

EU: BICYCLE SALES OUTNUMBER CAR SALES



There are bicycle-friendly cities scattered all over Europe, with Paris and Amsterdam leading the way. Europeans are known to love their bicycles. They love the two-wheelers so much that they are purchasing more bicycles than cars.

Bicycle sales in 2012 outpaced new-car sales last year in 23 of the 27 member states of the European Union. Belgium and Luxembourg were the two countries where bike sales did not outreach the car sales. Cyprus and Malta were excluded from the statistical analysis as there wasn't data available for comparison. The top countries where bicycle sales outnumbered car purchases include:

Germany - 3,966,000 bicycles over 3,083,000 cars

Britain - 3,600,000 bicycles over 2,045,000 cars

France - 2,835,000 bicycles over 1,899,000 cars

Italy - 1,606,000 bicycles over 1,402,000 cars

Spain - 780,000 bicycles over 700,000 cars

In addition to looking at the countries with the highest number of bicycle sales vs. car sales, researchers also considered countries that had the widest spread between the two. The five leading countries where bicycles outsold cars the most in 2012 include:

Lithuania - 115,000 bicycles over 12,000 cars

Greece - 320,000 bicycles over 58,000 cars

Romania - 380,000 bicycles over 72,000 cars

Slovenia - 250,000 bicycles over 50,000 cars

Hungary - 232,000 bicycles over 53,000 cars

In Groningen, Netherlands, people depend so much on their bicycles that they top the list of the most bike-friendly cities in the world, as reported in The Atlantic. Their 190,000 residents own 75,000 cars and 300,000 bicycles.

It is not a coincidence that there has been a declining trend of automobile purchases in Europe. **The recent recession has negatively impacted peoples' abilities to purchase luxury items, such as cars.** It also doesn't help that the youth of today are not as interested in driving cars as they are in riding bikes as their primary mode of transportation. It is their solution to combatting rising energy prices and urban congestion. Overall, they are also more health-conscious, and tend to be

more aware of what they are eating. They are also more conscious of incorporating exercise into their daily lives.

No wonder Europeans are known for loving their bicycles. They have the numbers to prove it. There is no comparison in North America. Davis, California has been deemed a "bike-friendly" city, with only less than a quarter of its residents commuting to work on bicycles.

At the rate that bicycles are sold in Europe today, market research company Research and Markets estimated that by 2018, the industry will reach \$64.1 billion. The trend into the future will allow for healthier residents and continued environmental improvements. Perhaps this trend is a welcome phenomenon for a better future.

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