



# SHARING ECONOMY INDEX

# 2024

• VILNIUS IS STILL NUMBER ONE! •

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Challenges are mounting, but the sharing economy endures. The top performers in the index have overwhelmingly remained the same: Vilnius enjoys the top spot, followed closely by Buenos Aires in second place, Madrid (third), Belgrade (fourth), and London (fifth). Unfortunately, venues like Luxembourg City (54th), Sofia (57th), Ljubljana (58th), and Athens (59th) continue to be poor performers. Tokyo has leaped from 56th to 44th in the rankings because it has finally made ride-hailing available. Conversely, Barcelona has dropped from 6th to 20th due to serious regulatory challenges to ride-hailing accessibility in the form of mandatory waiting times and car size requirements. Minsk now occupies the last spot due to the impact of the foreign agents law on business in Belarus.

Many macro attempts to stall the sharing economy have failed compared to last year. The [US Protecting the Right to Organize \(Pro\) Act](#) would have abolished “right to work” laws in 27 states (making it mandatory for non-unionized workers to pay union fees) and forced employers to treat freelancers and independent contractors as employees. However, the bill has languished in Congress for three years and is unlikely to be adopted under the current Trump administration. Similarly, the [European Council’s proposals](#) to change the nature of gig economy work have not come to pass due to [objections](#) from countries like Estonia.

Not all news is good news for the sector. A [recent proposal to hike the value-added tax](#) on online platforms offering rides and flat-sharing has overcome Estonia’s veto, albeit in a watered-down and delayed format (it will become voluntary in July 2028 and mandatory from January 2030).

Most significantly, city authorities have increased efforts to regulate where national authorities could not or would not. San Francisco’s voters have



approved a ride-sharing tax increase ([Proposition L](#)). The measure will most likely not be instituted only because it [received fewer votes](#) than a competing referendum on overhauling business tax (Proposition M). Meanwhile, Paris banned e-scooters in August 2023 based on a referendum with [a turnout of just 7.5%](#), supporting purely speculative safety concerns around user behavior and parking.

Given these realities, we at the Consumer Choice Center ranked 60 cities worldwide to help consumers pick the destination that best fits their sharing economy preferences. We examined several variables ranging from ride-hailing, professional car-sharing, car-pooling, and flat-sharing to gym-sharing, ultra-fast delivery apps, and e-scooters. With the knowledge provided by our ranking, consumers can prevent unnecessary discomfort or unwanted risk on their next journey or night out.

Our fifth edition of the Sharing Economy Index features the most ambitious update to our methodology yet. It is the first sharing economy composite indicator to apply the Ivanovic-distance method based on [academic feedback](#) from the International Conference on Sharing Economy and Contemporary Business Models ([IC-SHARE](#)) in Belgrade. In doing so, it tracks local variations in consumer preferences and the impact of discrete regulations in more statistical detail than ever. This edition further updates the analysis using expert assessments, annual reports, online statistics, news pieces reflecting the latest information, and our research. Considering the feedback from previous iterations, the index features clear definitions of each sharing economy category and explains the new statistical approach in the methodology section below.



# OVERALL SCORE: TOP 5 MOST SHARING-ECONOMY FRIENDLY CITIES WORLDWIDE

COUNTRY	CITY	COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE	RANK
	VILNIUS	16.01270205	1
	BUENOS AIRES	15.17999625	2
	MADRID	14.96747113	3
	BELGRADE	14.96255809	4
	LONDON	14.7935206	5
	WASHINGTON DC	14.7935206	5

## TOTAL RANKINGS

COUNTRY	CITY	COMPOSITE INDEX SCORE	RANK
Lithuania	Vilnius	16.01270205	1
Argentina	Buenos Aires	15.17999625	2
Spain	Madrid	14.96747113	3
Serbia	Belgrade	14.96255809	4
UK	London	14.7935206	5
USA	Washington DC	14.7935206	5
Netherlands	The Hague	14.75003297	7
USA	Nashville	14.73911487	8
Finland	Helsinki	14.55357474	9



