



Press release

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KBC Market Research : 2 in 3 Belgians want to move to more sustainable mobility in next 5 years but encounter many barriers.

Multi-mobility top of mind but the car is still king due to lack of alternatives.

Mobility is something that affects everyone. Individuals are seeking solutions for better mobility or to avoid journeys, companies are suffering economic losses due to immobility, and governments are directing all their focus towards sustainable mobility.

In collaboration with DataSynergy, KBC conducted an online survey examining (sustainable) mobility among approximately 1 000 Belgians aged between 18 and 69. In the survey, KBC probed the importance of the car today and in the future, as well as people's willingness to switch to more sustainable forms of mobility such as electric cars, public transport and shared mobility.

A few key conclusions:

- The car is still king, but we are seeing a (growing) shift to 100% electric driving.
- Two out of three Belgians (mainly Brussels residents, Francophones and city-dwellers) would like to switch to more sustainable forms of mobility in the next five years.
- The switch to more sustainable mobility still faces many obstacles: it is too inflexible, not reliable enough, costs time and money and is not sufficiently available.
- Belgians mainly look to the government or transport companies to support this transition to sustainable mobility.
- The government's mobility budget remains largely unknown.

Additional analysis by KBC's economic research department further shows that:

- The structural saturation of the car market means that car sales in the coming years will be driven mainly by replacement demand. Car-sharing, telecommuting, climate change, increasing congestion, policies to discourage car use and the fact that fewer and fewer young adults drive cars are all contributing factors. Despite this, 70 000 young people still try to obtain a driving licence every year.
- Steadily increasing economic activity leads to more mobility. As a result, Belgium has become one of the most congested countries in Europe in recent years.

- The greater diversity and complexity of the various forms of cohabitation (newly formed families, single parents, LAT relationships, cohabiting young couples, single-person households, and so on) affect the mobility behaviour and needs of households. The resulting changes in living and working patterns are also changing people's mobility needs and requirements. Easy access to transport is becoming more important than vehicle ownership. Flexible, smart mobility solutions are intended to provide this access.
- Most journeys (60%) are made for leisure purposes (shopping, sports and hobbies), and the KBC research department expects this share of total journeys to increase further due to rising prosperity and demographic/social trends (growing population of older and single people).
- On the other hand, digitalisation and environmental/climate awareness may lead to changing leisure experiences, with fewer and/or shorter journeys (e.g. visiting a museum using virtual/augmented reality, more holidays closer to home, etc.).
- The KBC research department concludes that the car is likely to remain dominant as it offers the only realistically viable solution in many cases. But there is clear evidence of more creativity around mobility. Multimodality has become top-of-mind for all generations.

Given the above analysis and observations, what might be the possible solutions?

KBC has invested heavily in recent years to meet changing demand and needs in relation to mobility and to enable Belgians to save time and money when they use the more sustainable and flexible mobility solutions KBC offers them.

Karin Van Hoecke, General Manager of Digital Transformation & Data at KBC Belgium: *'KBC is a customer-focused company with a clear social role. Although our market research shows that Belgians do not initially turn to their bank or insurer for this, KBC still wants to be a reliable partner in the transition to sustainable mobility. KBC believes it can make a positive contribution and wants to offer solutions to its customers. In this sense, mobility fits in perfectly with KBC's strategy.'*

KBC is already well equipped to be or become the reference in mobility. KBC covers all aspects of mobility in relation to financing, insurance, leasing and assistance, all under one roof. With companies such as KBC Insurance, KBC Autolease and VAB, KBC has access to market leaders and highly respected discussion partners within specific areas of mobility. These companies pool their expertise to increase their clout and further improve customer service.

But we go further in making life easier for our customers. Thanks to our third-party services in KBC Mobile, and with the support of Kate, the personal digital assistant who helps customers use KBC Mobile to search for solutions, we can answer any need or question in relation to transport at any time of the day. This service is not just offered to KBC customers: non-customers can also purchase train, tram and bus tickets from SNCB, De Lijn and STIB in KBC Mobile without having to open an account.

We are pleased to note that a recent survey showed that our efforts are paying off and KBC is currently considered by the majority of respondents to be the mobility partner of choice.'

A few figures (as of the end of September 2024) illustrate how KBC customers are actively using the mobility solutions offered in the user-friendly KBC Mobile:

- 1 159 000 tickets purchased from De Lijn, 1 000 000 tickets from SNCB, and 3 700 tickets from STIB
- 10 200 rides in Cambio shared cars, 10 400 rides on shared bikes
- 1.4 million parking sessions (4411 app) and 88 400 Q-Park sessions
- 15 000 Belgians apply to take their driving test each year through VAB

DETAILS OF MARKET SURVEY DataSynergy: Car is still king

The market survey shows that the car is still the most popular mode of transport, and this is unlikely to change any time soon:

- Almost one out of two respondents use a car (almost) daily and no fewer than 80% use a car at least once a week.
- At the same time, we are noticing an increasing focus on electric driving, with 6% of respondents already driving 100% electric, and 53% of the remaining respondents considering switching to an electric vehicle in the future.

