

Oslo: State of the City

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The report has been commissioned by **Oslo Business Region**, which is owned and funded by the **City of Oslo**.

The report is written by **The Business of Cities**, an urban intelligence firm based in London that provides data and advice to 100 global cities and companies.

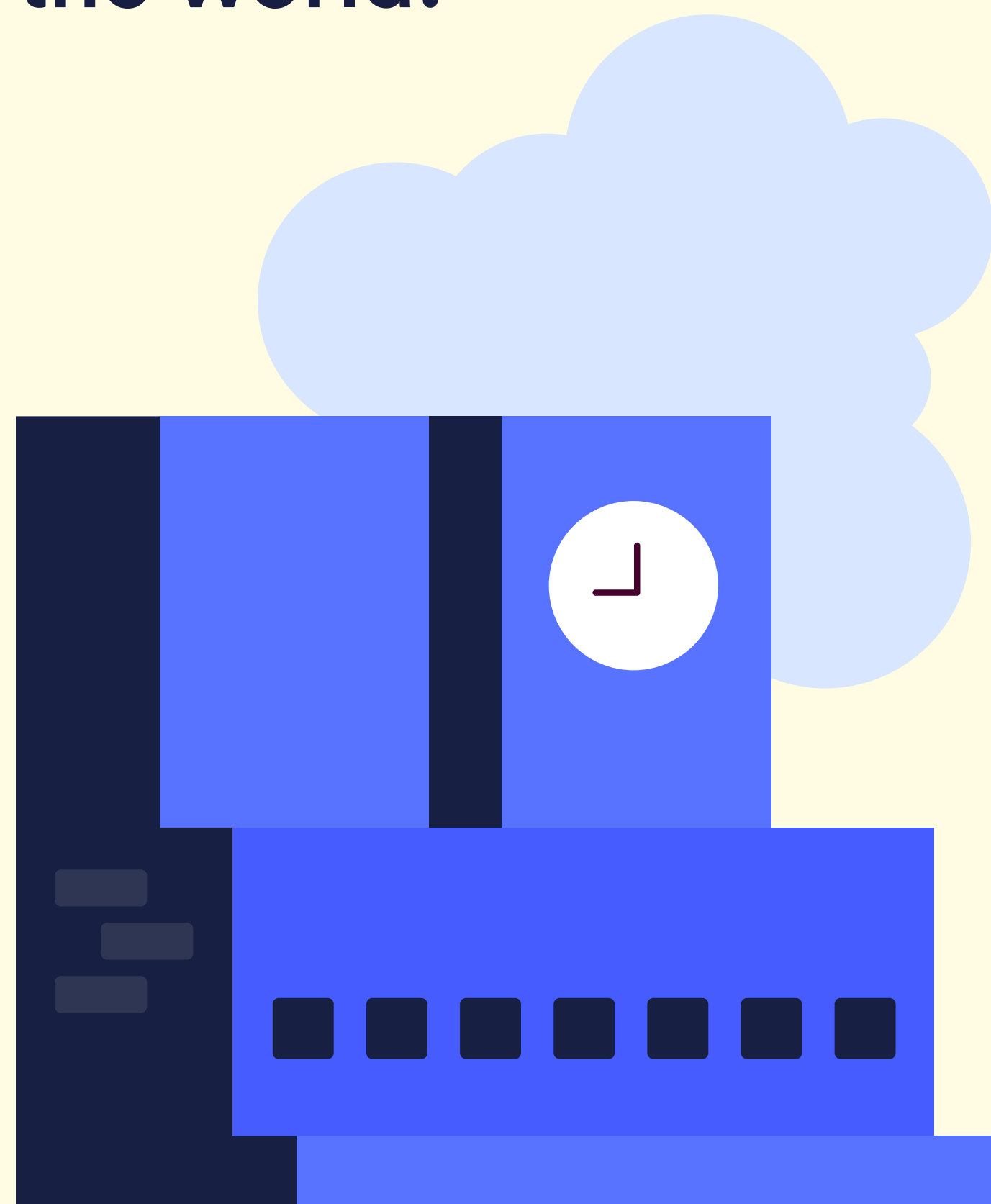


Photo: Getty Images

Executive Summary

What next after Oslo's pioneering decade?