Czech Republic	Prague	14.54265664	10
Sweden	Stockholm	14.54265664	10
Switzerland	Zurich	14.54265664	10
USA	Dallas	14.54265664	10
Colombia	Bogota	14.52082043	14
Australia	Sydney	14.49916901	15
Norway	Oslo	14.36870611	16
USA	San Francisco	14.36870611	16
Ireland	Dublin	14.35778801	18
Netherlands	Amsterdam	14.33613658	19
Spain	Barcelona	14.13967836	20
Estonia	Tallinn	14.13882208	21
Mexico	Mexico City	14.13476532	22
Belgium	Brussels	14.12876025	23
Germany	Cologne	14.12876025	23
Portugal	Lisbon	14.12876025	23
Italy	Milan	14.11784215	26
Austria	Vienna	13.95480973	27
Germany	Berlin	13.95480973	27
Switzerland	Geneva	13.95480973	27
USA	Chicago	13.95480973	27
Germany	Munich	13.9113221	31
Germany	Hamburg	13.9113221	31
USA	New York City	13.9113221	31
USA	Philadelphia	13.88951756	34
France	Paris	13.75905466	35
Italy	Rome	13.70394576	36
Romania	Bucharest	13.49656943	37
Georgia	Tbilisi	13.4916564	38
UAE	Dubai	13.42463358	39
Croatia	Zagreb	13.31152833	40
Hungary	Budapest	13.27507452	41
Chile	Santiago	13.06769818	42
Brazil	Sao Paulo	12.94712465	43
Japan	Tokyo	12.85414432	44



Latvia	Riga	12.79244276	45
Slovakia	Bratislava	12.67933751	46
China	Shanghai	12.61507409	47
Taiwan	Taipei	12.12225993	48
Poland	Warsaw	11.50699228	49
Ukraine	Kyiv	11.06034158	50
Denmark	Copenhagen	11.03569882	51
Turkey	Istanbul	10.78483486	52
Costa Rica	San Jose	10.64730148	53
Luxembourg	Luxembourg City	10.59982543	54
Cyprus	Nicosia	10.53610722	55
Malta	Valletta	10.30345718	56
Bulgaria	Sofia	9.666811798	57
Slovenia	Ljubljana	9.508591194	58
Greece	Athens	9.421615931	59
Belarus	Minsk	8.156866484	60



Similar to previous entries, no city achieved a perfect score, leaving room for policy improvements in the sharing economy. Vilnius comes closest once again thanks to its desire to harness network effects via investment into the sharing economy and the population's generally positive image of the sector. Home to native enterprises like Citybee (car-sharing and e-scooter services), Trumpam (flat-sharing), and the [€100 million \(\\$108.9 million\) Tech Zity hub](#), Vilnius will soon boast the largest tech campus outside the United States. The site is [55,000 square meters \(592,015 sq ft\)](#) and is being built in the Naujamiestis district through private efforts to help sharing economy startups benefit from the proximity to Lithuania's tech stars Vinted and Nord VPN. Regular Lithuanians also value the sharing economy, with the [latest Eurostat and Eurobarometer figures](#) showing that 61% of people in the Baltic country value the industry's work flexibility, even though [less than 1 in 5](#) works or has worked in the sector.

Of course, some problems persist - the [occupancy tax on flat-sharing](#) is still in place, and the firm Teltonika has shelved its plans for the [High-Tech Hill park in the Liepkalnis area of Vilnius](#). Though local and national authorities often fail to engage with the consequences of European-level legislation like the Digital Markets Act and its effects on the Lithuanian market, their willingness to attract and retain tech talent gives reasons for future optimism.

The runner-ups, Buenos Aires and Madrid, remain unchanged. The Argentine Central Bank's [complicated and confusing regulatory process](#) for any fintech company remains a substantial barrier to more sharing economy initiatives in the country, as are Madrid's special permits and taxes on ride-hailing and flat-sharing.

