With a view to infrastructure, this could include ensuring good lighting at public transport stops, good surveillance infrastructure in these public spaces where possible, or alarm buttons;
- With a view to security personnel, this could include employing security services where necessary and increasing presence of staff generally, especially on high-risk lines and during late-night services;
- With a view to protocols, this could involve developing comprehensive strategies to combat aggressive behaviour and prevent crime, as well as providing easily accessible information about where to report harassment and enabling them to do so;
- As well as sensitising passengers to security concerns, for example, through developing public campaigns against harassment.

All of these can contribute to heightened feelings of security in public transport spaces.

4.2 Identify societal groups particularly affected by transport poverty and develop targeted solutions

In order to tackle transport poverty, we need to know who the affected groups are. This means thinking both in terms of particularly affected regions, as well as looking at specific sub-sections of the population that may be affected disproportionally. It also means considering that some groups or regions may be more affected by some dimensions of transport poverty than others. Especially when limited funds are available for investments, price increases are expected due to climate policies, such as a carbon price on fossil fuels. Further, as transformations are underway in the transport sector to move away from fossil fuel-based transport, we must ensure therefore that we

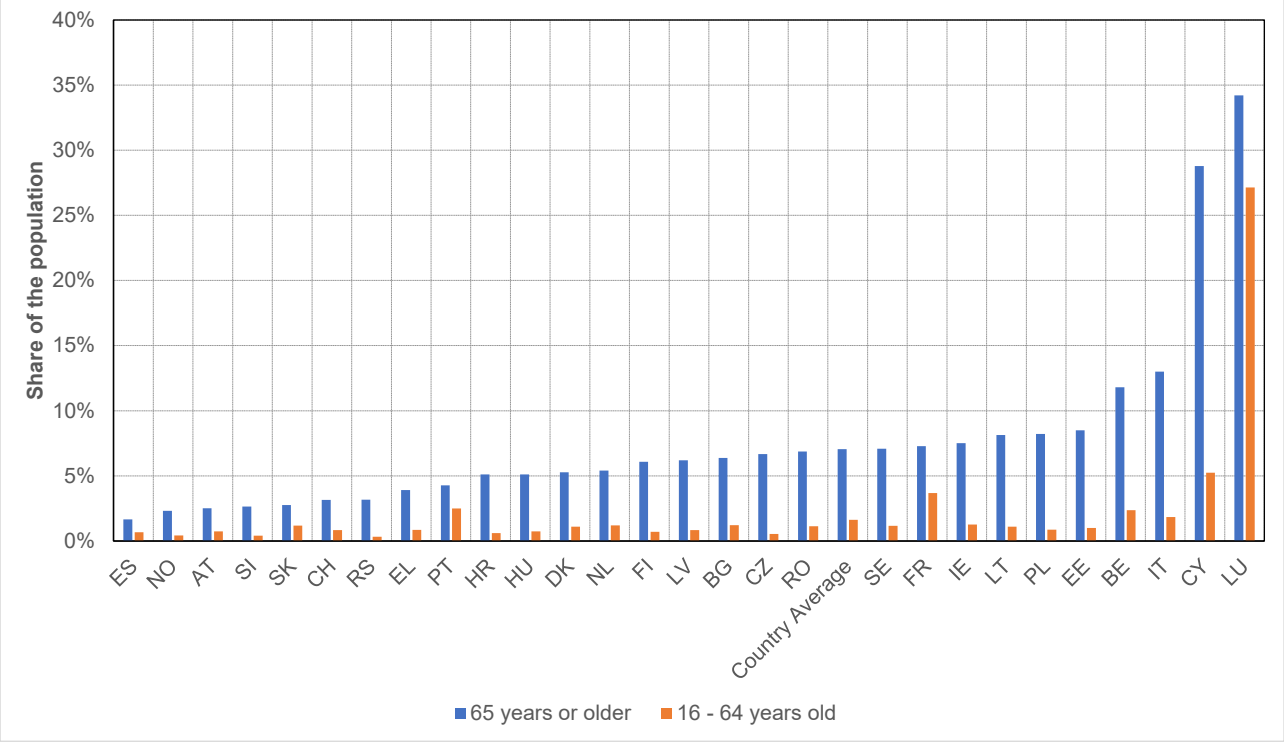
are investing funds wisely, addressing those affected the most by price increases, and leaving no one behind in our effort to decarbonise. This is also at the heart of the Social Climate Fund, which requires targeted investment from Member States to tackle transport poverty.

Examples of differences across low-income (through the at-risk-of-poverty group) and the rural-urban divide have already been shown. This indicates that while in some instances clear differences can be seen in how transport poverty is experienced differently across these socio-economic markers, the differences are not as clear in other cases.

In an effort to further show differences across vulnerable groups, we consider the adequacy dimension of poverty. This refers to the usability of the transport system, in this case the public transport system, which is highly differentiated depending on age, gender, migration status, and so on.

Figure 4-7 shows that the share of the population who does not use public transport due to physical inaccessibility or safety and security concerns is higher among those aged 65 years or older than among those aged 16–64 years in all countries. This is probably because older people are generally less mobile and more vulnerable in unsafe situations. The difference between these two groups is particularly high in the Czech Republic (CZ), Serbia (RS) and Poland (PL), where the share of people aged 65 or over who does not use public transport due to adequacy reasons is more than eight times higher than the respective share of people aged 16–64.

Figure 4-7: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns by age groups, EU-SILC 2024

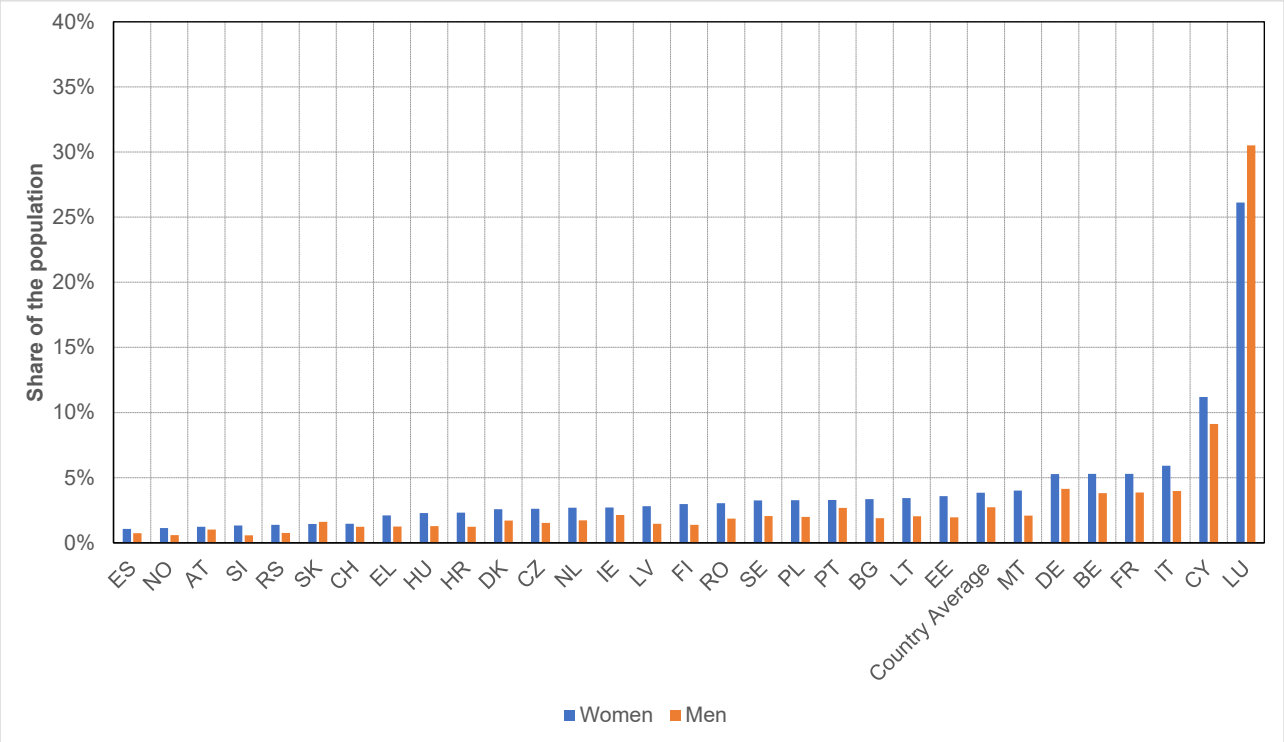


Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, NO should be flagged for the category '65 years or older' due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). NO and RS should be flagged for the category '16 – 64 years old' due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). For DE and MT, no age data is available.

When we look at the share of the population that does not use public transport because it is physically inaccessible or due to safety and security concerns, disaggregated by gender, we find that, in most countries, the rate is higher among women than men (Figure 4-8). Here, security concerns probably play an important role. The gender gap is particularly pronounced in Slovenia (SI) and Finland (FI), where the proportion of women who avoid public transport for these reasons is more than twice that of men.

Figure 4-8: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns by gender, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, NO should be due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations).

Indeed, women often face specific challenges in the transport sector, due to their diverse mobility demands and patterns that are often linked to unpaid care work. Additionally, security concerns related to fear of harassment, violence, and discrimination within the public transport system are particularly prevalent amongst women (Titheridge et al. 2009; González-Moreno et al. 2020). Additionally, women are more likely to report instances of harassment, violence, and fear on public transport, whilst still reporting that they feel relatively safe, indicating a level of normalisation of violence that are commonplace for women using public transport (Karlsruher Institut für Technologie 2025). This can be tackled by focusing on providing additional transport services that address such concerns or by focusing on strategic improvements to the public transport system itself (Box 6).

Box 6: Gender perspectives: transport alternatives and strategic changes

When the public transport system is not fit-for-use for certain groups, e.g. women, due to fears of harassment and discrimination, one way to tackle these concerns is to introduce transport alternatives. One such example is the 'Frauennachttaxi' (night taxi for women) scheme currently in place in a wide variety of cities in **Germany** such as Munich (muenchen.de n.d.),Osnabrück (Gleichstellungsbüro Osnabrück n.d.), and Mannheim (Stadt Mannheim n.d.). Generally, women from the age 14 can get discounted taxi fares during the evening, either through vouchers or by using a dedicated app or hotline to book the taxi. This means that women have alternatives available to them if they feel uncomfortable using or cannot use public transport. However, availability varies greatly by city.

Medium- to long-term policies should, however, focus on improving security on public transport. One way to tackle this is by actively integrating gender aspects into the urban mobility plans. This is the route taken in the Infrastructure Master Plan in **Barcelona, Spain** which sets out strategic developments from 2021 to 2030. The Barcelona-based organisation 'Col Lectiu Punt 6,' which works on a variety of issues related to gender-inclusive urbanism, has been able to integrate these gendered perspectives into the Infrastructure Master Plan (Area de Barcelona 2021), ensuring long-term planning and integrated solutions to improve usability of the transport system for women. Their additional work conducting gender audits, researching safety in public spaces, and offering trainings on gender-inclusive urban planning for local and regional governments (Col·lectiu Punt 6 SCCL 2020) helps to further solidify the understanding and integration of gendered issues in the city's transport developments.

Indeed, ensuring a strategic approach to tackling transport poverty that identifies the most vulnerable groups is central to effective policy. The Commission Recommendation on tackling transport poverty includes guidance for Member States on developing a strategic approach towards the matter. Based on this and in addition to the recommendations made in the previous chapters, a local, regional, and/or national approach should also include:

