

Social Rights Monitor 2025 - Country Report - France



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About SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR is a European network of progressive Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. We represent over 50 member organisations based in 26 countries (19 of which are EU countries), among which national CSOs in Europe, as well as some non-EU and EU-wide organisations, working in one or more of our fields of activity.

The network is brought together by its shared values of solidarity, equality and participation.

SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions by carrying out advocacy actions, project management and coordination, policy monitoring and awareness-raising across its different policy areas.

What is the Social Rights Monitor (SRM)?

The Social Rights Monitor assesses the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) at national level from a civil society perspective. The EPSR – also known as the Social Pillar – is a set of 20 principles that guide the action of the European Union in the realm of social affairs and policies. In other words, it is intended to be a compass guiding the EU towards a more social Europe. For too many people, however, the implementation of these principles at national and EU level is not yet a reality.

Thanks to the contribution of our members and their networks on the ground (the National Strategy Groups), SOLIDAR monitors the extent to which social rights are respected, upheld and promoted for all people living in the EU. The Social Rights Monitor also investigates the health of civic space and social and civil dialogue in the EU, as well as the extent to which a just transition is being pursued. Therefore, the thematic areas covered by the Monitor are the following: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; Fair working conditions; Social inclusion and protection; a Just transition; and Civic space. The first three correspond to the three chapters of the EPSR, while the last two have been added to give a fuller picture of social justice in Europe.

Thanks to first-hand data gathered by national civil society organisations, the Social Rights Monitor constitutes a direct channel of policy recommendations between the national level and EU policymakers. It thus amplifies the voices and needs of the most marginalised groups. The Monitor dedicates a section to “advocacy messages” which result from the national-level analyses in each thematic area and are addressed to EU policymakers.

Countries are assigned a score for each thematic area out of a maximum of 100 points. This makes immediately visible how each country is performing in each area and enables comparison with other countries. The numerical scores originate from the National Strategy Groups’ (NSGs) assessments of national developments related to social rights, civic space and just transition. Negative developments in an area result in lower scores. NSGs rate these developments for each country by replying to Linkert-scale questions. This means that the score of a country’s thematic area is given by adding up all the rates given to the questions concerning that thematic area and expressing the score out of 100. The overall score of a country is the average of the thematic areas scores. Further details on the questionnaire and data gathering are provided in the section “About: What is the process?”

Since the SRM score reflects the NSG’s assessment of changes—either improvements or deteriorations—in each of the five areas over the past 12 months, it does not represent the overall status of these dimensions in absolute terms. Instead, it highlights recent trends. For example, a country with a historically strong welfare state might receive a low score if recent reforms have significantly weakened social rights or pose a risk of doing so. This does not imply that the overall situation is poor, but rather that recent developments are cause for concern and may undermine social standards over time.

Therefore, the SRM should not be used to compare the overall situation of social rights across countries—official statistics are more appropriate for that purpose. Instead, it serves as a tool to track short-term national trends and to understand the perspectives of civil society organizations (CSOs) on these developments.

What is the process?

The Social Rights Monitor is a tool that amplifies the voice of progressive civil society at national level. Its content is based on the inputs provided by the National Strategy Groups (NSGs) set up by SOLIDAR’s members and partners, which are active in the countries analysed. They consist of NGOs, associations, movements, trade unions, academia and thinktanks, ensuring that the perspective of civil society is mirrored in the Social Rights Monitor’s analysis. The Monitor reflects the experiences of these organisations, which are active on the ground, and the experiences are complemented by scientific data gathered through desk research.

The data elaborated in the Social Rights Monitor are gathered by SOLIDAR’s secretariat through a questionnaire distributed to the National Strategy Group Leaders (our national members) and completed with information produced by each group. From 2023, this questionnaire has been carried out online.

Based on the picture that emerges from the Monitor, SOLIDAR and the NSGs together devise policy recommendations for EU policymakers. These aim to make social rights, a healthy planet and an enabling, free, protected civic space a reality for all in Europe. The key recommendations stemming from the analysis are used as a basis for SOLIDAR's social affairs advocacy work.

The SRM is published every year, around the end of November/beginning of December and its findings cover the period going from June of the previous year to May of the year of the publication. This timeline is due to the fact that the NSGs submit their questionnaire by the end of May of the publication year.

How do we use it?