On the other hand, the change in methodology has revealed shortcomings that were not as previously evident in some cities. Barcelona's steep decline from 6th to 20th position is due to highly stringent ride-hailing rules. Unlike any other entry in the index, Barcelona requires any vehicle registered on a ride-hailing

app to [measure at least 4.9 meters](#), which is longer than the average five-door car. This requirement alone means that many regular drivers cannot register as independent drivers. Unsurprisingly, the number of licensed vehicles for hire is low (at only 1,455 in the entire province of Catalonia). Moreover, consumers are legally required to book their trips [15 minutes in advance](#), raising transaction costs (wasted time, money, and effort) with no benefit to passengers. In reality, such policies only benefit the more numerous incumbent taxi companies who have aggressively [lobbied against free and fair competition](#) to the detriment of workers and consumers alike.

Other cases reveal the problems with any regulation that disturbs market supply and demand. New York City has decided to tackle its housing crisis by making most flat-sharing options impossible in its jurisdiction. Rules like forcing owners to register with the city to host anyone for temporary rentals [equal to or shorter than 30 days](#), remaining present on-site for the whole duration of a guest's stay, and forbidding any rental for more than two guests are intended to make landlords exit the short-term market and offer their housing to the broader public. Far from helping solve New York's housing crisis, the policy has generated a [large black market in rentals](#), exposing consumers traveling with their families to completely unnecessary risks just to have the chance to be tourists in the city. At the same time, it has failed to increase the available housing supply to the point where the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in August 2024 was [\\$4,500](#), making New York City the most expensive place to rent a home in America.

Instead of trying to control owners' and consumers' individual preferences, New York City should reconsider its rent control laws. Numerous [meta-analyses](#) have shown how such price ceilings lead to higher prices in uncontrolled units, a lower supply of rental accommodation, and fewer new housing units being built, leading to a depression in the quality of existing housing stock and a



lowering in housing mobility.

In positive news, Japan has finally overcome [opposition from special interest groups](#) and allowed ride-sharing in Tokyo. For now, private individuals can provide ride-sharing services through the more comprehensive network in only [23 districts within the city](#), and activity is under strict supervision out of purported safety concerns. This regime is in place despite evidence from other countries that ride-hailing is the safest transportation option - ahead of taxis, public transportation, or professional car services for [75% of American women](#). Nonetheless, the availability of the service in Japan is a testament to the sharing economy's adaptability and forward march worldwide.

It sparks hope that other venues that score very low on our list due to lack of availability (like Sofia, Ljubljana, Athens, and Minsk) will one day open up to innovation. Athens and Sofia have yet to allow ride-hailing, feature absent or partial fintech regulations, and impose the most considerable restrictions on sharing economy services. Minsk applies restrictions on all overseas activity, sharing economy included, based on its version of the [foreign agents' law](#). This makes any non-governmental organization criminally liable for receiving foreign grants and donations against local legislation - a reminder that the rule of law is a prerequisite for any semblance of predictable policy and flourishing industry.

## **Implications and benefits for consumers**

There are several advantages to choosing one of the top five cities, such as multiple affordable options for ride-hailing, carpooling, and car sharing, certainty and safety for borrowers and lenders engaged in peer-to-peer exchanges, accessible libraries, frequentable gyms anywhere in the city, the convenience of ultra-fast delivery, and an easy means of transportation on hand in the form of e-scooters.

- Top 5 (and top 10) picks offer the best experience all around.
- On a positive note, the availability of sharing economy services continued to increase overall. Far more cities feature carpooling (in Tallinn and Tbilisi, for instance), ultra-fast delivery apps, and e-scooters than ever before. Japan has finally allowed ride-hailing in Tokyo, albeit in a highly restricted, cautious format, while Luxembourg is still contemplating authorization.
- Negatively, the same regulatory barriers in 2023 continue to apply this year, with most accessibility scores remaining unchanged. More worryingly, measures like San Francisco's Proposition L and the ban on Airbnb in Budapest's Terezvaros District indicate a trend towards more restrictionist future policies.

