

POLIS 2026

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Transport Poverty

MONA in-person training

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Can you get there without a car ?

What is transport poverty?

'Transport poverty' means 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.

(EU Social Climate Fund Regulation, 2023)



Dimensions

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Affordability
- Time poverty
- Inadequate conditions



Who is most affected?

- Low-income individuals
- Young and elderly people
- Vulnerable and marginalized communities
- Women
- People living in rural, peri-urban and remote areas

The car dependency trap

For many households, the car is not a free choice. It is a necessity imposed by the absence of alternatives.

Car dependency means:

- Lack of choice, not freedom of movement
- Vulnerability to fuel price increases
- Economic stress when a car breaks down or becomes unaffordable
- Exclusion when a license is lost due to age or health



Transport poverty as a structural problem

Transport poverty is not primarily the result of individual choices. It is the result of how land use and transport systems have been shaped over decades.



The European policy response

The European Commission adopted a Recommendation on Transport Poverty in May 2025, calling on Member States to combat transport poverty through affordable, accessible and sustainable mobility solutions.

Social Climate Fund: €86.7 billion mobilised 2026–2032 to support vulnerable households and transport users affected by ETS2.

What can be done?

Public transport

Demand-responsive transport

Shared mobility

Social tariffs and mobility budgets

Mobility management and travel support

Resources

Access Denied: Transport Poverty in Europe (2026): https://greenpeace.at/uploads/2026/05/transport_poverty.pdf

Fighting Transport Poverty with the Social Climate Fund (2025): <https://www.polisnetwork.eu/document/fighting-transport-poverty-with-the-social-climate-fund/>

Social Climate Fund: Public Transport and Shared Mobility EGUM

Subgroup (2024): https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f7e54ea5-23aa-4f8d-a24c-9d902fc9652c_en?filename=EGUM_Recommendations_Social-Climate-Fund.pdf

Transport poverty: definitions, indicators, determinants, and mitigation strategies (2024): https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/transport-poverty-definitions-indicators-determinants-and-mitigation-strategies-final-report_en

École de la mobilité inclusive (wimoov): <https://wimoov.org/accompagner/ecole-de-la-mobilite-inclusive/>