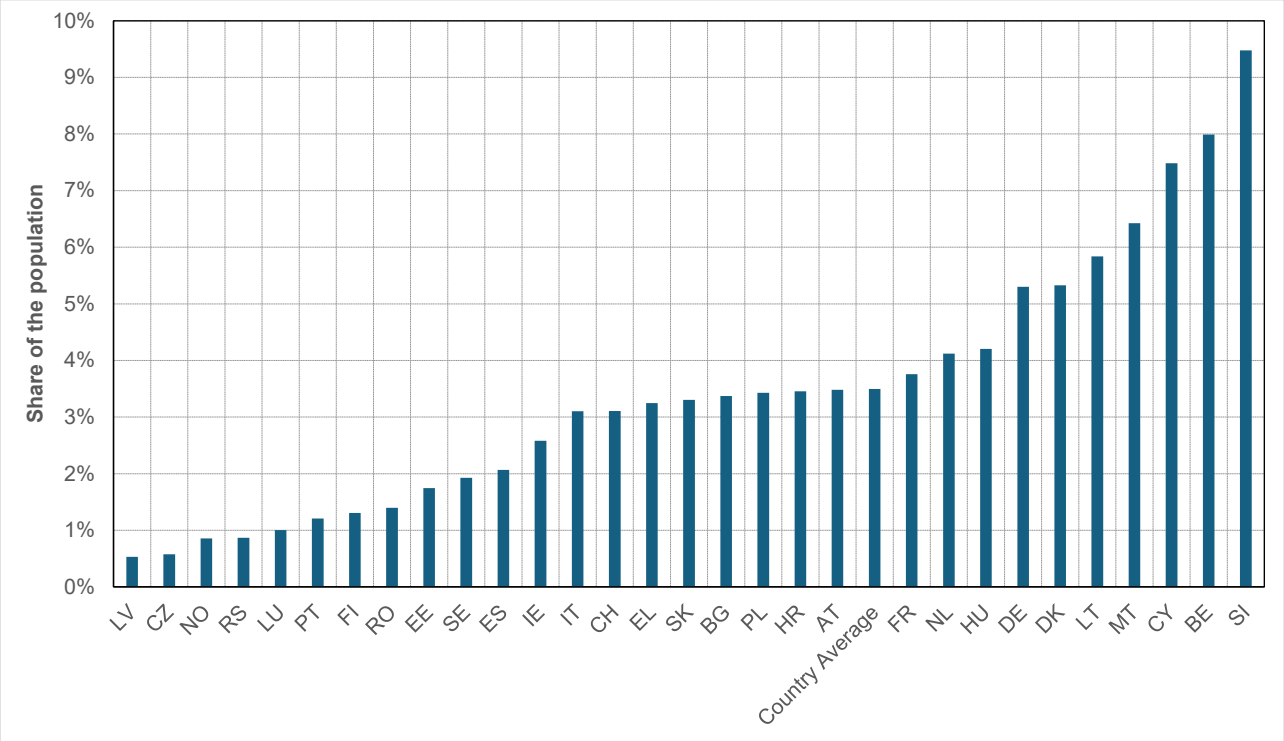
- Integrating an understanding of and emphasis on tackling **transport poverty into existing national strategies**, ensuring a coherence with existing plans and that these plans should align with fair climate transition goals. This includes the Social Climate Plans, where transport poverty must be explicitly addressed, as well as the Recovery and Resilience Plans, the National Energy and Climate Plans, and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans in cities.
- Working towards **systematically identifying vulnerable and transport-poor groups** to ensure adequate tailoring of measures. This may include data analyses with national or regional data sets, that provide more detail than indicators from EU datasets, identifying data gaps, defining adequate levels of availability, accessibility and affordability in transport sector in order to benchmark effects. All of this helps to identify gaps in policies and systematically working towards filling these gaps.
- Ensuring **collaborative work between national government and regional and local actors** that are directly involved in the transport infrastructural development or supporting precarious transport users. Identifying vulnerable groups and/or neighbourhoods or regions where support is most needed can be supported by those actors who are already working in these areas and with these groups. They can often use existing networks and relationships to reach the most vulnerable and to implement small, but highly effective changes. Ensuring an integrated approach across levels of governance helps to target policy change and program implementation.

4.3 Ensure that people can access essential goods and services without ending up in time poverty

People need transport options that guarantee access to essential goods and services without spending a large amount of time reaching them. People will mostly choose the quickest and most convenient option available, which is often the private car. Therefore, it is particularly important that the public transport system is structured so that travel times are adequate for everyday life to be an attractive alternative (Box 7).

In Slovenia (SI), Belgium (BE) and Cyprus (CY), a particularly large share of the population does not use public transport because it takes too long to travel this way. These countries have shares of 9%, 8% and 7% respectively (Figure 4-9).

Figure 4-9: Share of the population that does not use public transport, because the travel time with public transport is too long, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

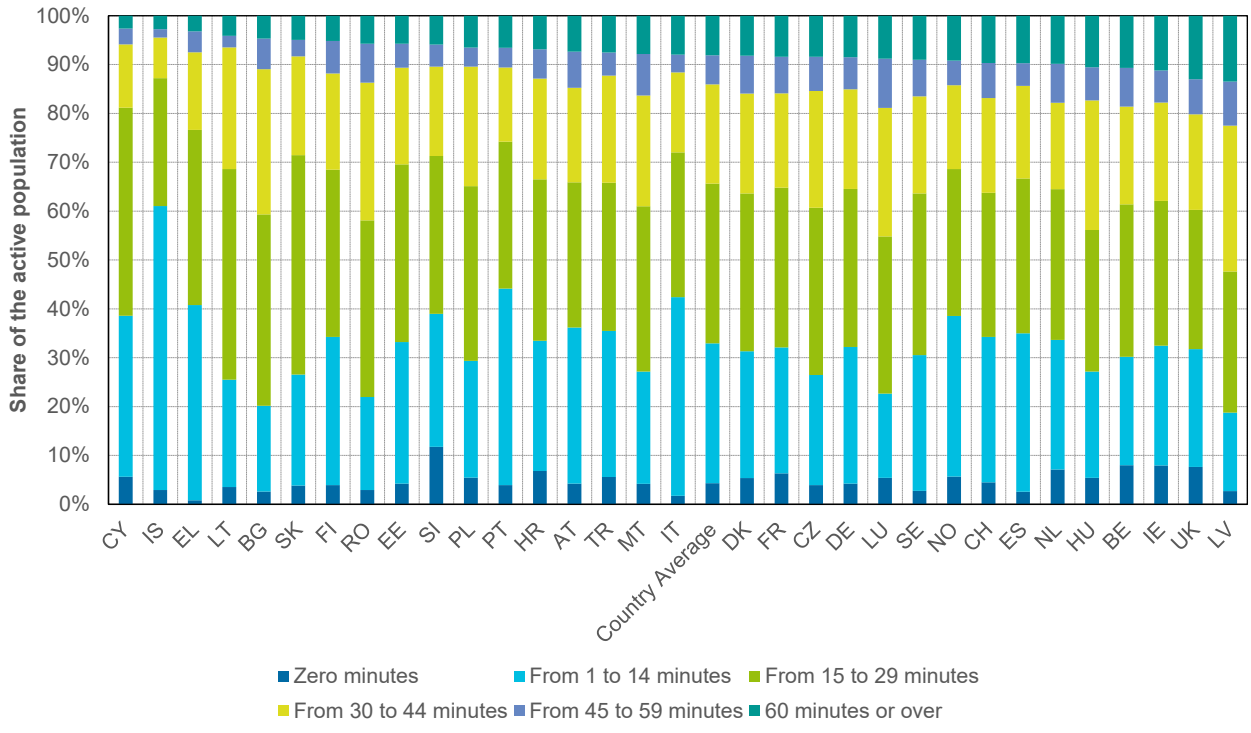
Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, LV should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations).

Although commuting to work is not the only relevant activity in peoples' everyday lives, it is certainly an important one that also ensures social inclusion when travel times make up a significant portion of weekly travel. Figure 4-10 shows how time is distributed among the population for commuting to work. The countries are sorted by the category '60 minutes or over'.

The following countries have the highest proportion of people who spend 60 minutes or more on their commute (one-way): Latvia (LV) at 14%, the United Kingdom (UK) at 13%, and Ireland (IE), Belgium (BE) and Hungary (HU), all at 11% (Figure 5-8, Annex II).

Figure 5-7 in Annex II shows that disaggregating the share of the population who does not use public transport because travel times are too long by degree of urbanisation does not clearly indicate which region has the greatest problem. In rural regions, the distances to other villages and the next larger settlement are expected to play an important role in travel time, while in cities, traffic jams and distances to different destinations within the cities can cause long travel times.

Figure 4-10: Time spent commuting to work (one-way)



Source: Oeko-Institut's compilation, based on 2019 LFS data from the Eurostat database.

While examining travel times to work provides some indication of time-poverty, long commute times are not necessarily a strong indicator of transport poverty. This is primarily because the reasons behind these long travel times are unknown.

These identified commuters will include, for example, those living in more affluent neighbourhoods in the suburbs, resulting in longer commutes into the city. However, for these households, transport costs are not an issue since they typically own a car, which they can comfortably afford. Therefore, income and other socio-economic markers associated with transport poverty are not relevant. Concurrently, there are also instances where low-income and otherwise vulnerable groups are pushed out into outer city regions and less connected neighbourhoods, due to the high cost of housing in inner city regions, resulting in long commute times, additionally driving vulnerable transport users into time-poverty (see, for example, Tiznado Aitken et al. 2024).

Considering housing and transport together in this way can also reveal instances of 'double energy vulnerability,' where households are at risk of experiencing both energy and transport poverty (Simcock et al. 2021). Overlaps are particularly common across vulnerable socio-demographic groups, such as those on a low income, older individuals, those with pre-existing health conditions and disability, and ethnic minority groups. These vulnerabilities seem to overlap most acutely in rural areas. As a result, one of the most pressing issues in addressing these energy-related vulnerabilities is identifying the groups most affected and targeting policies at them.

Similarly to the policy recommendations for improving the availability of public transport, ensuring accessibility of essential services via the transport infrastructure more generally means focusing on comprehensive spatial and regional planning:

- Firstly, identifying areas where accessibility issues are most pressing provides a basis for priority investments in the transport infrastructure. This means not only identifying vulnerable transport users but focusing on specific regions that would benefit from additional transport infrastructure.
  - Some countries in the EU have produced detailed maps of transport poverty as part of their Social Climate Plans to help target policies. However, accessing data on what kind of amenities individuals can reach within a reasonable time, either by car or public transport, is difficult.
  - The Transport Poverty Hub (EU Urban Mobility Observatory 2025), developed by the Joint Research Centre of the EU, is working to fill this data gap and provide more granular data about the accessibility of essential services. This can help national policymakers to identify regions, cities, or counties with which to collaborate on integrated transport planning.
- Within the public transport system, having accurate and modelled data on the usage of bus and train routes can also support route optimisation (Box 7). This ensures that existing public transport services are adapting and responding to user needs.
- Beyond transport planning, city and spatial planning more generally can also improve accessibility to essential services by reducing travel needs. Concepts such as proximity cities with mixed uses – also known as 15-minute cities, meaning that individuals can reach all their daily needs within 15 minutes – can greatly reduce transport poverty. This means thinking holistically about planning decisions and ensuring that basic amenities are within short travel times, especially within suburban or outer city neighbourhoods, as described above.

Box 7: Using data modelling to improve public transport planning – the case of AMINA (AMINA 2025)

Through the use of transport planning software, the regional transport initiative AMINA in **Bavaria, Germany** was able to optimise public transport routes. Through more detailed data on multi-modal transport usage at a highly granular level and advanced modelling of changes to transport behaviours based on changes to public transport routes, they were able to both analyse the impact of proposed changes on travel times, passenger demand, and operational services, as well as optimise their services to meet both environmental and economic goals.

4.4 Ensure the compatibility of climate goals and social inclusion in transport policies

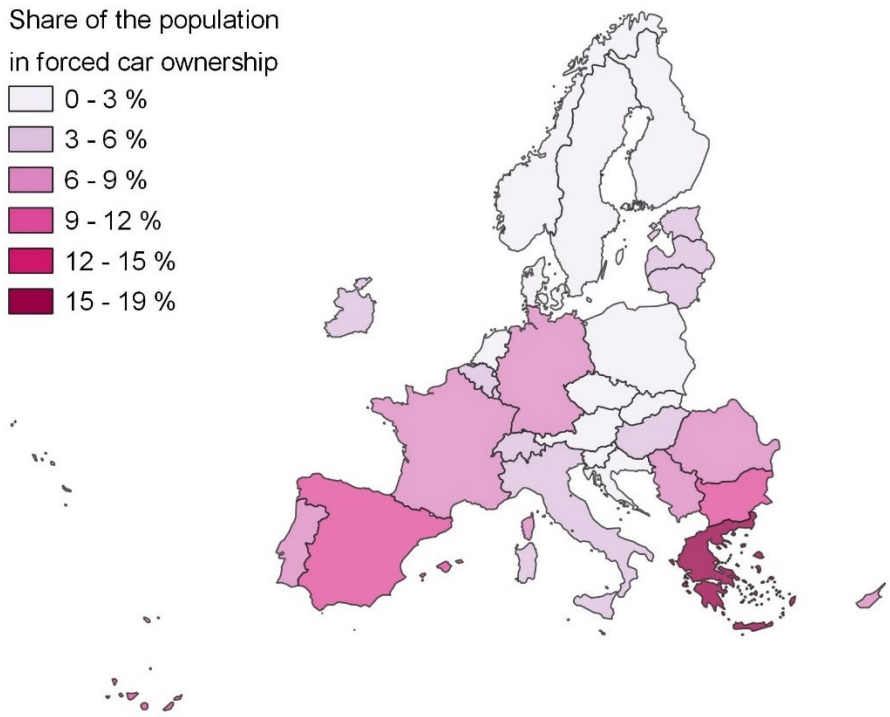
We need ambitious climate policy to achieve our climate targets. However, **we must ensure that these policies are designed in such a way that does not disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, and that suitable support mechanisms are in place to ease any additional burden** that results from these policies and ensure that everyone can partake in the transformation.

In the transport sector, climate policies often aim to reduce the use of fossil fuel cars by making them less convenient or more expensive to use. Distributional problems arise if those affected by these higher prices are unable to switch to alternatives, either because they lack the financial means to switch to electric vehicles, for example, or because there are no alternative transport options, such as public transport, available.

One indicator that quantifies this group is the share of the population that is materially and socially deprived yet still owns a car. This indicator assumes that individuals forego goods and services that are necessary for an adequate standard of living in order to afford a car because they have no alternative way of fulfilling their daily mobility needs, such as commuting to work (Mattioli 2017; Curl et al. 2018). This is why this transport poverty indicator is also called 'forced car ownership'. In 2024, particularly high rates of forced car ownership were found in Greece (EL) at 19%, Spain (ES) and Bulgaria (BG) at 10% each (

Figure 4-11). However, comparing the 2024 data with that from 2018, no clear pattern emerges across European countries, with some showing higher rates and others lower (Figure 5-1, Annex II). Figure 5-2 in Annex II shows the difference between the two years in percentage points.