**Research note:** *We strive to improve the quality of this index's underlying data every year and aim to refine its methodology further. Even under the new and improved methods, the unreliability of underlying reports remains an issue. Hence, we sometimes face contradictory information and news developments. This was particularly the case for financial regulatory assessments, where regulations continue to evolve. As such, we relied on the existing opinions of experts in the field (either in academia or the financial sector) to bolster our approach. We ask the index readers to acknowledge the difficulties in working with heterogeneous data and caution users to be aware of the underlying complications.*

*Furthermore, what makes a city "good" for each individual can have a distinct qualitative element. Please remember, then, that our assessments are strictly quantitative and non-normative. We are not passing moral judgment on a city's goodness and badness or downplaying personal experiences by ranking one city lower. We are simply highlighting measurable conclusions based on the data available at the time of this index.*

# Methodology

The most significant change to methodology has come from the way the index handles aggregation and how it weighs variables.

Previous editions used an equal weighting method, though allowing for hierarchical results across dimensions. Ride-hailing always resulted in a maximum tally of 40 points, and every regulation would cost 5 points, though other categories like gym and library sharing awarded fewer points. The result was a simple sum aggregation scheme - hence, the total score added together all nine variables to reach a maximum of 160. This resulted in an informative report that was simultaneously easy for consumers and policymakers to understand.

However, adding new entries alongside extra dimensions makes the older model increasingly untenable. Unlike train stations or airports, this composite indicator operates with radically different aspects of the sharing economy, which capture separate markets and consumers. As a result, consumers from various cities and parts of the world may value each element differently, something an equal weighting fails to capture.

Once more regulations enter the mix, it becomes harder to grasp just how much more damaging a specific barrier to accessibility can be than another. Is Barcelona's mandatory 15-minute wait time really equal to Tokyo's district restrictions, or is it worse? If the latter, then by how much? The index intends to measure such questions in more detail than merely giving the authors' judgment of the scenarios.

For these reasons, the index introduces another layer of statistics through data envelopment analysis via Ivanovic-distance metrics. Put simply, the method

treats every variable as a category in itself but standardizes the overall results by using the lowest possible values for each variable as a common yardstick. This technique means there is less influence for a single high category on the overall results of a city (respecting consumers' diverse preferences). It allows us to directly measure the negative impact of additional rules and restrictions on the sharing economy, providing a clearer picture for policymakers to act on.

To ease readers into the change, the maximum base points an entry can receive remains 160 points.

**The number that determines the rankings, though, is the composite indicator score. The maximum value it can theoretically achieve (assuming a perfect fictitious city with no harmful regulations and all sharing economy services allowed) is 16.2273705. The higher the indicator score's value, the larger the distance from the base Ivanovic value and, consequently, the higher the city's ranking.**

#### 1) Ride-hailing (availability and accessibility)

We define ride-hailing as hiring a private driver and vehicle through a general platform to reach an agreed-upon destination. Companies provide a network bringing together willing passengers and drivers. Unlike car sharing, the vehicle is not rented out to a client-driver for extended periods of time, and unlike carpooling, only one consumer uses the service. Ride-hailing is available if no regulatory barriers prevent its presence on the market. It is accessible if there are no onerous rules and taxation in place. An urban destination where ride-hailing is available and accessible is where consumers enjoy the comfort of affordable rides anywhere and anytime.

Meanwhile, drivers reap the full benefits of flexible employment that would otherwise not exist. Conversely, a city where ride-hailing is not available nor

accessible deprives workers of opportunities and leaves consumers with fewer, more expensive options. We discounted cases where ride-sharing is de facto controlled by traditional taxi companies (Istanbul, Sofia, Athens).

The category nets a maximum of 40 points.

Availability = 20 points

No availability = 0 points

Accessibility with no restrictions = 20 points

Restrictions (licensing and permits, taxation, return-to-garage norms, technical approval, and others) are present = -5 points deducted from the “accessibility” score per inconvenience

## 2) Carpooling

Carpooling allows multiple consumers to share the same ride, making for a hassle-free return from a night out or an exciting journey together. If carpooling is available through an app or an online platform, the city receives 10 points.