Two out of three respondents would like to switch to more sustainable mobility in the next five years, but there are still many obstacles to overcome

More sustainable mobility (public transport, shared mobility and electric vehicles), is gaining in importance. Two out of three respondents said they planned to increase their use of sustainable mobility in the next five years. Those living in Brussels and urban areas, in particular, are willing to make this switch. Many companies are actively making the transition to more sustainable mobility, for example by offering a subscription to public transport, or leasing electric cars or bicycles.

The KBC Autolease fleet currently contains around 32 000 bikes (61.5% electric and 16% speed pedelecs). 40% of the total fleet consists of electric cars, and 87% of the cars ordered in 2024 are electric.

Yet there is still a lot of resistance to more sustainable mobility, mainly among people aged over 55.

- Those who would like to buy an electric vehicle in principle are mainly put off by the high purchase cost, uncertainty about battery life/range and limited charging infrastructure. Despite this, KBC is seeing a huge increase in the number of loans for the purchase of an electric vehicle:
 - **An increase of 140% in the number of loans for electric cars (YTD)**
 - **An increase of 16% in the number of bicycle loans (YTD)**
- **38% consider public transport to be unreliable** and 45% claim their journeys take longer. However, KBC notes that **more than 1 159 000 De Lijn tickets, 1 000 000 SNCB tickets and 3 700 STIB tickets were purchased** through KBC Mobile this year. **The number has been increasing for years.**
- The move towards shared mobility also still faces a lot of resistance. **One in four respondents find it too much hassle** to get started, and **27% of respondents said there was no shared mobility scheme active in their neighbourhood**. Knowledge about shared mobility schemes is also fairly low (21% do not know enough about them). KBC is mainly seeing **increasing interest in car sharing**. There were 28% more trips recorded using the Cambio car-sharing scheme in the first half of 2024 (compared to 2023). Olympus Mobility, a loyal partner of KBC, says the supply of shared cars/bikes has increased in recent years, both in terms of distribution and availability, to such an extent that virtually every location in Flanders and Brussels can be reached using multi-/shared mobility.
- One in two of those surveyed said they are less likely to choose public transport or a shared mobility scheme because they are satisfied with their current mode of transport.

Mobility budget is largely unknown

Only **7%** of respondents currently make use of the **mobility budget**: an agreement between employer and employee which allows employees to exchange a company car for an annual budget that can be spent on an environmentally friendly company car, sustainable means of transport and housing costs.

Interestingly, 77% have only heard about the mobility budget by name, or are not aware of it at all. The mobility budget is also unknown among people with a company car, with only 27% being familiar with it and only 8% saying they use it.

Added to this, only four in ten say it would persuade them to switch to a more sustainable form of mobility. The main reason for not switching to mobility budgets is that people want to have access to their cars at all times.

Belgians mainly spontaneously look to the government (54%) and transport companies (42%) to support the transition to more sustainable mobility. Only one in ten respondents expect help from their bank or insurer.

SURVEY BY KBC ECONOMIC RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Hans Dewachter, KBC Chief Economist explains: *'The steadily growing economic activity in Belgium is leading to more mobility: more commuting as new jobs are added, more transportation of goods, etc.). The continuing advance of e-commerce is also having an effect on mobility. On the one hand, people are travelling to bricks-and-mortar shops less frequently, but this is offset by the increasingly frequent deliveries, leading to a big increase in the proportion of delivery vans in traffic. Yet car ownership is nearing its saturation point and car sales in the future will be driven mainly for replacement demand. In addition, societal, technological and other changes are leading to a less car-dependent lifestyle. Think of factors such as car-sharing, telecommuting, growing congestion, or the high cost of car ownership. Young adults in particular are driving cars less and less and postponing getting their driver's license. Nonetheless, in 2023, 186 000 Belgians were still trying to get their driver's license, and there are just under 15 000 students this year for the B license through VAB.*

There is also wide diversity and great complexity in terms of forms of cohabitation (e.g. more single-person households), and living and working are also becoming more flexible and dynamic. This accordingly calls for flexible, tailor-made mobility solutions which allow the customer to choose which means of transport is best for them at any given time. These trends mean that access to transport is becoming more important than possession and that people are both literally and figuratively pausing to think about their future mobility.'

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