Figure 4-11: Share of the population that is materially and socially deprived and owns a car, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.
Notes: For IS and UK, no 2024 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Box 8: Car ownership in Greece

Although the share of the population that is materially and socially deprived and owns a car decreased from 2018 to 2024, in comparison to other countries in Europe, the share in **Greece** remains very high.

In comparison to Figure 4-2, we also saw that a large share of the population in Greece also selected 'other' when asked why they were not using public transport. This coincides with a relatively high share of car ownership in the country overall, at 579 cars per 1,000 inhabitants.[8]

These high shares of car ownership, also among those who may have difficulty covering costs, is likely linked to the fact that public transport is virtually non-existent outside of larger cities, such as Athens. Especially on the islands less frequented by tourists, a car may be the only mobility option for inhabitants. This coupled with high import costs and high tax rates means that the cost burden is high and limited alternatives exist.

One example of a climate policy that is said to affect those who cannot afford to switch to an electric vehicle and who rely on their private fossil fuel car for their daily mobility needs disproportionately is **low emission zones (LEZ)**. These LEZs regulate car usage, particularly in urban centres, by either restricting or charging high emission vehicles. The aim is to reduce pollution in these areas and indirectly encourage alternative transport options.

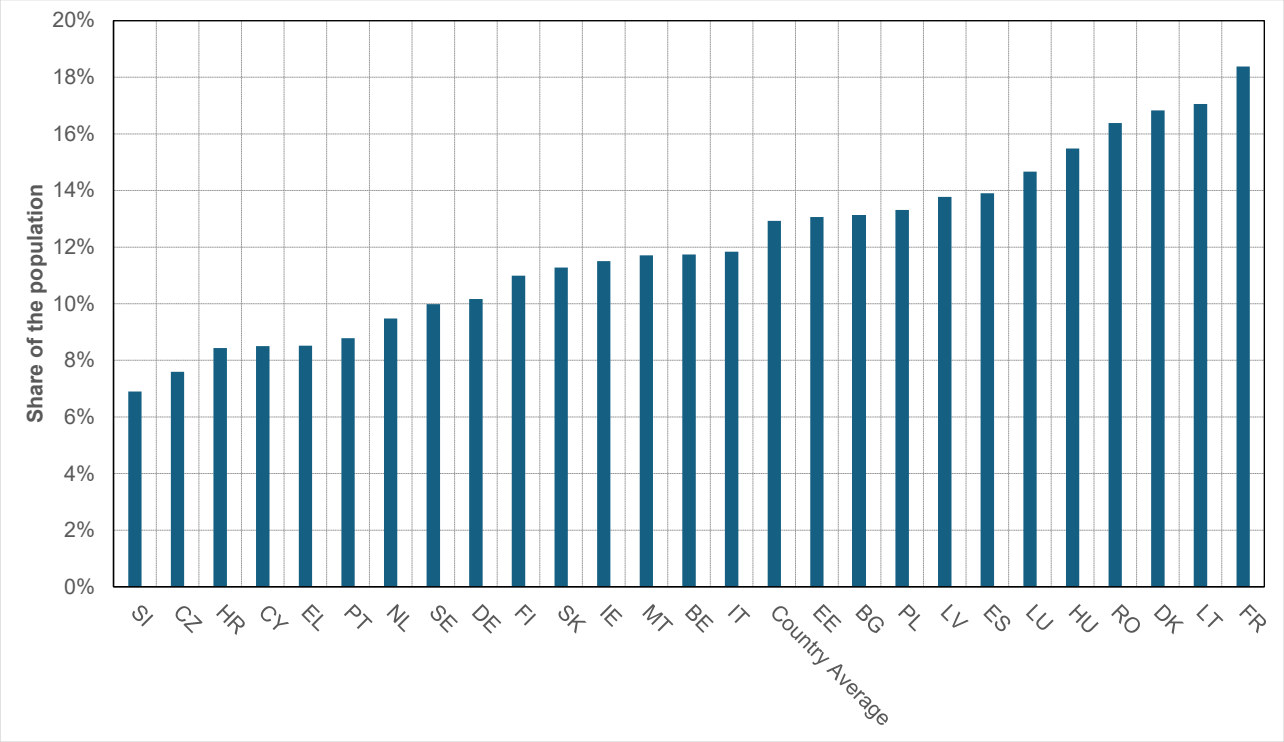
However, vulnerable transport users that are car-dependent, as those seen in the figure above, often own older cars that may not be LEZ-compatible and do not have the financial resources to purchase another vehicle. Vulnerable households are therefore likely to be negatively and disproportionally affected by LEZs (Blandin et al. 2025) if they do not receive adequate support either to purchase a more environmentally-friendly vehicle or to undergo a modal switch and use public transport instead. Indeed, subsidies or tax benefits that support the purchase of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) often do not target vulnerable transport users. A notable exception is the recent social leasing scheme introduced in France (Box 9).

In terms of costs, carbon taxes in the transport sector, while being an effective market instrument to phase out fossil fuels, tend to have negative distributional effects, meaning that lower-income households are disproportionally affected by price increases. Most acutely, the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading System for the buildings and the road transport sectors (**ETS 2**) will result in higher costs for fossil fuels. This will particularly affect those who are currently reliant on their private fossil fuel car to fulfil their daily mobility needs and either cannot afford to switch to an electric vehicle or have no other means of transport available to them.

Figure 4-12 shows that a significant proportion of low- and middle-income households in each European country already spend a large share of their total expenditure on transport and are assumed to have limited savings as well. The presented transport expenditure is primarily driven by fuel costs, meaning that these households are expected to face an even greater financial burden if fuel prices rise. In France (FR), Lithuania (LT), Denmark (DK), Romania (RO), and Hungary (HU) more than 15% of the low- and middle-income household population spends more than the national median on transport (as a share of their total expenditures).

[8] Eurostat, 2024, Passenger cars - per thousand inhabitants, road_eqs_carhab

Figure 4-12: Share of the household population for which the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures exceeds twice the national median and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution, HBS 2015



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on HBS 2015 microdata.

Notes: HBS data is available only for EU Member States. For AT, no 2015 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

To offset these additional cost burdens, measures can be put in place to support vulnerable and low-income households. These can either be direct financial compensation mechanisms to help cover the additional costs or can come in the form of financial investment support for these individuals to move away from fossil fuel-based modes of transport.

The introduction of the ETS 2, for example, is accompanied by the **Social Climate Fund**. This fund makes available additional funding for Member States to implement new measures to support transport-poor households and vulnerable transport users. This may include some limited direct compensations but primarily focuses on investments. Common measures planned by Member States include subsidies for EV purchases or social leasing programs for EVs, transport vouchers for users of public transport, and on-demand transport services especially for rural and remote regions (see section/chapter 4.1.2). It is central to these support instruments that they must be designed in such a way that the target group can access them.

Box 9: A case for social leasing – example from France

Social leasing is a policy tool that provides low-income individuals or those with special needs with subsidised access to assets such as vehicles, supported by government funding. It originated in **France**, where the programme offers low- and middle-income people with lengthy commutes affordable, subsidised EV leasing options (see Unger et al. 2025).

The social leasing scheme is also considered good practice by the EU; however, the successful targeting of such a measure is highly dependent on the specifics of the program. The fact that the French government takes on the liability for recipients and covers up-front costs is paramount to the program being accessible to vulnerable groups in practice and not just in theory.

To ensure ambitious climate policy in the transport sector that does not systematically disadvantage or exclude certain groups, holistic and inclusive thinking needs to start at the inception phase:

- Considering distributional effects of climate policy during development and implementation to ensure that support needs are identified early on.
- Designing flanking measures for climate policy to address these distributional impacts
  - Targeted direct financial support, where short-term support is necessary, and
  - Sustained and targeted investments and measures that support households in the long-term
- The expansion of the public transport system as outlined in chapter 4.1 is particularly important. This should address affordability, accessibility, and inclusiveness, and include subsidies for the purchase of low-emission vehicles for vulnerable groups that ensure low or no upfront costs, low maintenance cost or support with these, low administrative burden, easy-to-access information for addressed households, suitable income brackets for financial support to ensure low-income households are profiting primarily.

5 Where do we go from here: a holistic approach

This report has given a systematic introduction to transport poverty, including the variety of ways that it can be defined, measured, and addressed. The data has shown that transport poverty is a complex phenomenon, comprised of multiple aspects that may even be partly in opposition to one another. It has also shown that in each country results vary greatly; transport poverty is also experienced very differently based on socio-economic factors and along regional differences.

Since transport poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon, tackling the issues also requires a variety of measures that encompass a multitude of policy domains and associated stakeholders.

At the same time, transport poverty levels and any measures addressing the issue are very particular to the national context. The built environment and existing mobility infrastructures influence not only where transport poverty is experienced more acutely but also dictates what further infrastructural developments are possible and necessary, for example.

Legislative, political, and governmental processes influence key decision-making processes when developing relevant measures and set agendas, determining priorities in tackling transport poverty. There may, therefore, be a focus on improving availability of public transport options in rural areas or on social ticketing if affordability is determined to be a central concern.

Indeed, these high-level processes are central to whether transport poverty is even identified as a policy concern. Determining the role that all these aspects play in the policy-making surrounding transport poverty is therefore very specific to each country (or even region and city).

Finally, there will inevitably be conflicting interests in the transport, climate, and social policy domains when it comes to the specifics of policy design. This should not diminish the central notion that climate policy should not further exacerbate or produce new social injustices, and that an inclusive and fit-for-use transport system must be climate-friendly.

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Annex

Annex I. Datasets and methodology used for measurement

The analysis is based on data from the following EU-level datasets: the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the Household Budget Survey (HBS), the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the European Quality of Life Survey by Eurofound (EQLS). The following section provides further details on the data sets used and methodology applied.

European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC):

The survey designed by Eurostat collects data on household income, direct taxes, social contributions, and additional variables relating to social exclusion and living conditions. It has been conducted annually since 2004. The EU-SILC provides both cross-sectional and longitudinal data, collected periodically over a four-year period. The countries participating in the survey vary from year to year, but typically include EU Member States, as well as occasionally candidate countries and European Free Trade Association countries. The EU-SILC covers households and individuals aged 16 and over. For our analysis, we have used EU-SILC microdata from 2018 and 2024 to present the most recent available data from a wide range of countries.

This study analyses the following microdata variables from the survey:

- car ownership in combination with social and material deprivation variables,
- affordability of car ownership,
- frequency of public transport use,
- main reason for not using public transport regularly by degree of urbanisation, age and gender,
- financial burden of public transport when at risk of poverty.

For each indicator and the disaggregation into different groups, the sample only includes households that answered the relevant questions about their living situation.

Household Budget Survey (HBS):

The HBS collects data on household consumption expenditure, which is used at a national level to calculate weights for the Consumer Price Index. As the survey is carried out by the national statistical institute of each EU Member State, the objectives, methodologies and survey intervals can vary between countries. This can lead to differences in data quality. Households that report negative spending in any relevant expenditure category are excluded before the calculation.

Eurostat compiles and releases the HBS every five years, with microdata available for 2010, 2015 and 2020. To avoid potential distortions in the 2020 HBS figures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, microdata from the 2015 HBS is used instead. Expenditure figures are adjusted for inflation to reach 2023 price levels, using the average monthly Eurostat Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) for each Member State.

The following expenditure-based transport poverty indicators are calculated for this study using the HBS microdata:

- Household population that spends more than twice the national median on heating fuels and has total expenditure below the national median
- Household population that spends less than half the national median on heating fuels and has total expenditure below the national median.

In the HBS, income is generally regarded as a less reliable variable than total expenditure, so households are grouped into expenditure quintiles rather than income quintiles. One reason is that not all countries report every non-monetary component of income, which makes cross-country comparisons of income variables unreliable. Relying on monetary net income as an alternative ignores non-monetary income components, which can be sizeable, particularly for low-income households (see TEMURSHO et al. 2020 for details). Total expenditure is also viewed as a good proxy for long-term household income. Empirical studies suggest that consumption is a better measure of permanent income than current income and that consumption correlates more strongly with subjective well-being than income does. In addition, there is a general pattern of under-reporting of income among households with limited resources, whereas their expenditure data tend to be reported more accurately (Atkinson et al. 2017).

When ranking households into expenditure quintiles, both the household weight and the number of household members are taken into account, and the new OECD equivalence scale is applied. Each quintile thus contains an equal number of individuals.

EU Labour Force Survey (LFS):

The LFS collects quarterly data on labour participation among the employed working-age population (15–74 years old) in all industries and occupations. Data is available from 1983 to 2023 for EU countries, as well as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, depending on the survey year. As each country's national statistical office carries out the survey, survey methodologies may vary between countries. For our analysis, we use the 2019 LFS module on work organisation and working time arrangements, which collects data on commuting times. The data presented was downloaded from the Eurostat database.