## 3) Professional car sharing

Car sharing involves the long-term rental of a private vehicle for a driver provided by another individual or company via sharing economy platforms. The category awards 30 maximum points. A city earns 20 points if car sharing is available. It receives an additional 10 points when the service is peer-to-peer (among private owners, with no company car fleet involved).

## 4) Ultra-fast delivery apps

Ultra-fast delivery apps deliver restaurant orders to a consumers' doorstep in 15 minutes or less. A city that offers such apps scores an additional 10 points.

## 5) Peer-to-peer lending (availability and accessibility)

Peer-to-peer lending enables consumers to obtain loans directly from lenders

through a fintech network. The website or app sets the rates and terms of the transaction (depending on the creditworthiness of potential borrowers). Peer-to-peer lending empowers those who would otherwise not be able to obtain a loan through traditional banking to do so. Alternatively, it facilitates lower rates for borrowers and more advantageous returns for lenders.

Availability denotes the absence of legislative hurdles to establishing a peer-to-peer lending business in that city. Accessibility assesses the overall regulatory framework based on whether it has allowed the industry to thrive or has had a stifling effect on the practice.

We have developed multiple criteria to reflect expert analyses best. In our index, peer-to-peer lending regulations can be low burden, complicated, uncertain, or an overall regulatory framework may be absent.

The designation “low burden” is for financial rules that have allowed companies to grow and develop, reflecting the sharing economy’s full potential to improve consumer well-being.

Although “complicated” regulations are well-specified, their complexity causes extensive compliance issues, hampering the sector.

“Uncertain” norms for peer-to-peer lending create an environment where firms must expend considerable attention and resources to adjust to ever-changing political expectations. This situation leaves very little room for future investment and for taking the risk of a loan, severely stunting peer-to-peer lending.

The final category is that of “absent regulatory framework”. We reserve the phrase for cities that apply traditional banking regulations to the fintech sector. Thus, peer-to-peer lending is reduced to holding funds and acting as a prime lender, abandoning its unique position as an intermediary connecting

independent borrowers and lenders. We treat it as the worst possible outcome (besides a straight ban) because it denies consumers the positives of the sharing economy's financial model.

The peer-to-peer lending classification can net a city a maximum of twenty points.

Availability = 20 points

Low burden = 0 points deducted

Complicated = -5 points deducted

Uncertain = -10 points deducted

Absent regulatory framework = -15 points deducted

## 6) Gym sharing

Gym sharing allows consumers to access any fitness studio or gym in a network just by opening an app on their phones. If gym sharing is available, then the city receives 10 points.

## 7) Library sharing

Consumers can use library-sharing apps and websites to navigate multiple libraries at their leisure. We separate such innovations from conventional inter-library systems like university ones (allowing for the exchange of materials between libraries, not private individuals). The presence of library sharing earns a city 10 points.

## 8) Flat sharing (availability and accessibility)

Thanks to flat sharing, consumers do not need to rely solely on hotels when traveling abroad. Instead, they can contact owners eager to list their house for short- or long-term rental and enjoy the comfort of home even in another city. The availability of flat sharing depends on whether the local authorities recognize such a rental arrangement in the first place. Its accessibility is

dictated by special permits, taxes, and upper limits on how many days one can rent accommodation.

The highest number of points a city can obtain for this category is 20. Every regulation equals a deduction from the total.

Availability = 20 points

Permit = -5 points deducted

Taxes = -5 points deducted

Limited days:  $\geq 60$  days = - 5 points deducted

Limited days for every 30 days above 60 = 1 point deducted less (90 days = -4 points, 120 days = - 3 points, and so on)

Other restrictive interventions = -5 points deducted

## 9) E-scooters

Electric kick scooters (e-scooters) are stand-up motorized scooters integrated into the sharing economy. Consumers can find them at standard docking stations and rent them for fixed periods. A city receives 10 points if e-scooters are available.



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# ABOUT THE CONSUMER CHOICE CENTER



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The Consumer Choice Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending the rights of consumers around the world. Our mission is to promote freedom of choice, healthy competition, and evidence-based policies that benefit consumers. We work to ensure that consumers have access to a variety of quality products and services and can make informed decisions about their lifestyle and consumption.

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