

How European cities are battling diesel-polluted air

October 9 2018, by Daphne Rousseau With Tom Barfield In Frankfurt



European cities are taking action against car pollution, with diesel engines in the spotlight

A Berlin court ruled Tuesday that older diesel cars must be banned from some major roads in the German capital.

Here is how other major cities around Europe are looking to bring down harmful nitrogen oxides (NO_x) pollution.

Hamburg: full steam ahead

In May, Germany's northern port city became the first in the country to issue a driving ban against older diesels, targeting stretches of two main roads. Proposed bans are looming in other cities including Frankfurt, Berlin and even car industry bastion Stuttgart.

Paris: a grand day out

In the City of Light, authorities have decreed one car-free Sunday each month in central districts between 11am and 6pm, except for major axes.

More occasionally, more extensive no-car days allow pedestrians to meander along historic avenues like the Champs-Elysees untroubled by traffic.

Elsewhere, some of France's most-polluted cities like Marseille, Lyon, Nice and Strasbourg are implementing "low emissions zones" to shut out the dirtiest vehicles.

Rome: weight of history

Roman officials vowed in February to ban private [diesel](#) vehicles from the Eternal City from 2024.

And since 2013, a detour has shielded the ancient arena of the Colosseum from blackening car exhausts.

Fashion and finance hub Milan, meanwhile, will exclude diesel vehicles

from 2025 and plans to achieve "all-electric" status by 2030, shutting out [internal combustion engines](#) altogether.

Brussels: hefty fines

Success for the Belgian and EU capital's pedestrian zone around the central Grand Place—allowing only cyclists, taxis and some delivery vehicles—has been limited, pushing up NO_x levels in other city districts as traffic was diverted.

From January this year, a "low-emissions zone" or LEZ has been in effect, shutting out the most polluting diesels and ratcheting up the number affected each year. Infringers can expect to pay a 350 euro (\$400) fine.

London: toxic tax

One of Europe's most polluted cities, London has imposed a "toxic charge" of 10 pounds (11.40 euros, \$13.04).

That levy comes on top of the 11.50 pounds daily "congestion charge" drivers have paid to enter central London from Monday to Friday since 2003, which has exceptions for electric and low-emissions vehicles.

Madrid: cut-off date

From November 23, Spaniards driving diesels built before 2006 will be barred from the streets of Madrid, with a more forgiving date of 2000 for petrol cars.

The measures affecting up to 20 percent of vehicles registered in the city are expected to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions by 40 percent.

Amsterdam: cycling instead

Cycling-mad Amsterdam has made driving a luxury option, charging an annual fee for a windscreen badge allowing drivers to park their private cars on the street.

Meanwhile, giant bike parks are strewn around the city at strategic spots like main train stations, making it as easy as possible to switch to from four to two wheels.

Oslo: circle the wagons

While the Norwegian capital can issue outright diesel bans on the most polluted days, usually in winter, it is also deterring inner-city driving by slashing parking spaces, blocking direct car routes through the [city](#) centre, pedestrianising some streets and raising toll charges.

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