European Quality of Life Survey by Eurofound (EQLS):

The EQLS provides a detailed overview of living conditions in European countries using a range of quality-of-life indicators, which include both objective and subjective factors. Topics covered include subjective well-being, health and mental well-being, work-life balance, housing, access to public services, neighbourhood quality, and services such as traffic and public transport access. Other topics include trust and social tensions, and social exclusion and support. The EQLS focuses on adults aged 18 and over. The survey has been conducted every four to five years since 2003. For our analysis, we use EQLS 2016 data, which includes information on self-reported assessments of public transport accessibility. The data presented was downloaded from the Eurofound database.

Annex II. Indicator description and results for the total population

The following sections provide details on each indicator and the results for EU Member States and other countries. The results highlight differences between the three dimensions of transport poverty and between different countries.

a. Availability indicators

Related to the availability dimension of transport poverty, the report uses the following three indicators: (1) share of the population that is both materially and socially deprived (MSD) and owns a car, also known as forced car ownership, (2) share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in area, the frequency too low or inconvenient, (3) share of the population with 'very difficult' access to public transport.

Share of the population that is both materially and socially deprived (MSD) and owns a car, also known as forced car ownership

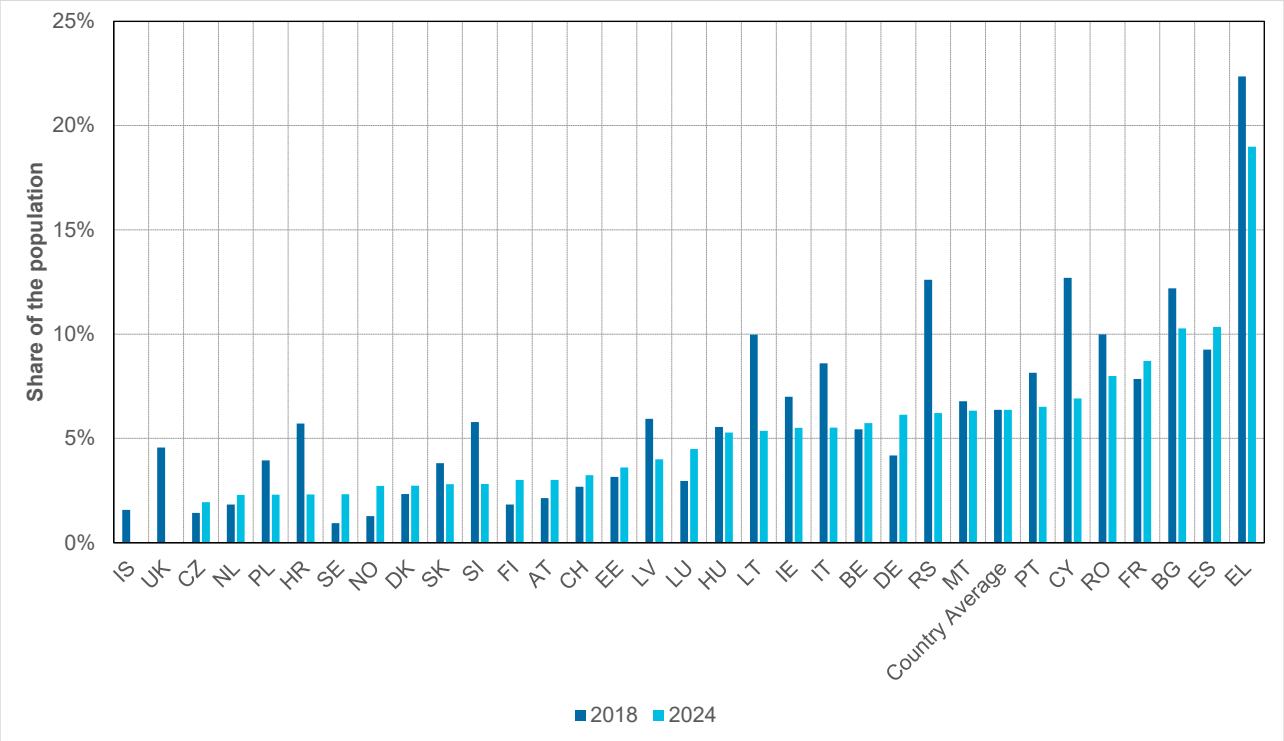
This indicator assumes that individuals forego goods and services that are necessary for an adequate standard of living in order to afford a car because they have no alternative way of fulfilling their daily mobility needs, such as commuting to work (Mattioli 2017). This is why this transport poverty indicator is also called 'forced car ownership'.

The indicator combines living in a household with a car with being materially and socially deprived.

This indicator is based on the response 'Yes' to the yearly EU-SILC survey question: 'Do you own a car?' with the response options 'Yes,' 'No, cannot afford' and 'No, other reason'.

The MSD indicator identifies individuals who are not able to afford five of thirteen pre-defined material items. The list of thirteen items includes the following: 1) capacity to face unexpected expenses; 2) capacity to afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home; 3) capacity to being confronted with payment arrears (on mortgage or rental payments, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments); 4) capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day; 5) ability to keep home adequately warm; 6) have access to a car/van for personal use; 7) replacing worn-out furniture; 8) having an internet connection; 9) replacing worn-out clothes by some new ones; 10) having two pairs of properly fitting shoes (including a pair of all-weather shoes); 11) spending a small amount of money each week on him/herself; 12) having regular leisure activities; 13) getting together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month.

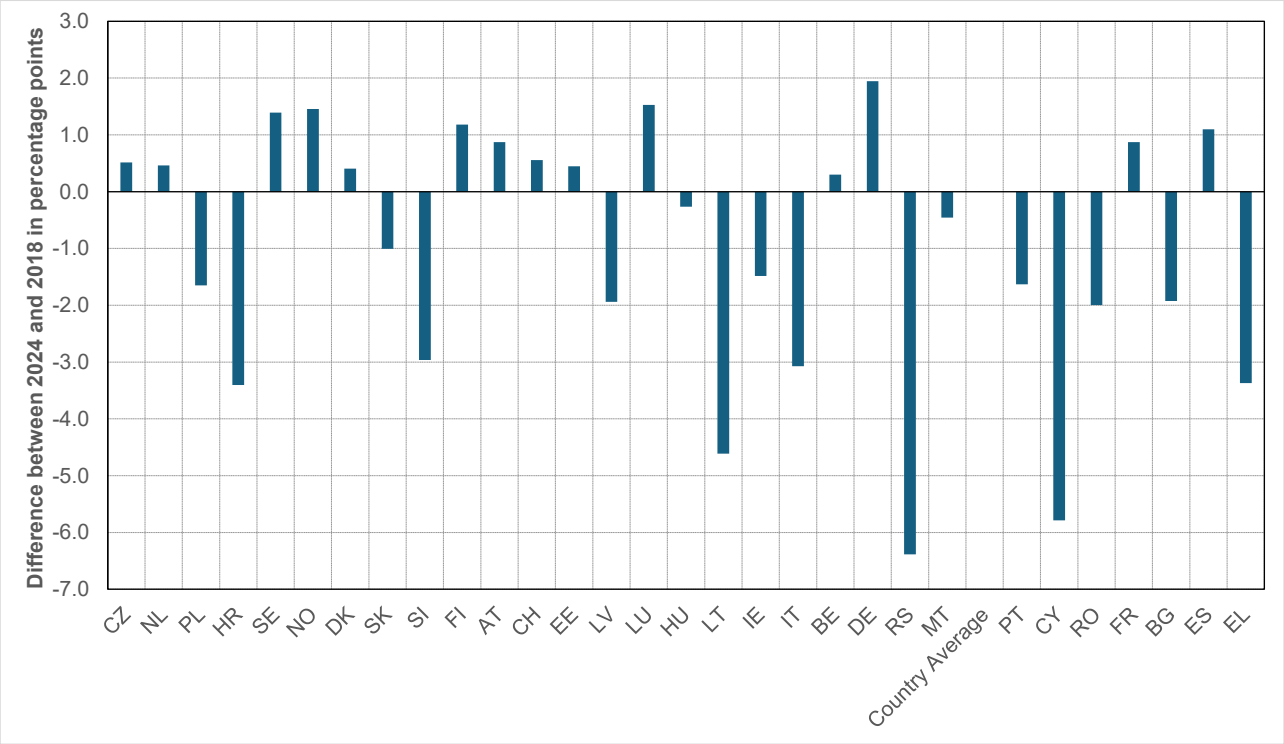
Figure 5-1: Share of the population that is materially and socially deprived and owns a car, EU-SILC 2018 and 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2018 and 2024 microdata.

Notes: For IS and UK, no 2024 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Figure 5-2: Difference in the share of the population that is materially and socially deprived and owns a car between 2018 and 2024, EU-SILC 2018 and 2024



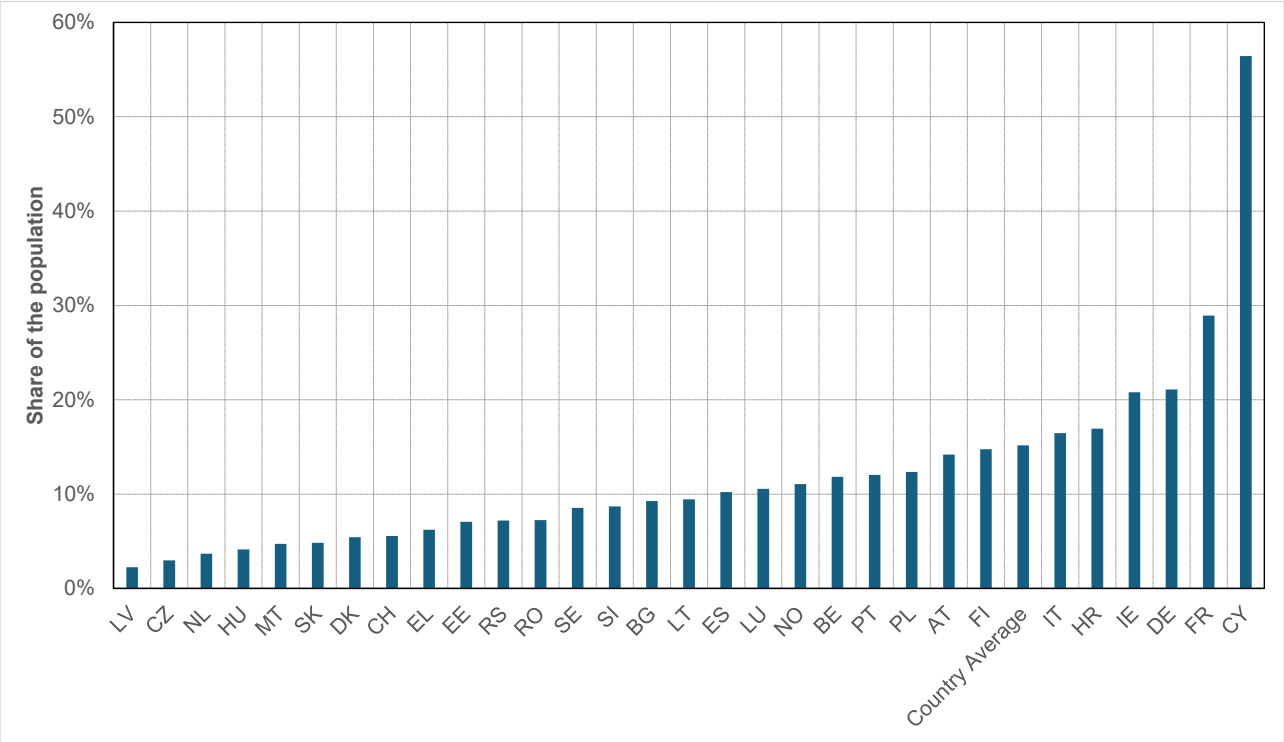
Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2018 and 2024 microdata.

Notes: For IS and UK, no 2024 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in area, the frequency is too low, or the schedules are inconvenient

This indicator is based on the response 'No public transport available in the area' or 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules' to the EU-SILC 6-yearly rolling module 'Access to services' question: 'What is the main reason for not using public transport, or not using it more often?' with the response options 'Too expensive,' 'No public transport available in the area,' 'Physical access too difficult,' 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules,' 'Too long travel time,' 'Safety or security concerns' and 'Other reason'.