"Oslo: State of the City" captures Oslo through the eyes of the rest of the world.



The report reviews how Oslo compares and competes internationally, drawing on hundreds of city benchmarks to see how Oslo is perceived and how it is actually performing.

Oslo's decade of change

A look back across the last 10 years reveals how much Oslo has established itself, slowly but surely, as a standard setter and first mover on the international stage.

Oslo is now firmly one of the world's great small cities. Taking an aggregate of more than 300 indices of city performance annually, in 2025 **Oslo is up to 31st globally** (from 43rd globally six years ago), and 13th in Europe (up from 17th six years ago).

Oslo steadily continues to gain visibility even as more cities compete for attention. It performs strongly on dimensions valued by those making choices about where to live, work, visit and

invest: liveability, trust and resilience in particular. The work-life story is resonating.

Looking over the decade, the green advantage has become Oslo's signature move. The city is now routinely recognised for its leadership in sustainability, climate ambition and electrification.

Oslo's innovation credentials also continue to progress. Oslo is now among the 10 cities in Europe most likely to host a breakthrough startup, and punches well above its weight as a top 60 global ecosystem by business value. Strengths in the blue and green economy, fintech, and life sciences continue to shine, driving more capital in 2024 alone than Lisbon, Eindhoven and Belfast combined.

Oslo's special city/nature combination is also underpinning its visitor appeal. The city is doing

better than most cities at attracting international visitors, conferences, and destination desirability.

The wide ranging progress means that as more people in more audiences learn about Oslo's proposition, the reputation gap between those 'in the know' are those 'out of the loop' is narrowing.

Moving with the times

Yet the success model of the last decade will not be the same one that shapes the next. The new geopolitics, profound AI transformation, and race for talent and new industries, leaves Europe with no choice but to compete.

Here scale matters, and Oslo has to be vigilant about how it optimises its reach, capability and influence.

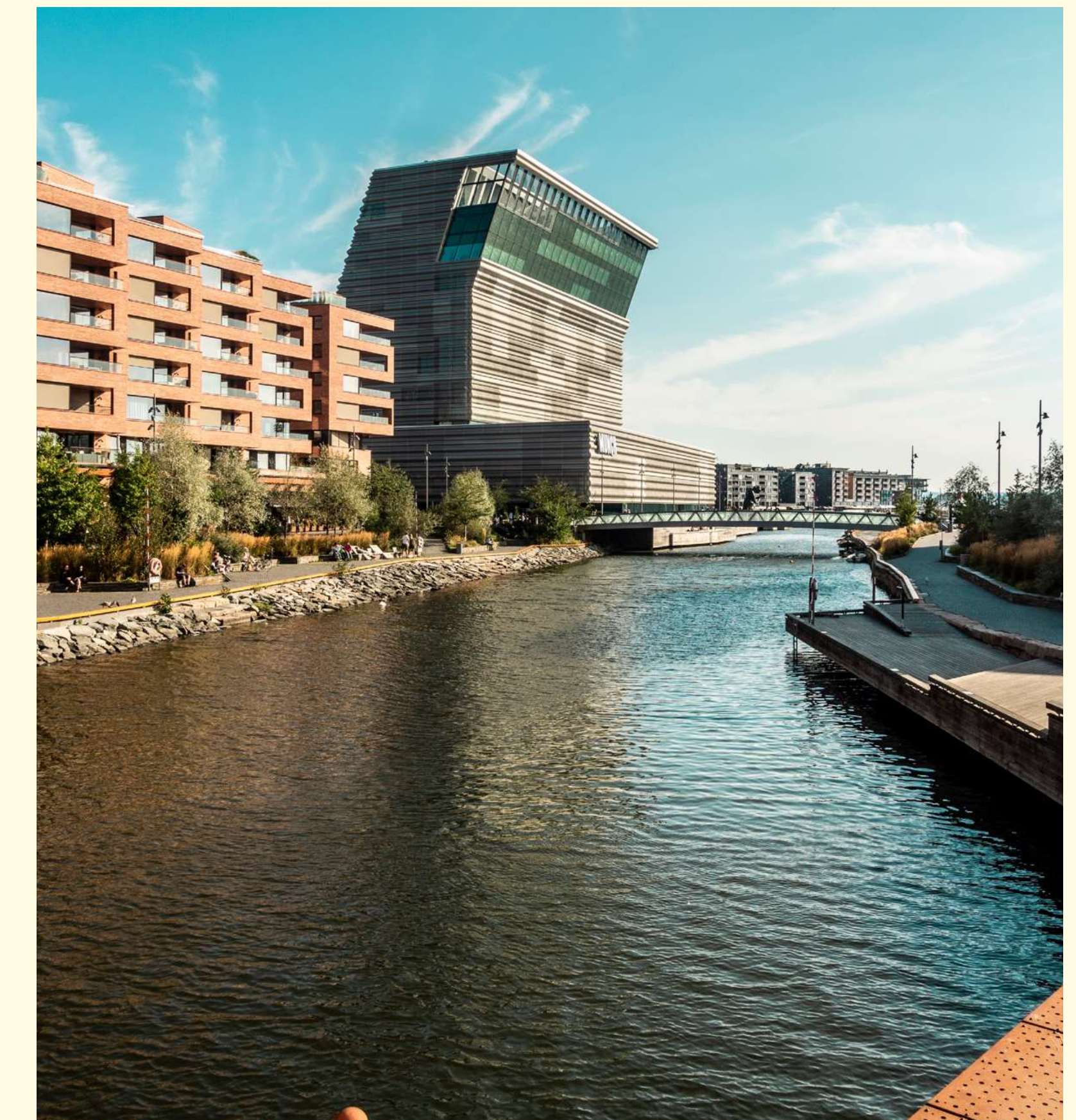
Oslo has to figure out how to succeed – on its