SOLIDAR's main role as a European-level civil society network is as a bridge between EU institutions and their policies on the one hand and our progressive members working at the national level on the other. The Social Rights Monitor is a valuable tool to gather information from the ground and bring it to policymakers' attention. This ensures that the voices of the most neglected social groups are duly taken into account. For example, the SRM complements the European Semester, by providing a more-complete assessment of Member State policies. Regrettably, the Semester is still too focused on countries' economic and financial performances and does not provide sufficient guidance on upward social convergence in the European Union.

SOLIDAR disseminates the findings of the Social Rights Monitor in various ways, including through the Social Europe Conference, an annual event at which it is presented, and which also explores a topic of priority for social Europe. More generally, the Monitor is one of the main ways through which the SOLIDAR network presents its positions on social affairs, so its findings are mainstreamed throughout our advocacy work.

Social Rights Monitor Overview

SCORE: 32

France has declined in all five categories of the Social Rights Monitor despite minor improvements in some areas, the NSG reports. In schools, ability-based grouping was introduced in an attempt to address the heterogeneity of classes, despite history and research showing that such grouping does not have a positive effect on diversity in classrooms. Education is also suffering from budget cuts and a lack of political will to pass important legislation. Other policy areas, too, such as the social and solidarity economy and access to sustainable mobility, have been held back by a lack of policy initiatives and the non-implementation of existing legislation. This inactivity is difficult to understand, given the political interest expressed in previous years. Positive measures to eradicate poverty have been maintained from previous years, yet their impact has been reduced by the introduction of an activity requirement to receive the minimum income benefit. Lastly, the climate for civil society actors has worsened significantly and become hostile, the NSG reports. Attacks on them and on civil rights in general include heavy police presence and violence at protests and bans on protests and funding cuts for associations that express opinions diverging from those of the government.

The NSG for France was led by SOLIDAR's member [La ligue de l'enseignement](#).



Equal Opportunities and Access to the Labour Market

SCORE: 22

Education, training and lifelong learning

Several key legislative initiatives have been taken in education policy, the NSG reports. Following a substantial transformation of the French education system in 2023,[1] reforms in 2024 reflected political choices that did not balance equal opportunities, efficiency and budget management. The “Choc des savoirs” (knowledge shock), for example, introduces ability-based groupings in middle schools for French and mathematics.[2] It thus segregates high-scoring and lower-scoring students. Two civil society organizations – the Comité pour les relations nationales et internationales des associations de jeunesse et d’éducation populaire (CNAJEP) and the Centres d’Entraînement aux Méthodes d’Éducation Active (CEMÉA) – warned that the move could increase social inequalities by creating socially homogenous groups. As Philippe Meirieu, on behalf of CEMÉA, stated: “At school, with the ‘Choc des Savoirs,’ we set up ability-based groups in middle school, even though we know how stigmatizing and dangerous this is for the most fragile students. Threatening students with grade repetition, exclusion, or mandatory vacation classes is misguided—education should inspire a love of learning, not rely on coercion.”[3] This directly contradicts the reform’s stated goal of combating inequality, according to the organizations, which are both members of the NSG. The new approach also directs resources to higher performing students, the NSG points out. This comes at the expense of lower performing students, who are often from relatively disadvantaged groups.[4] Research by the Institut des Politiques Publiques shows that mixed-ability classrooms benefit students of all levels. [5] Furthermore, government instability has led schools to be granted flexibility in the implementation of the groups, causing differences among schools in different parts of the country.[6]

The financing of private education is another factor causing differences among schools. Faith-based private schools continue to receive public funding despite reinforcing social inequalities and isolation. The leftwing political party La France Insoumise submitted a proposal for a bill that would penalize schools that perpetuated and increased socio-educational segregation.[7] The proposal was rejected, but it did reignite the debate on the public funding of private schools, especially given the financial pressure on local governments. Since the entry into force of a 2019 law mandating compulsory education from age three, local administrations have already been required to fund private preschool education.[8] However, the 2025 Finance Bill cut €5 billion in funding for them.[9]