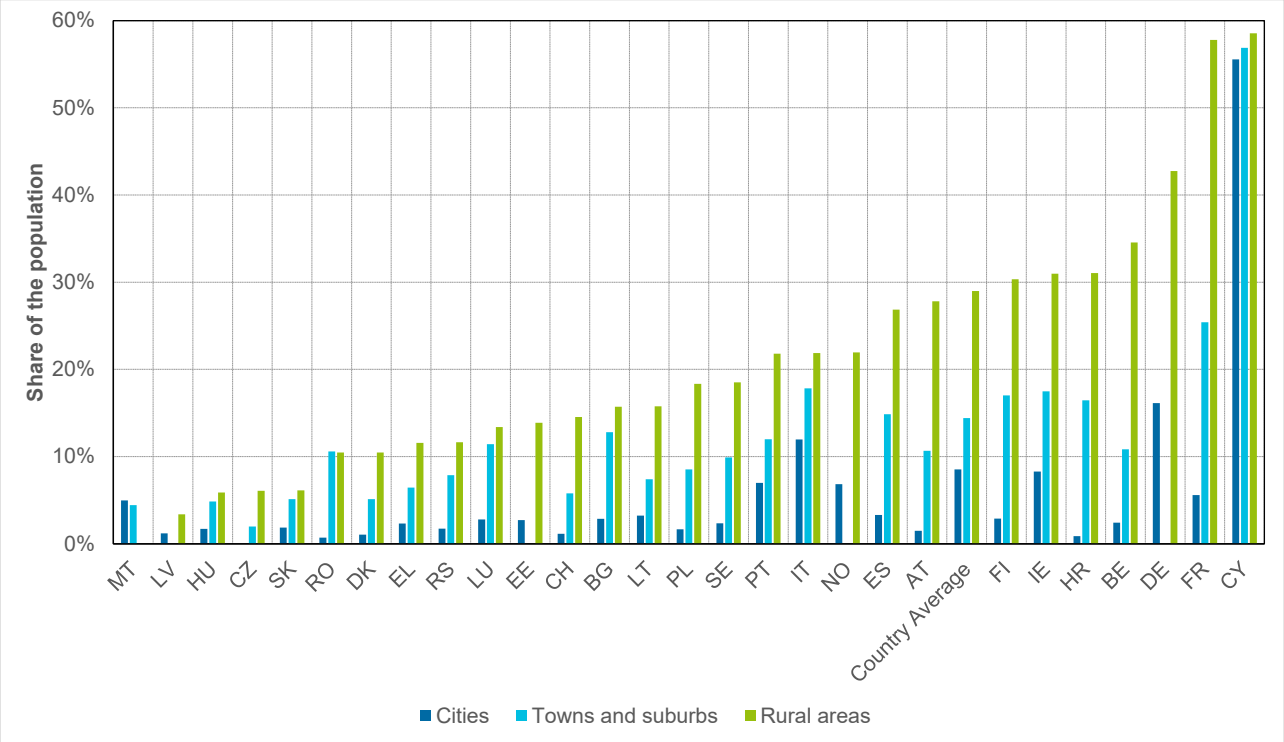
Figure 5-3: Share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in area, the frequency is too low, or the schedules are inconvenient, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Figure 5-4: Share of the population that does not use public transport because there is no public transport in area, the frequency is too low or the schedules are inconvenient by degree of urbanisation, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

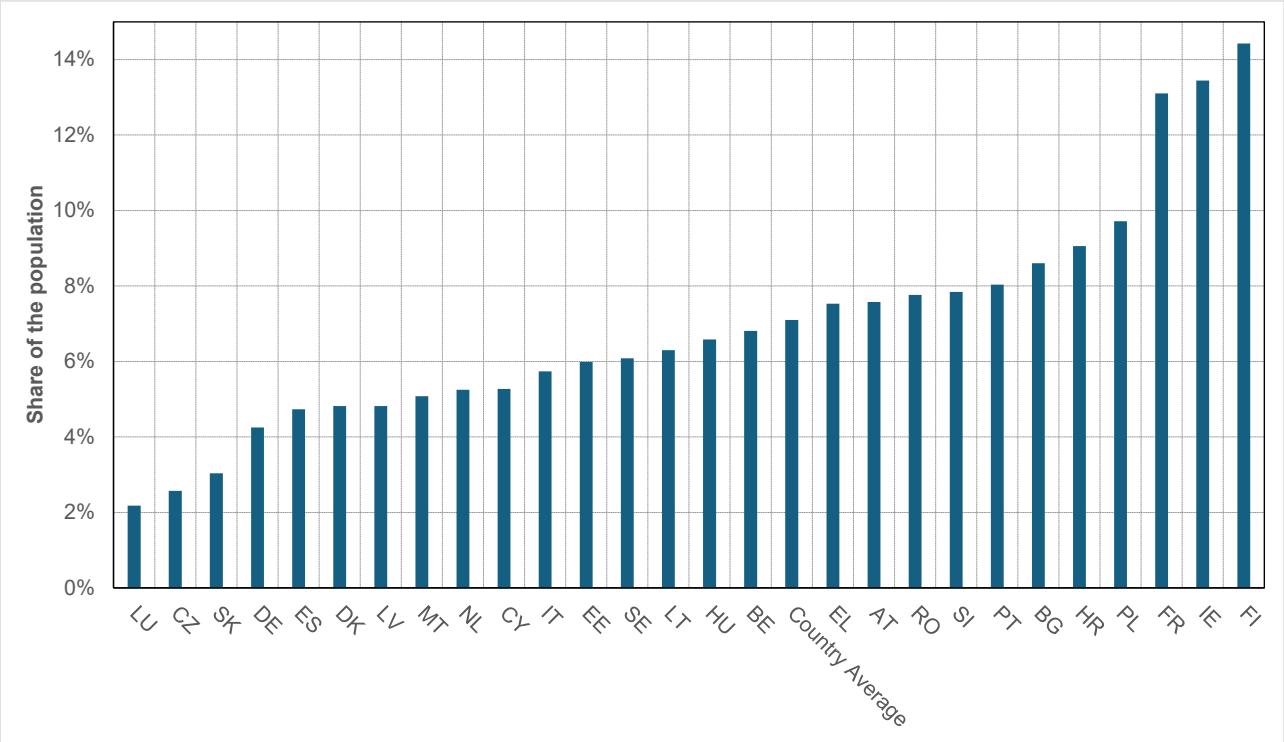
Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, the following countries should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations): LU, AT, DK for the category 'Cities'. Results for CZ for the category 'Cities' and for MT for the category 'Rural areas' cannot be shown because the number of observations is too low (<20 observations). In the microdata set, towns and suburbs are included in the 'Cities' category for DE, EE, LV and NO, and in the 'Rural areas' category for MT. The degree of urbanisation is not available for NL in the microdata.

'This variable reports on the degree of urbanisation in the area where the usual residence of the person or the household is located. […] [T]he variable classifies LAU2 into three types of area: 1. 'Cities' - densely-populated areas where at least 50% of the population live in an urban centre. 2. 'Towns and suburbs' - intermediate density areas where at least 50% of the population live in urban clusters, but which are not 'cities'. 3. 'Rural areas' - thinly populated areas where more than 50% of the population live in rural grid cells. This classification is based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and minimum population threshold applied to 1 km2 population grid cells.' (Eurostat 2025b, p. 114).

Share of the population with 'very difficult' access to public transport

This indicator is based on the response 'very difficult' to the survey question 'Rate the accessibility of public transport' from the EQLS 2016 by Eurofound.

Figure 5-5: Share of the population with 'very difficult' access to public transport, EQLS 2016



Source: Oeko-Institut's compilation, based on 2016 EQLS data from the Eurofound database.

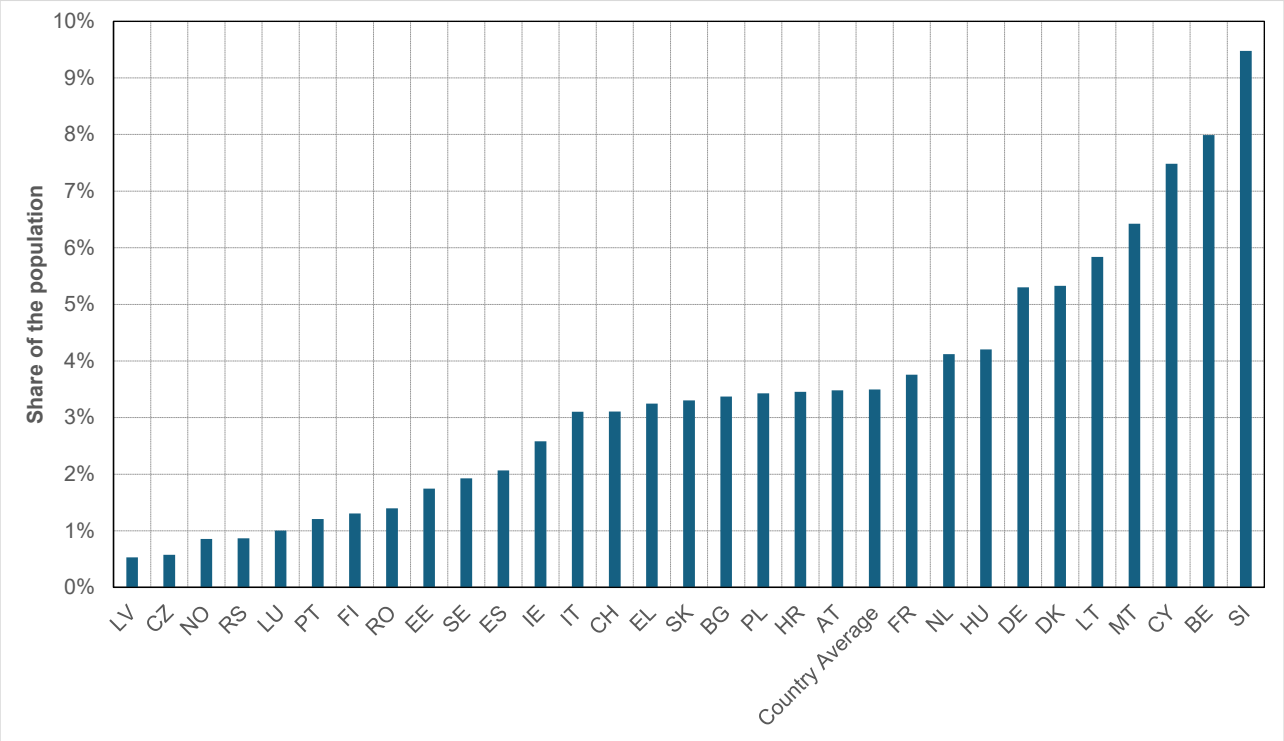
b. Accessibility indicators

Related to the accessibility dimension of transport poverty, the report uses the following indicators: (1) share of the population that does not use public transport because the travel time with public transport is too long, (2) share of the population with a one-way commute to work of more than 60 minutes.

Share of the population that does not use public transport because the travel time with public transport is too long

This indicator is based on the response 'Too long travel time' to the EU-SILC 6-yearly rolling module 'Access to services' question: 'What is the main reason for not using public transport, or not using it more often?' with the response options 'Too expensive,' 'No public transport available in the area,' 'Physical access too difficult,' 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules,' 'Too long travel time,' 'Safety or security concerns' and 'Other reason'.

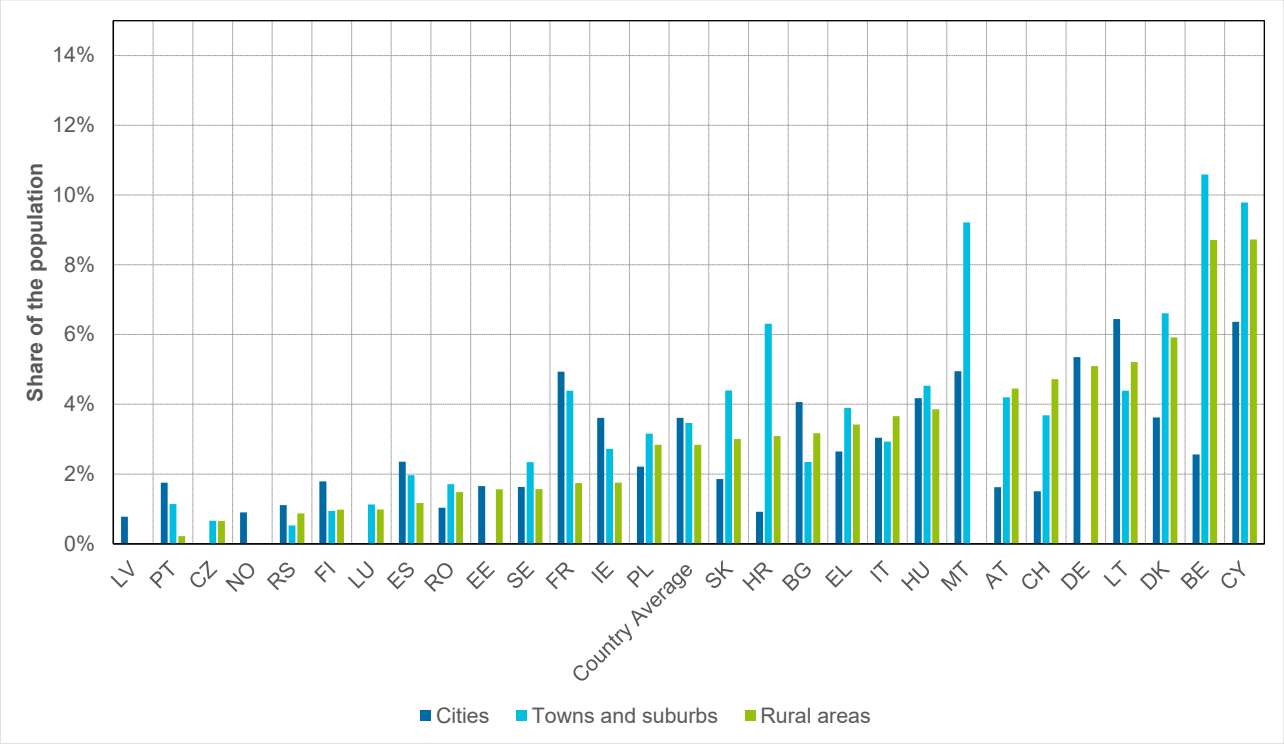
Figure 5-6: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the travel time with public transport is too long, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, LV should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations).

