

PRESS RELEASE

TOP 10 – The most polluted environmental zones in Europe – Lyon ranks far ahead of Madrid and Wiesbaden in Germany

Berlin, 18.09.2019. The Green-Zones portal has determined in which European environmental zones the highest levels of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), harmful to humans and the environment, occurred in 2019.

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) cause many harmful effects on the environment, especially on the bronchi of every human being. The NO_x emissions are produced by road traffic (e.g. diesel engines) and coal, oil, gas and wood combustion plants.

To protect human health from nitrogen dioxide, a 1-hour limit value of 200 µg/m³ has therefore been set throughout Europe. For the average of the year, a maximum average value of only 40 µg/m³ applies in Europe.

For this reason, too, driving bans should be imposed in European environmental zones not only in case of high concentration of particulate matter and ozone, but also in case of extremely high NO_x levels. However, such a rule is currently only valid in a few countries, so that extremely high NO_x levels can occur unhindered in most German environmental zones.

The French town of Pau, just a few kilometres from the pilgrimage site of Lourdes on the edge of the Pyrenees, ranks among the **last** European environmental zones with the highest NO_x values (hourly average in micrograms/m³), where a maximum NO_x value of 142 µg/m³ was measured in February 2019, and a driving ban was not imposed.

The Spanish city of Barcelona and the German environmental zones are ranked **in the middle**, where NO_x values of 164-171 µg/m³ were reached in February and June 2019, as confirmed by the official measurements of the German Federal Environment Agency.

The French city of Lyon ranks **1st** among the most polluted environmental zones in Europe. On 27.06.2019, the highest NO_x value to date of 216 µg/m³ was reached as 1-hour average value in environmental zones, which led to an immediate driving ban for more than 60% of all vehicles in the region until July.

Find below a table with the TOP-10 zones. All details for each environmental zone in Europe can be viewed by clicking on the links in the table.

The TOP rankings of Europe's environmental zones will continue in the summer months – followed by evaluations of the “largest”, “smallest”, “most polluted”, “oldest”, “newest”, “most beautiful”, “most dangerous” and “most unusual” environmental zones in Europe.

The Berlin-based company Green-Zones provides information about permanent and weather-dependent (temporary) environmental zones in Europe and in the respective European countries through its portals green-zones.eu, umweltplakette.de, crit-air.fr and blaue-plakette.de, among others. Thanks to the free Green-Zones app and the professional app (Fleet-App), tourists and especially commercial users (e.g. bus and transport companies) can obtain reliable information in real time about the current environmental zones. The required [badges and registrations](#) are also available from Green-Zones.