Cuts to the national education budget following Decree No. 2023-1158 of 9 December 2023, have made teaching less attractive as a profession. Working conditions have deteriorated, public schools are struggling to provide quality education. The NSG highlights a lack of structural investment as well as a lack of structural reform to both class composition and the middle school system, even though address the decline in the enrolment of students in secondary education, which is expected to decrease by approximately 8000 students in 2025.[10] The lack of teacher training – both initial and ongoing – is yet another major obstacle to the provision of quality education. The current requirement of a master's degree forms a substantial barrier to potential teachers from modest backgrounds, the NSG points out. While official university tuition fees remain relatively low, according to the UNEF's 2025 annual survey, student living costs have increased by 4.12% in 2025, representing an additional €807 per year and marking a 31.88% rise since 2017.[11] This is combined with a high pressure to perform, as students are required to both obtain a degree and pass a competitive teacher recruitment exam. Dropout rates are high during the training period, reducing social diversity among prospective teachers. To address these issues, the government moved the competitive exam to the bachelor's (undergraduate) level, and it established specialized bachelor's degrees to better prepare students for the master's.[12] Graduates with these specialized bachelor's degrees are now able to follow the master's degree as paid civil-servant trainees. These measures could have a positive effect, but the NSG warns that the current compensation level for trainees is insufficient to fund a decent standard of living. Moreover, these trainees could be used to fill staffing gaps at the expense of their training.

Youth mental health is also short of both funding and professionals, with a severe impact on the provision of care. Public psychiatry in France remains structurally underfunded, and Mental Health Centres (Centres Médico-Psychologiques), which provide most outpatient psychiatric care, are increasingly overwhelmed. According to a 2025 Senate report, the demand for ambulatory psychiatric care has tripled since 1989, yet resources have not kept pace, leading to saturated services and long waiting times that seriously compromise access to care.[13] Two pieces of legislation were introduced in 2024 to address this, yet neither has had a substantial impact. The first initiative sought to improve lifelong knowledge of first aid provision but was withdrawn by its author Salvatore Castiglione, hence it is still not approved.[14] The second initiative focusses on training young people in mental-health first aid but has yet to be passed into law.[15] It has the potential to be an important step in mental health aid provision, but its impact will depend on the finalized version and its implementation. However, first aid is not enough to deal with mental health issues, so additional care provision measures are needed.

The NSG also highlights the difficulty in legislating on emotional, relational and sexual life education. A proposal by then-minister Anne Genetet was voted down, as ideological opposition was strong, mainly from the right, the far right and conservatives.[16] As a result, shortages in healthcare and social workers persist, as does violence against family planning services. The NSG points to an urgent need for a comprehensive, intelligent and preventative approach – a view shared by Anne Genetet.[17]



Fair Working Conditions

SCORE: 33

Social and solidarity economy

France continues to be a global leader in the social and solidarity economy (SSE). However, the NSG reports chronic underinvestment in the sector. The SSE contributes around 10% of France's GDP and around 14% of jobs in private employment, yet it has consistently received only 0.0046% of the national budget for more than a decade.[18] In 2024, this amounted to €22.4 million out of a total of €491 billion. This allocation was 8.17% higher than in 2023, but with inflation averaging 2.9% in 2024 (INSEE), the rise merely neutralized the impact of price increases and did not represent a substantial increase in real terms. The 2025 Financial Bill cut the funding by 25% to 17 million, leading to outrage from French CSOs active in the SSE sector. The bill aims to save €60 billion through new taxes and funding cuts, which undermine transformative sectors like the SSE. Local authorities cut another €5 billion from their social and cultural programmes, with a severe impact on regional SSE actors.

This lack of investment is all the more difficult to understand given France's apparent commitment to the SSE in recent years. In 2014, the Hamon Law recognized it as a distinct economic sector, and the government showed renewed interest in 2023 by appointing a Secretary of State responsible for the sector and publishing a national roadmap. This roadmap included an incentive mechanism for

companies to place private orders with the SSE and the creation of “impact contracts”, a framework for private prefinancing of projects with a social or environmental impact. Within this framework, social or environmental needs are identified, and SSE actors propose project solutions. The projects are then financed by private actors, which are reimbursed by public authorities if a project achieves contractually agreed results. (This roadmap was described in detail in the 2024 Social Rights Monitor.[19]) However, there is a substantial risk of mission drift, whereby these projects are mainly viewed as investment opportunities by for-profit private actors instead of contributions to society, so that only financially profitable projects receive support.[20] A reliance on private funding cannot be the solution to public underinvestment. The High Council for the SSE criticizes the lack of political will and resources to follow up on the ambitions of the Hamon Law. This view is shared by the Union des employeurs de l'économie sociale et solidaire (UDES – Union of SSE Employers).[21] The NSG agrees with this criticism and highlights the lack of significant advances in SSE policy. The increasing emphasis on “purpose-driven” for-profit projects comes at the expense of traditional associative models and should be viewed as a form of strategic regression, according to the NSG. Companies serve their shareholders before the general interest or the public good, even if they are “purpose-driven”.