Figure 5-7: Share of the population that does not use public transport, because the travel time with public transport is too long by degree of urbanisation, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

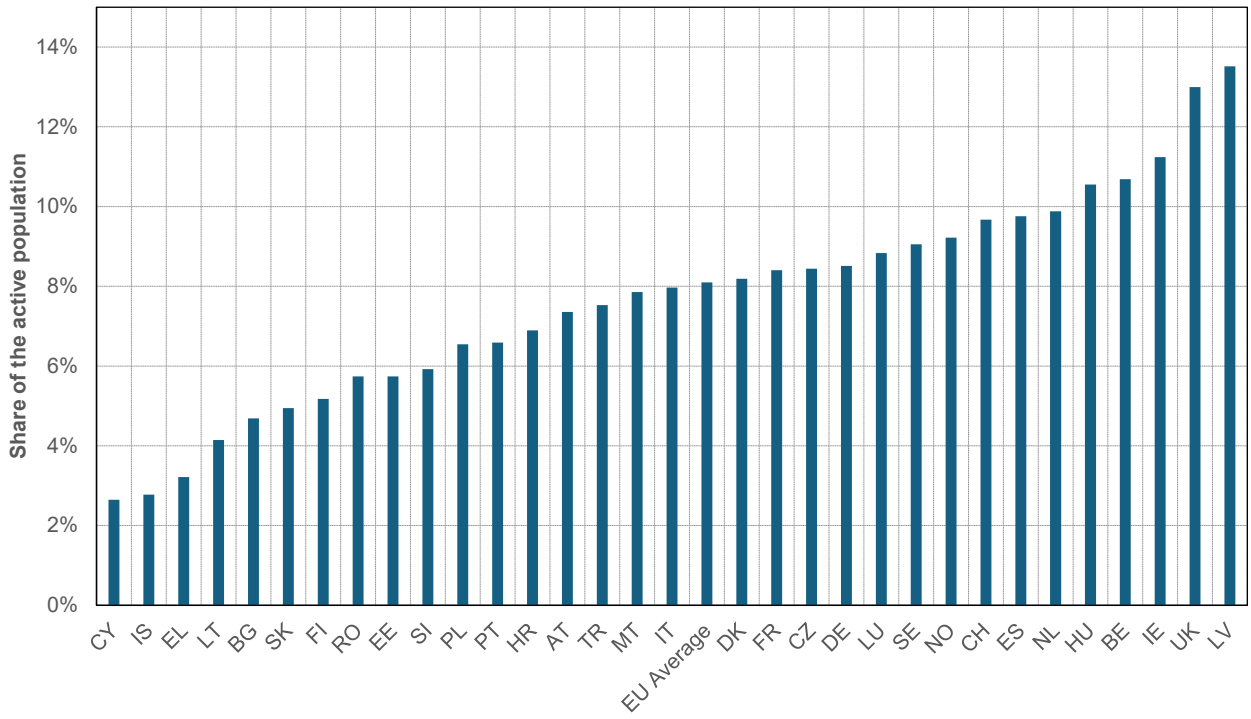
Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, the following countries should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations): RO, SK, AT, LV, RS, HR for the category 'Cities'. CZ, RS for the category 'Towns and suburbs'. LU, CZ, FI, PT for the category 'Rural areas'. Results for LU and CZ for the category 'Cities' and for NO, LV, MT for the category 'Rural areas' cannot be shown, because the number of observations is too low (<20 observations). In the microdata set, towns and suburbs are included in the 'Cities' category for DE, EE, LV and NO, and in the 'Rural areas' category for MT. The degree of urbanisation is not available for NL in the microdata.

'This variable reports on the degree of urbanisation in the area where the usual residence of the person or the household is located. […] [T]he variable classifies LAU2 into three types of area: 1. 'Cities' - densely-populated areas where at least 50% of the population live in an urban centre. 2. 'Towns and suburbs' - intermediate density areas where at least 50% of the population live in urban clusters, but which are not 'cities'. 3. 'Rural areas' - thinly populated areas where more than 50% of the population live in rural grid cells. This classification is based on a combination of criteria of geographical contiguity and minimum population threshold applied to 1 km2 population grid cells.' (Eurostat 2025b, p. 114).

Share of the population with a one-way commute to work of more than 60 minutes

This indicator is based on the LFS 2019 ad-hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements. It estimates the share of individuals who commute to work for more than 60 minutes (one-way).

Figure 5-8: Share of the population with a one-way commute to work of more than 60 minutes, LFS 2019



Source: Oeko-Institut's compilation, based on 2019 LFS data from the Eurostat database.

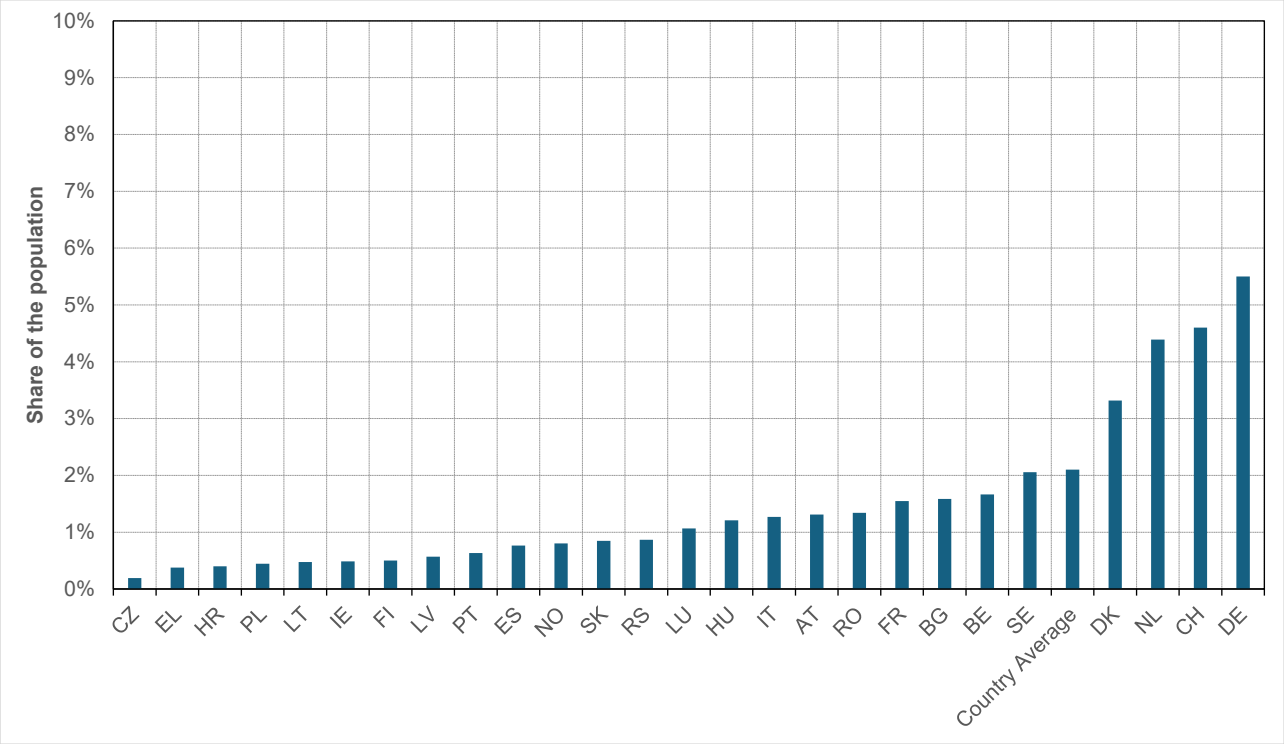
c. Affordability indicators

Related to the affordability dimension of transport poverty, the report uses the following four indicators: (1) share of the population that does not use public transport because it is too expensive, (2) heavy financial burden of public transport, (3) share of the population facing enforced lack of a car, (4) share of the household population that spends more than 6% of total expenditures on transport and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution, (5) share of the household population for which the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures exceeds twice the national median and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution.

Share of the population that does not use public transport because it is too expensive

This indicator is based on the response 'Too expensive' to the EU-SILC 6-yearly rolling module 'Access to services' question: 'What is the main reason for not using public transport, or not using it more often?' with the response options 'Too expensive,' 'No public transport available in the area,' 'Physical access too difficult,' 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules,' 'Too long travel time,' 'Safety or security concerns' and 'Other reason'.

Figure 5-9: Share of the population that does not use public transport because it is too expensive, EU-SILC 2024



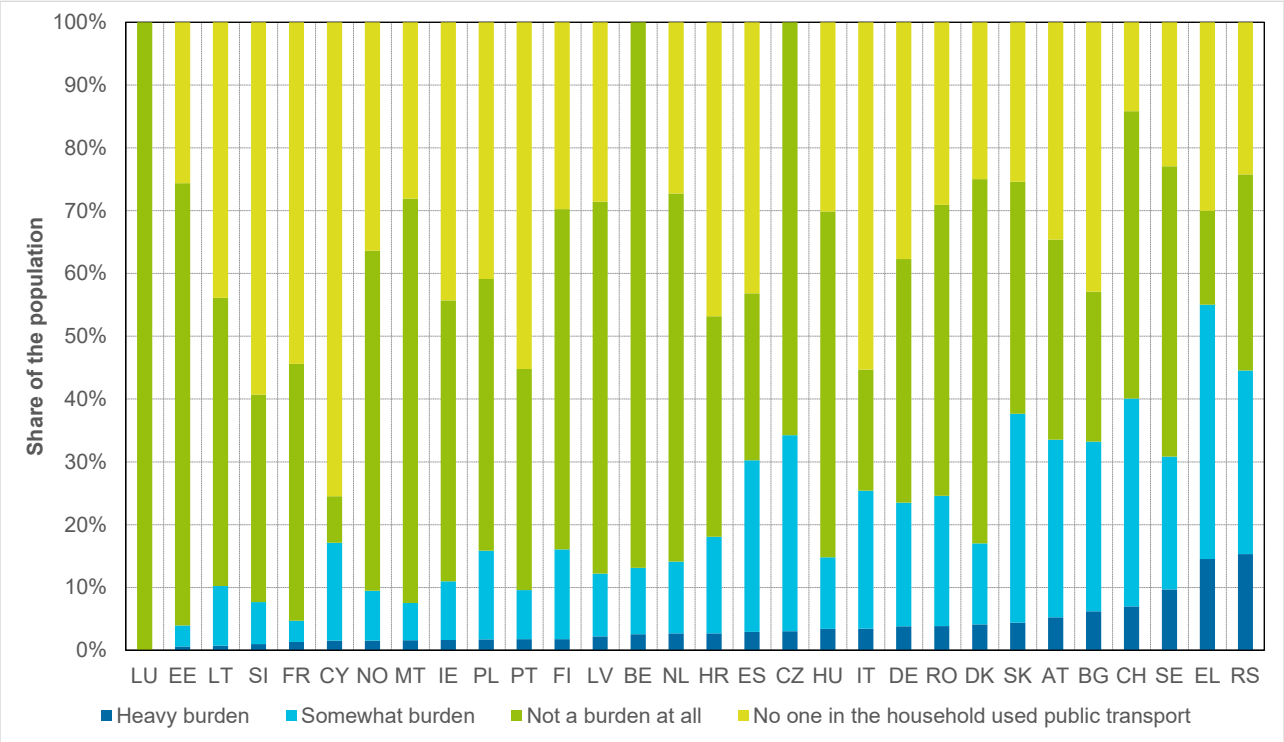
Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, CZ, LT, FI, IE should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). The results for MT, SI, EE, CY cannot be shown, because the number of observations is too low.

Heavy financial burden of public transport

This indicator is based on the response ‘Heavy burden’ to the EU-SILC 6-yearly rolling module ‘Access to services’ question: ‘Thinking of the total costs of public transport (bus, tram, train, underground etc.) for the household in the last 12 months, which of the following statements applies?' with the response options ‘Heavy burden,’ ‘Somewhat of a burden,’ ‘Not a burden at all’ and ‘No household member used public transport in the last 12 months’.