own, with Norway and in Europe - in the contests in talent, higher education and R&D. This means moving faster on cross-sector collaboration and scientific impact if Oslo wants to keep pace with frontrunning cities.

Oslo's appeal also relies on continuing to deepen the experience of culture and character to match the improved destination product.

And Oslo has to preserve and deepen its sustainability leadership as other cities gain ground on clean air, green buildings, and behaviour adoption.

The State of the City analysis in 2025 ultimately suggests that Oslo has to be bolder and more joined up in pursuing its goals and communicating its successes.



Oslo’s place in the world: the opportunity

Face of Norway’s future.

New-found growth and diversity.

Affluence with conscience.

Green pioneer headlines.

Innovation catch up.

Cultural catalysts.

Niche fan club.

Bridging the perception gap.

Next decade?

Forge of Norway’s future.

Enhanced roles and voice in Europe.

Signature specialisms.

Innovation critical mass.

Sense of place and participation.

Destination depth.

Influence and soft power.

Regional scale.

Last decade

This points to Oslo’s need to:

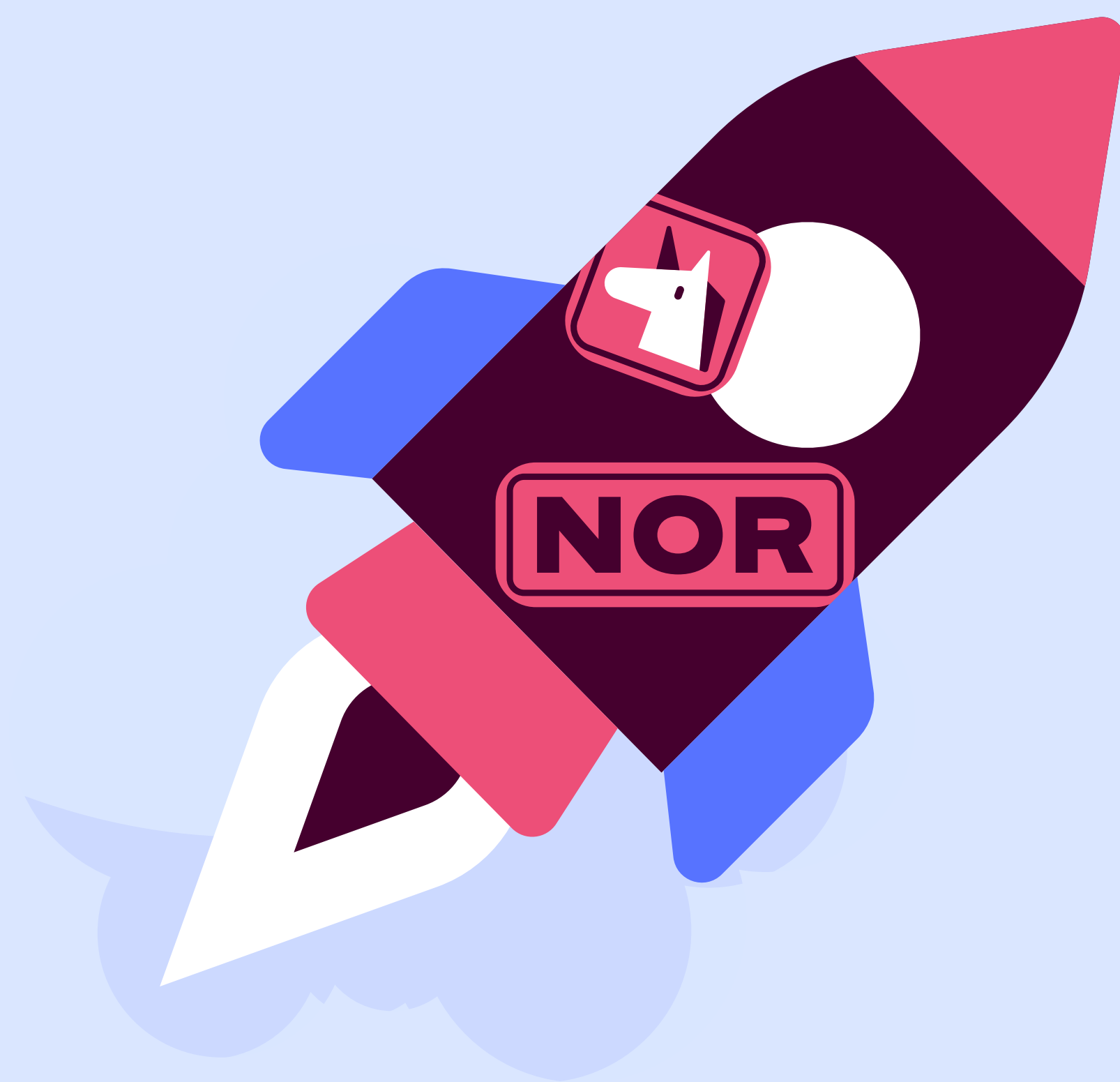
1	Be at the forefront of Europe’s push for renewed global competitiveness.	2	Remain vigilant about what really sways specialist talent and business demand for Oslo	3	Equip Oslo’s story tellers, sharers and ambassadors.
4	Promote coordinated national strategies, reminding Norway what Oslo brings to the table.	5	Reveal more of the places and people that animate the Oslo experience.	6	Decide which sustainability advantages Oslo needs to double down on.



Photo: Getty Images

Intro

Oslo's position and prospects in an uncertain world