Social Inclusion and Protection

SCORE: 40

Poverty eradication

France continued to implement its Solidarity Pact, a national plan to fight poverty, which was launched in 2023 and is scheduled to continue until 2027.[22] Some measures have brought positive change, but others have weakened the position of vulnerable people. This directly contradicts the pact's goal of poverty prevention, leading to heavy criticism from French civil society.

Positive developments include several childcare measures, such as the creation of an additional 1 000 crèches à vocation d'insertion professionnelle (AVIPs – daycare centres for workplace integration) by 2027.[23] These centres will help single parents access childcare and, therefore, employment. Another important measure is the continuation of €1 meals and free breakfasts in schools.[24] This provision supports vulnerable families and educates children in the importance of food for health.

Another measure to support vulnerable families is the allocation of an additional €250 million for emergency housing in 2024. CSOs such as Secours Catholique considered this important but insufficient to meet growing needs.[25]

Also positive was the continuation or introduction of measures to help people escape economic precariousness. The rate of people failing to take up social benefits is high in France – 34% for minimum income benefits in 2022, primarily caused by a lack of accessible information.[26] After 11 areas participated in the experiment “territoires zero non-recours” (areas where no one fails to claim social benefits they are entitled to) in 2023, 28 more were selected for 2024. The areas take various approaches. [27] As such, these approaches try to facilitate and simplify access to rights and social benefits. A similar initiative, the Solidarité à la source (solidarity at the source) project[28] facilitates access to the Revenu de solidarité active (RSA – minimum income benefit) to combat non-take-ups. The project automatically fills out the application form for the minimum income benefit based on data from employers and social agencies. The project started as a pilot in five administrative departments. After proving successful, it is being rolled out nationwide in 2025. However, entitlement to the RSA was made dependent on 15 hours of activity per week in 2025, following the 2023 Social Security Financing Act (Law No. 2023-1196, Article 45), therefore undermining access.[29] Implementation, however, has so far remained uneven and limited to pilot territories. The introduction of this conditionality has been heavily criticized by CSOs such as ATD Quart-Monde and the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme. They say the reform imposes yet more bureaucratic burdens on the vulnerable and that the kind of activities demanded do not raise beneficiaries' chances of accessing the labour market. At the same time, the conditionality takes up disadvantaged households' time and energy.[30] The CSOs call the conditionality an attack on social rights, a view shared by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH).[31] The CNCDH also had serious concerns about the increasingly restrictive measures applied to migrants both those in a regular and in an undocumented status, introduced by the French Ministry of the Interior. These measures include a residency requirement of seven years and mastery of the French language as conditions for obtaining a residency permit or for an undocumented migrant to regularize their status and thus

gain access to social benefits. The CNCDH warns that these measures could have a serious impact on fundamental rights and that they represent a clear violation of France's core values and human rights obligations.^[32]



Civic Space

SCORE: 17

The CIVICUS Monitor classifies France as “Narrowed”, a status which has remained unchanged since 2018.^[33] This classification indicates that, while individuals and civil society organizations can exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression, these rights are often violated through harassment, arrests or assaults against critics of those in power, as well as through excessive force during protests and political pressure on the media. In several cases in 2024, journalists were detained and faced legal action for covering protests.^[34]

Enabling space for civil society organizations

The NSG reports a significant deterioration of civic space in France, following the negative trend set in previous years. Civil society and civic rights face numerous types of attacks from various levels of government.

Several demonstrations were banned in 2024. In the wake of an attack on a synagogue in La Grande-Motte in August 2024, authorities banned pro-Palestinian demonstrations later that month on the grounds of a threat to public order.^[35] This ban was upheld by the administrative court despite the absence of threats of violence. More bans on pro-Palestinian gatherings were issued in 2024.^[36] This practice reflects a systematic attempt by the government to limit freedom of expression, according to the NSG.

Further restrictions to the freedom of expression – in particular of opinions diverging from those of the government – have become increasingly common through the *contrat d'engagement républicain* (CER – Republican Commitment Contract). The CER was introduced as a part of the 2021 separatism law and effectively allows the ideological filtering of associations, as it requires associations seeking state subsidies to align with “republican values”.^[37] Many organizations have reported being threatened with a loss of funding because of political statements or advocacy deemed incompatible with “the values of the republic”. The vagueness of these values was illustrated in January 2024, when local radio stations in the Finistère region lost their funding, after they covered the closure of a squatted space, used for social and cultural activities.^[38] According to the region's prefect, their journalistic work went against the republican order.^[39] A similar case took place in April 2024, when a subsidy application from the *Atelier populaire d'urbanisme du Vieux-Lille* was denied by the Lille metropolitan authority. The authority claimed the association had engaged in “verbal violence” against municipal agents during the eviction of a group of Travellers and thus violated the CER.^[40] The Atelier denied both the verbal assault and the presence of its staff during the eviction.