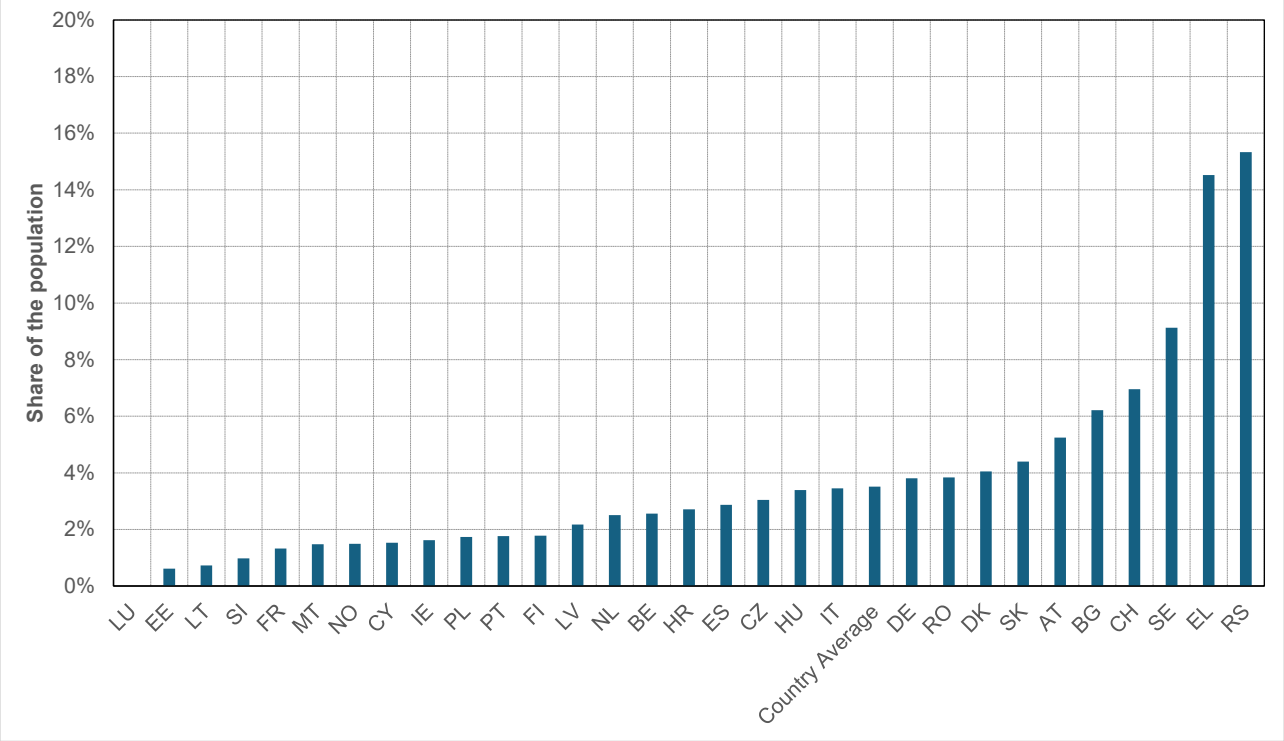
Figure 5-10: Public transport cost burden, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut’s own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Note: In LU, the question ‘Thinking of the total costs of public transport (bus, tram, train, underground etc.) for the household in the last 12 months, which of the following statements applies?' was not included in the questionnaire, but the data was set to 'not a burden' for all households and individuals. This is probably because public transport is free in LU.

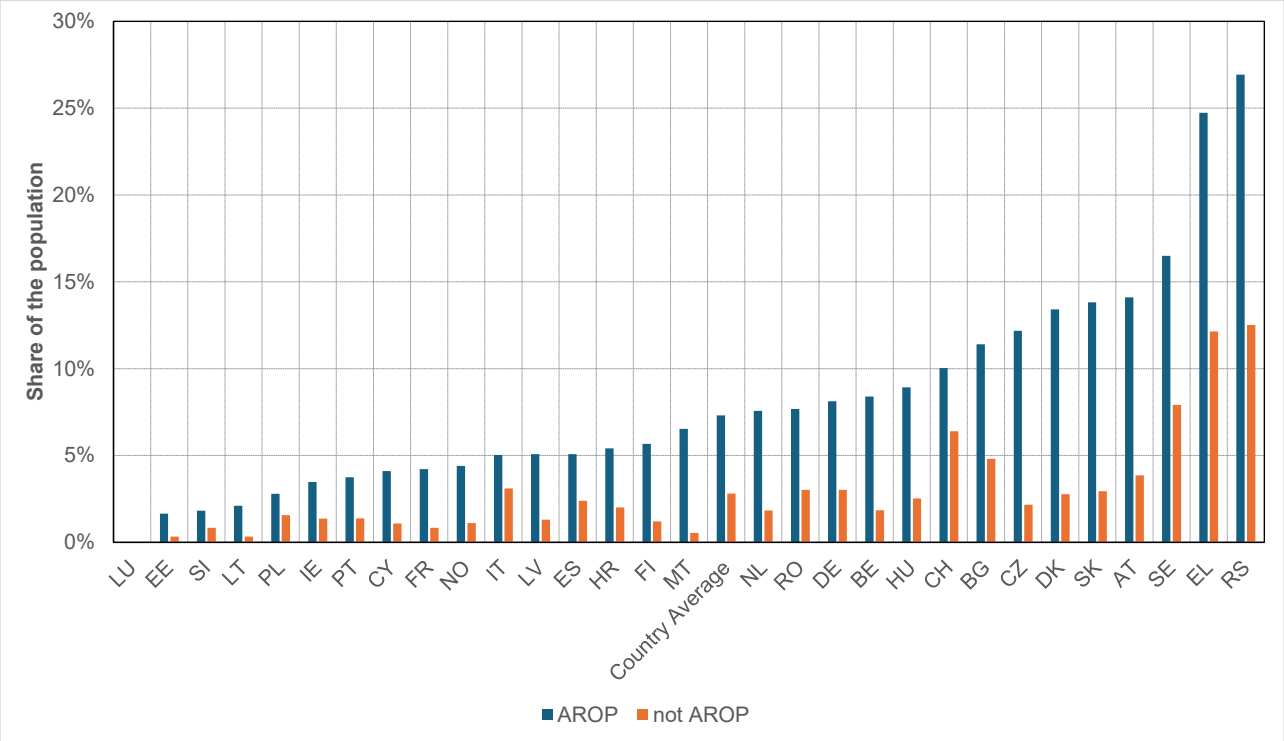
Figure 5-11: Heavy financial burden of public transport, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Figure 5-12: Heavy financial burden of public transport by the AROP indicator, EU-SILC 2024



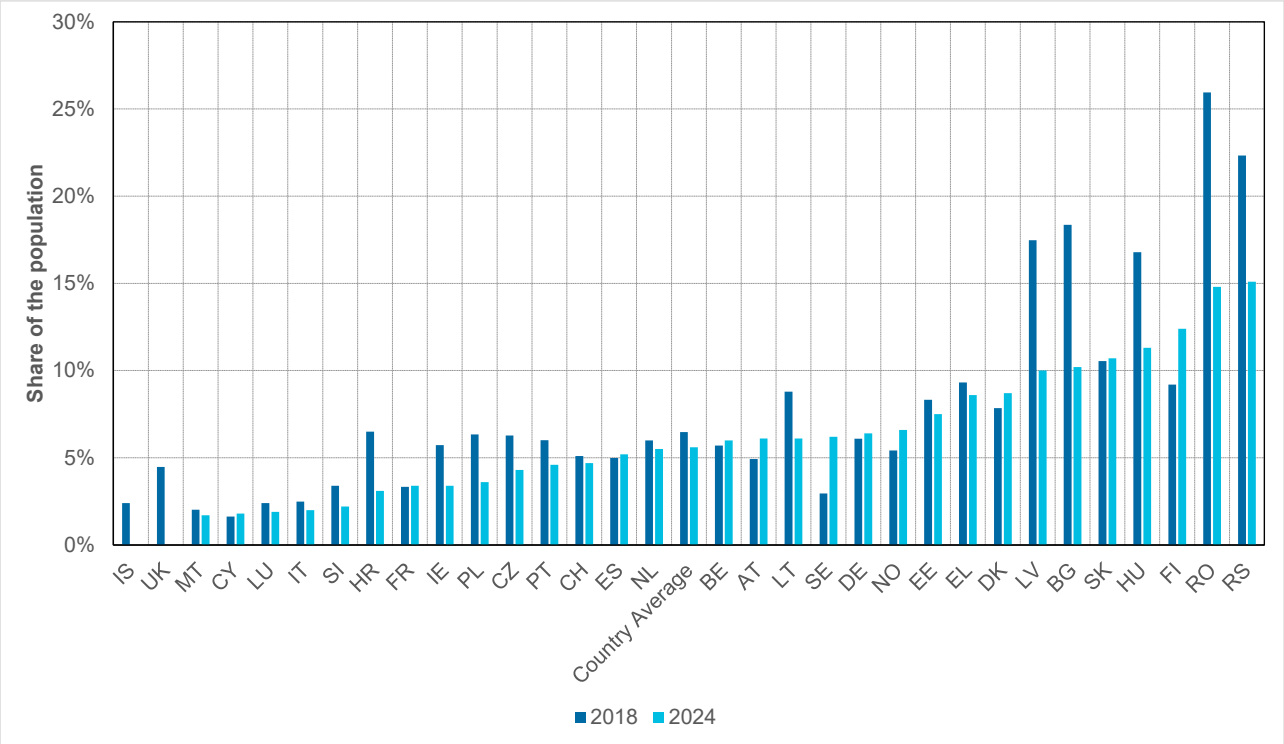
Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, the following countries should be flagged due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations): EE, NO, LT, IE, MT, SI, CY for the category 'AROP'. EE, LT for the category 'not AROP'.

Share of the population facing enforced lack of a car

This indicator is based on the response `No – cannot afford` the yearly EU-SILC survey question of whether individuals own a car.

Figure 5-13: Share of the population facing enforced lack of a car, EU-SILC 2018 and 2024



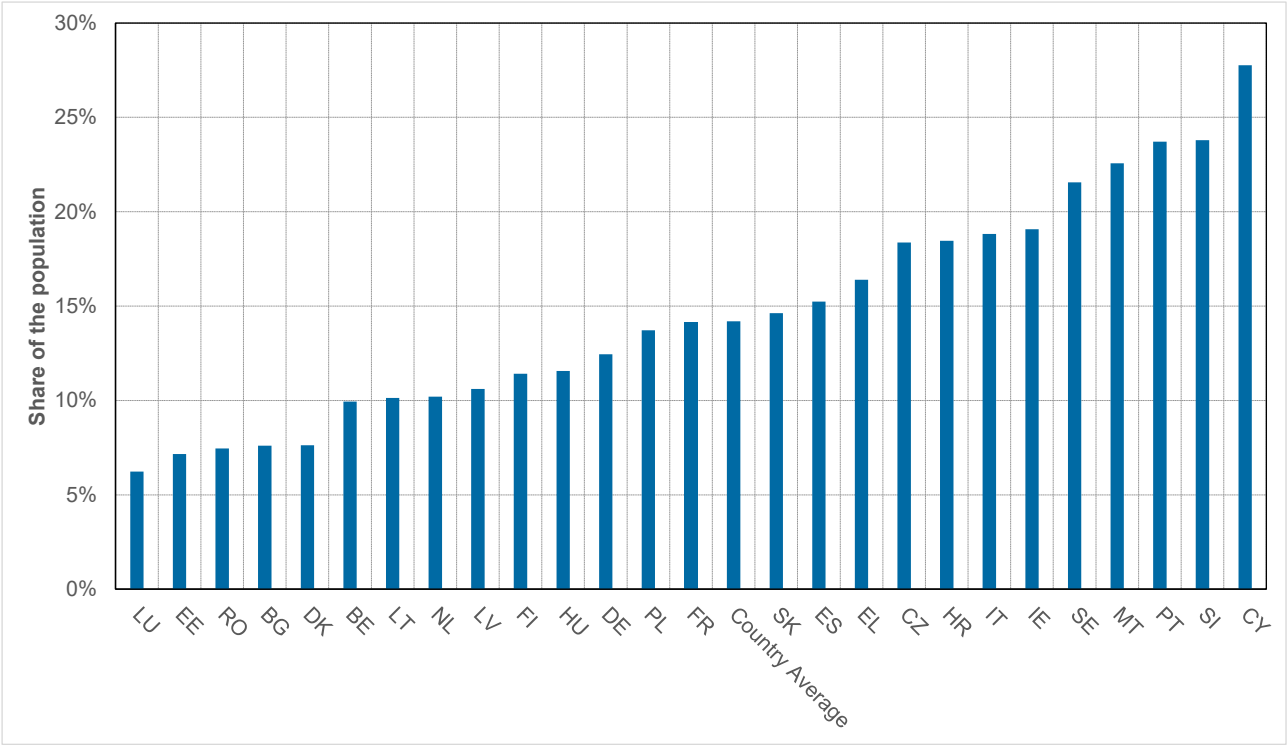
Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2018 and 2024 microdata.

Notes: For IS and UK, no 2024 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Share of the household population that spends more than 6% of total expenditures on transport and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution

The affordability indicator is estimated at the household level using 2015 HBS data. It is based on the proportion of a household's total expenditure spent on transport. A household is considered to be 'transport-poor' if its transport expenditure exceeds 6% of its total expenditure and it is in the bottom half of the expenditure distribution. Further details of the calculation method can be found in Annex I.

Figure 5-14: Share of the household population that spends more than 6% of total expenditures on transport and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution, HBS 2015



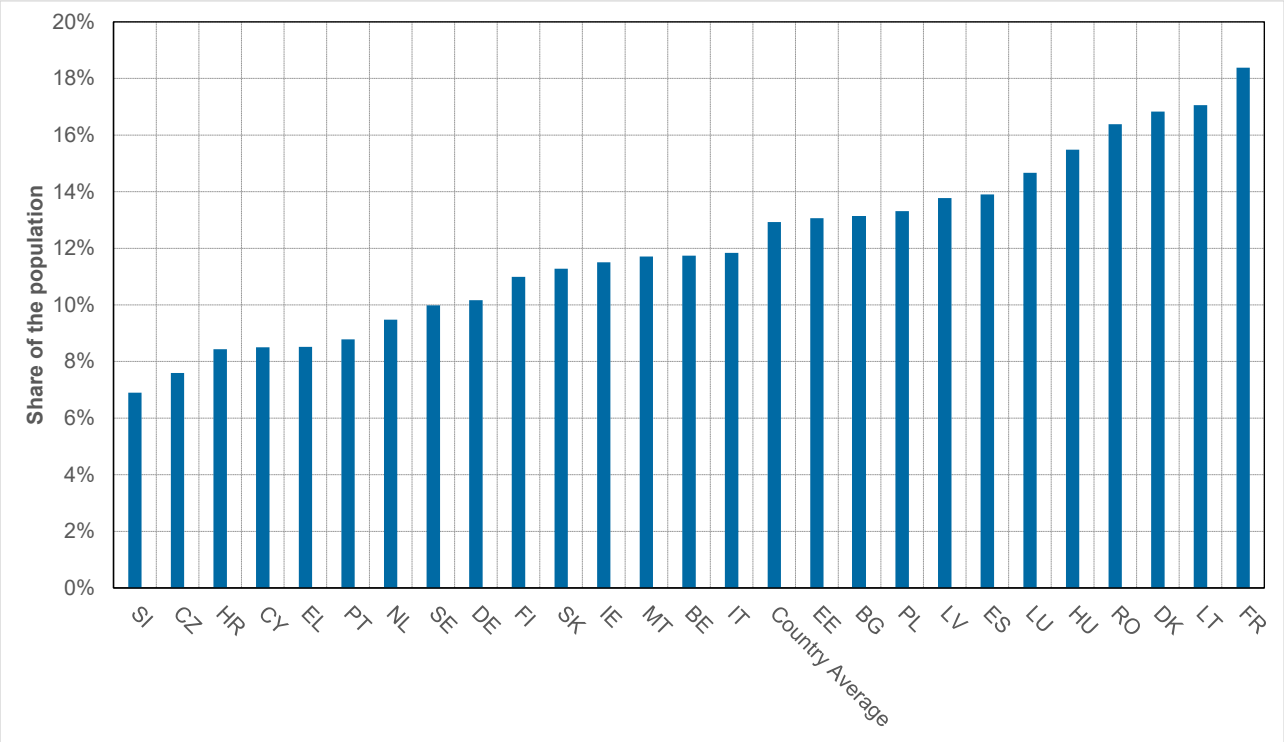
Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on HBS 2015 microdata.

Notes: HBS data is available only for EU Member States. For AT, no 2015 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

Share of the household population for which the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures exceeds twice the national median and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution

The affordability indicator is estimated at the household level using 2015 HBS data. It is based on the proportion of a household's total expenditure spent on transport. A household is considered to be 'transport-poor' if the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures is higher than twice the national median of transport expenditures in total expenditures and it is in the bottom half of the expenditure distribution. Further details of the calculation method can be found in Annex I.

Figure 5-15: Share of the household population for which the share of transport expenditures in total expenditures exceeds twice the national median and the household is in the bottom half of expenditure distribution, HBS 2015



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on HBS 2015 microdata.

Notes: HBS data is available only for EU Member States. For AT, no 2015 data is available. The country average is weighted by the number of people.

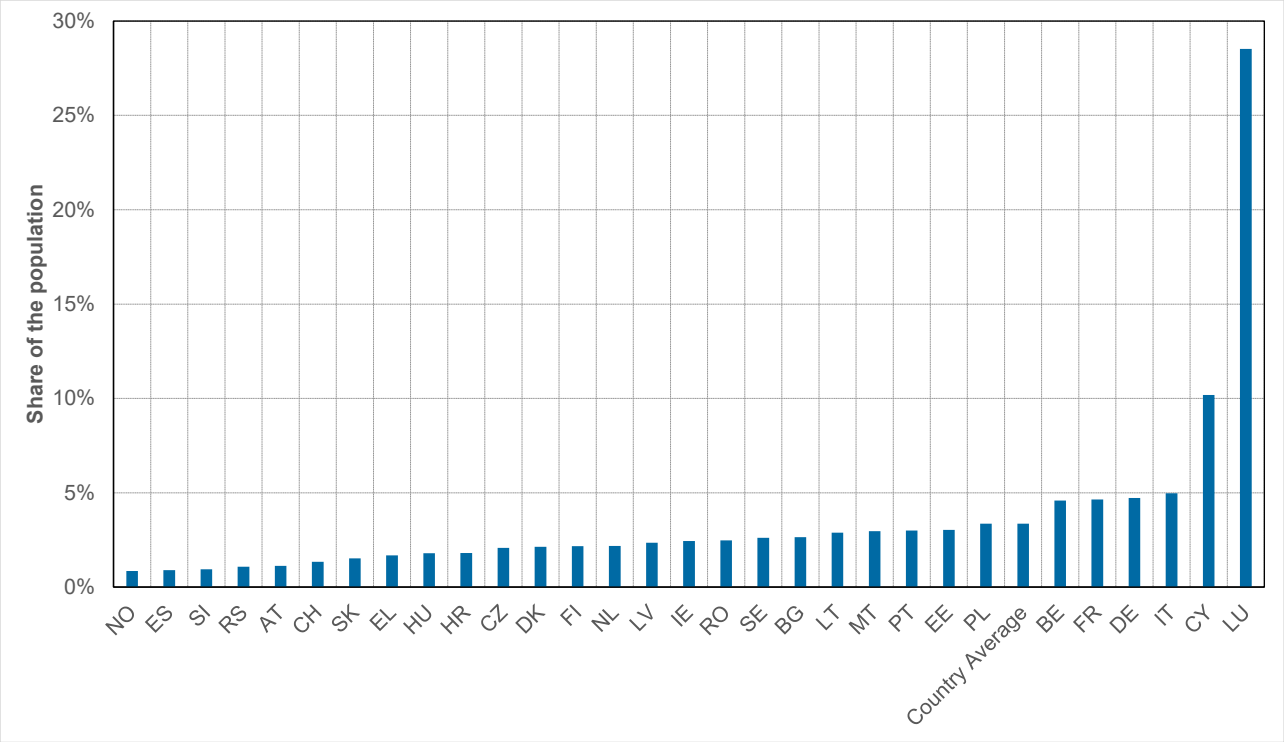
d. Adequacy indicator

Related to the adequacy dimension of transport poverty, the report uses the following indicator: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety and security concerns

Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns

This indicator is based on the response 'Physical access too difficult' or 'Safety or security concerns' to the EU-SILC 6-yearly rolling module 'Access to services' question: 'What is the main reason for not using public transport, or not using it more often?'. The response options are: 'Too expensive,' 'No public transport available in the area,' 'Physical access too difficult,' 'Frequency too low or inconvenient schedules,' 'Too long travel time,' 'Safety or security concerns' and 'Other reason'.

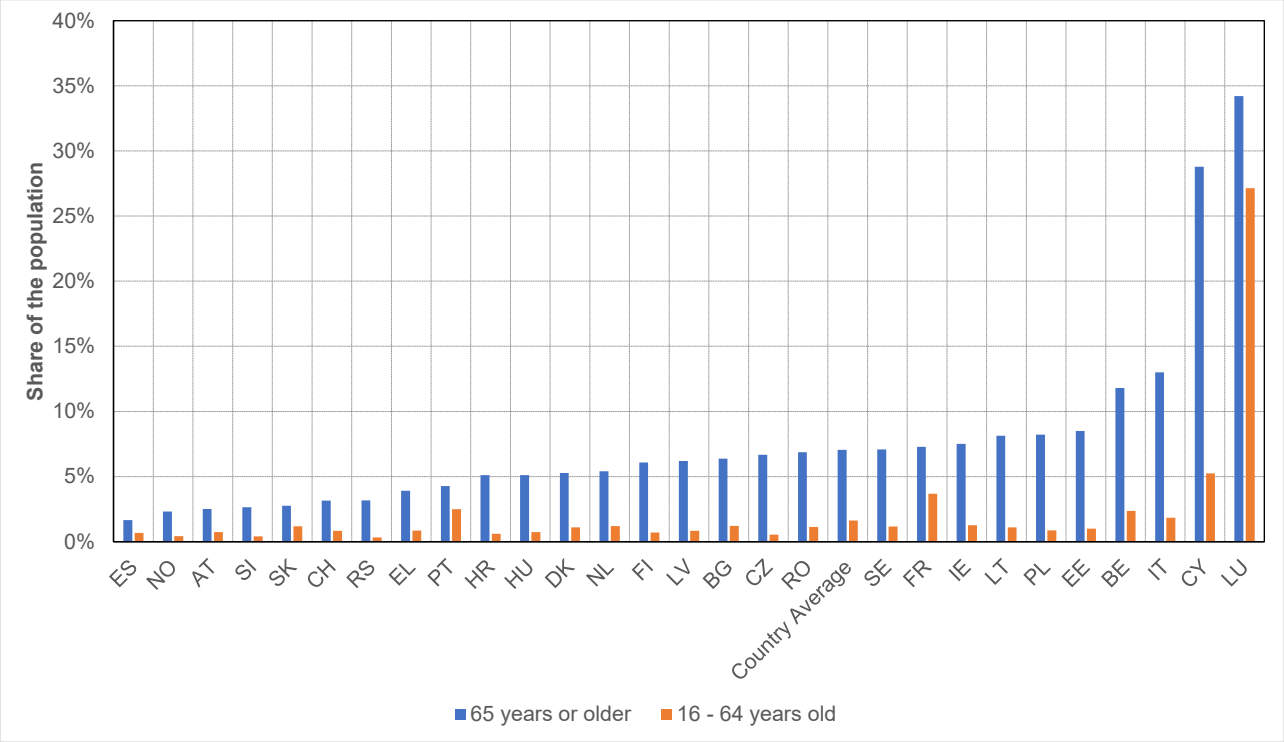
Figure 5-16: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people.

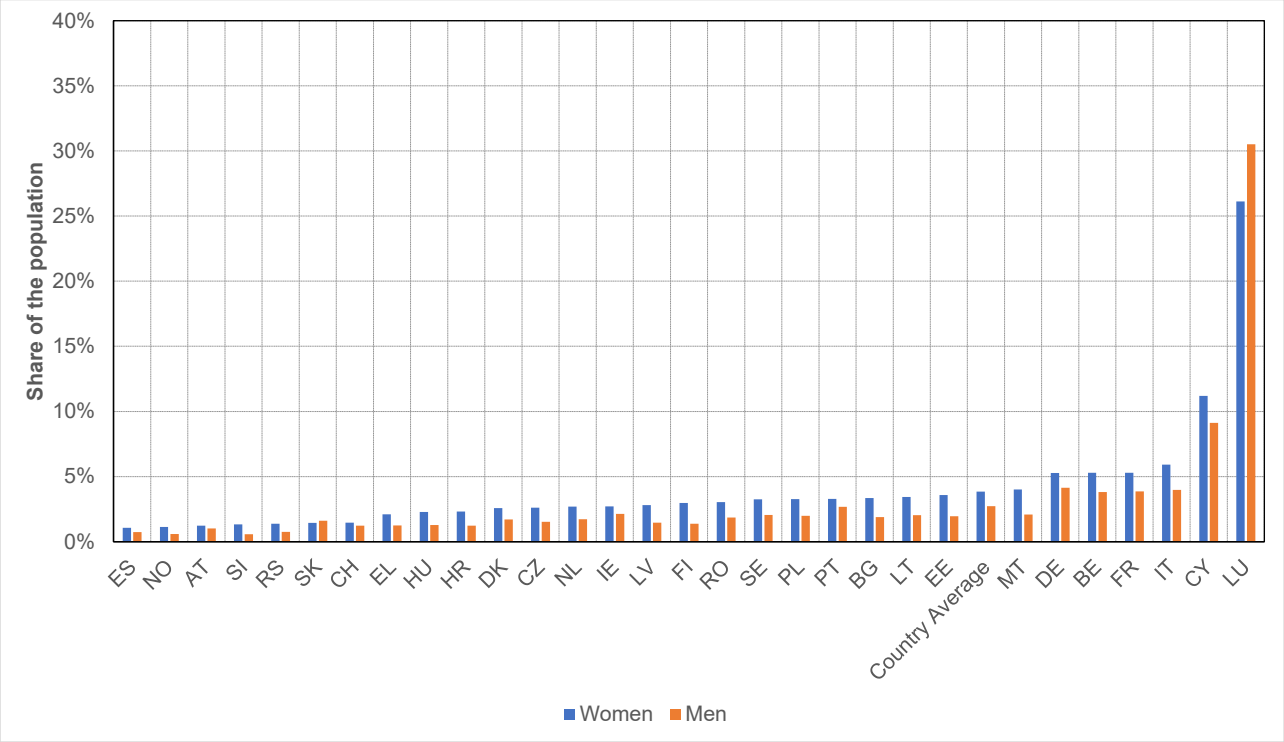
Figure 5-17: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns by age groups, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, NO should be flagged for the category '65 years or older' due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). NO and RS should be flagged for the category '16 – 64 years old' due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations). For DE and MT, no age data is available.

Figure 5-18: Share of the population that does not use public transport because the physical access of public transport is too difficult or they have safety or security concerns by gender, EU-SILC 2024



Source: Oeko-Institut's own calculations based on EU-SILC 2024 microdata.

Notes: The country average is weighted by the number of people. According to Eurostat rules, NO should be due to a low number of observations (20-49 observations).