This use of the CER effectively restricts the freedom of association, as it makes funding conditional on alignment with government views, the NSG points out. This position is shared by the UN's Human Rights Committee, which criticized the use of the CER in its Concluding Observations in November 2024.^[41] It expressed its concerns over how the 2021 separatism law and the CER were being implemented in an arbitrary manner and could therefore infringe upon the freedom of association. The *Mouvement associatif*, a member of the NSG, observed strong self-censorship tendencies by French CSOs in public debate and points to the CER as the main cause. However, the CER is a symptom of a broader disregard for the specificity of civil society under current government policy (as discussed in the section on the social and solidarity economy). That includes twisting public subsidies into public procurement, which neglects civil society organizations' fundamental role as independent actors in a framework of political pluralism, since procurement often requires apoliticality or neutrality. The NSG also highlights the absence of a European legal framework for associations. In particular, the proposed EU directive on European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA) could provide such a framework, by granting associations a supranational status similar to companies, thereby reducing the risk of arbitrary restrictions on public subsidies.

This disregard for the specificity of civil society has also resulted in political hostility towards CSOs that express opinions that diverge from government policy. In October 2024, Minister of the Interior Bruno Retailleau accused NGOs including *La Cimade* and *Forum réfugiés* of lacking neutrality over immigration and advancing political agendas.^[42] In January 2025, he said that “these organizations

benefit from state subsidies to promote different public policies than those that the state wants to defend".^[43] The 2025 budget of the Pays-de-la-Loire regional council, which was adopted in December 2024, substantially cut funding for cultural and civic associations,^[44] a move widely seen as targeting organizations that were considered politically non-aligned. In October 2024, several amendments were tabled to the national government's 2025 Finance Bill, aiming to suspend tax benefits for associations with members that were convicted of offences linked to environmental activism, agricultural protests, or civil disobedience.^[45] These amendments were mainly introduced by right and far-right MPs and were heavily criticized by CSOs as a direct political attack on the freedom of association.^[46] The NSG fears that more budget cuts and funding restrictions are coming for associations, severely limiting their freedom to express divergent opinions – especially when combined with the CER.

The Concluding Observations by the UN Human Rights Committee also highlighted the attempt to dissolve the environmental association *Soulèvements de la Terre* through a ministerial decision as particularly worrying.^[47] The decision was successfully challenged before the Council of State in November 2023, thanks to legal assistance from the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*.^[48] However, a clear anti-environmentalist sentiment is still present in France, and several environmental protests have been met with significant and often excessive police intervention. Around 3 000 people gathered to protest the construction of mega basins in Saint-Sauvant in July 2024 despite a ban on the protest.^[49] In response, around 3 000 police and gendarmes were deployed. Similar bans on protests and heavy police surveillance were used during smaller environmental protests in the summer and autumn of 2024. Some protests turned violent, as in La Rochelle, where police charged demonstrators.^[50] The NSG points out that environmental protests are increasingly treated as security risks rather than legitimate democratic expressions.

The NSG points to the European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA) Directive as a possible solution to the increased pressure on and governmental control of civil society. This EU initiative – which has not yet been approved at EU level – would allow not-for-profit associations to be recognized across Member States. The Directive would free some organizations from national pressures, as non-profit organizations active throughout the EU would be automatically recognized as such in all Member States. This would favour cross-border cooperation and funding from other Member States.^[51] However, it remains uncertain when and whether the Directive will be adopted, and one of its main opponents is France. In May 2024, a French member of the *Assemblée Nationale* submitted a resolution calling for the proposed initiative to be withdrawn, claiming that it undermines the state's oversight of the funding, security and dissolution of associations.^[52] After questions by Senator Florence Blatrix-Contat in March 2025, the Ministry of the Interior confirmed in May 2025 its principled opposition to the Directive, based on the potential for foreign interference and circumvention of national rules.^[53] Due to a lack of consensus at the European level, the Directive is currently stalled.

Despite these setbacks, some French CSOs intensified their activities in 2024 and 2025. *La Cimade*, the *LDH*, *France Nature Environnement* and *Planning Familial* continued to offer legal and humanitarian support. *La Cimade* organized mobilizations to give bicycle delivery riders in Poitiers legal residence status and access to the official employment system and against the creation of a detention centre.^[54] The *LDH* intervened in cases where public liberties were at stake, such as the challenge against the attempt to dissolve *Soulèvement de la Terre*.^[55] *Planning Familial* was able to conduct over 5 600 psychological consultations and numerous collective interventions, particularly on sexual violence.^[56] *France Nature Environnement* pursued dozens of nature protection and awareness actions.^[57] In May 2025, the *LDH* published a statement condemning France's shrinking civic space and the increasing threats to the freedom of association posed by the anti-separatism law, the CER, and the shrinking civic space in France.^[58] This statement was disseminated by the *Libertés Associatives Coalition*, a group of 18 CSOs that aims to record and bring to attention limitations of fundamental freedom.^[59]



Just Transition

SCORE: 44

Access to sustainable mobility and mobility poverty

Several positive sustainable-transport initiatives have been announced in recent years, yet most suffer from a chronic lack of implementation, the NSG reports. The *Plan d'avenir pour les transports* (Future Transport Plan) was announced in 2023, foreseeing a €100 billion investment in France's rail sector by 2040.^[60] The plan was intended to focus mainly on sustainable transport. Then-

Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said that France would “invest more in rail and sustainable mobility than in new road projects”, and that the investments would take the form of contracts between the French state and regional authorities. These contracts are aligned with the objectives of the 2019 Loi d’orientation pour la mobilité (LOM – Mobility Orientation Law), which aims to reduce territorial inequalities, strengthen territorial cohesion and improve connections between cities, rural areas and suburban zones.[61] The 2024 Green Budget also received an additional €7 billion to support the ecological transition,[62] the decarbonization of mobility amongst its priorities. In particular, it is intended for investment in the railroad network and green vehicles.

Despite these clear government commitments to green objectives, policies to implement them have been lacking. At the Ambition France Transport conference to identify financing solutions to develop transport, Prime Minister François Bayrou acknowledged that the €100 billion promised by the Plan d’avenir pour les transports has not yet been fully budgeted. This conference was jointly led by the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Economy and Finance and included workshops on themes such as passenger rail and road infrastructure and the greening of freight transport.[63] Public and private stakeholders, experts, environmental organisations and organisations of users of public transport participated in the workshops. They were held between May and July 2025 in Marseille, and it was unclear at the time of writing whether they would produce tangible results, the NSG notes.

Rail financing has been a substantial barrier to the affordability of sustainable transport. Rail traffic was liberalized by a reform in 2019, but this did not make it more accessible. The reform did attract four foreign operators, diversifying services and reducing costs for railway operator SNCF.[64] But this cost reduction did not lead to lower ticket prices. Instead, they have steadily increased since 2023 – by 2% in 2024 and 1.5% in 2025. Moreover, service coverage is insufficient in general and unequal across France. The CEO of SNCF has stated that the main cause is a shortage of trains, particularly in rural and suburban regions. The combination of high prices and inadequate service coverage effectively deprives many people of access to sustainable transport, of which trains are the main mode in France, the NSG points out. Public action in this field has been ineffective or lacking with a major impact on France’s rail system, according to the NSG.

The Association pour la transition Bas Carbone (ABC), a member of the NSG, highlights that this lack of initiatives constitutes a major barrier to sustainable-transport access, particularly in rural and suburban areas, where fossil-fuel cars remain dominant. Around one third of France’s greenhouse gas emissions comes from transportation, of which more than half is represented by private cars.[65] The LOM included measures to reduce vehicles’ carbon footprint, such as increasing the share of low-emission vehicles by 10 percentage points to 40% and ensuring that all public buses meet very low-emission standards. However, these measures still need to be implemented, the NSG notes. Actions such as ABC’s climate awareness and carbon footprint reduction programmes will not be sufficient. The NSG therefore calls for a structural shift involving all stakeholders – the state, companies and citizens.

Positive developments include the infrastructure works for the 2024 Olympic Games, which showed that substantial improvements are possible if there is political will and resources are available. Residents of Paris and its suburban areas reported improvements in public transport access during the Games, including more-frequent services, better management of service interruptions and the extension of Metro line 14.[66] These improvements are expected to have lasting benefits. However, it is important that all French citizens benefit from structural change, not just those living in and around Paris, so comprehensive interventions on a broader scale are needed.

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