After 10 years of progress, Oslo is better placed to maximise advantage and minimise downside exposure in a turbulent world.

A decade of population growth has been translated into a more dynamic and diverse economy. First Oslo began alerting the world to its advantages, and more recently it has been proving a more reliable place for good jobs, risk capital, sustained growth and culture-led lifestyle. The result is a narrowing of the reputation gap between those ‘in the know’ and those ‘out of the loop’.

The challenge is that many more dynamic growth markets have emerged especially in the global East and South. In Europe and North America the competition in technology, finance and higher education has intensified. And the alternatives to living in expensive cities have multiplied.

This review looks at how Oslo is competing and evolving in this fast changing landscape. Using comparative metrics and data, it takes into account the constantly shifting set of lenses that the world appraises cities through.

This information trove allows us to track whether Oslo is more often the radar, in what ways it stands out, how perceptions map on to performance, and where the gaps are - on the ground and in the mind of audiences.

What is State of the City?

The State of the City is an outside-in review of how Oslo compares and competes, first conceived by Oslo Business Region and shaped in collaboration with the City of Oslo.



The key things to know are:

It selects from a wider set of 1,000 international city benchmarks and rankings, national rankings as well as local data sources.

It looks both at how Oslo is performing and how it is perceived.

It reviews how Oslo has been rated since the start of 2024.

The 1st edition was in 2015.

It evaluates how Oslo is doing across themes.

The data scale reflects how others appraise Oslo – mainly the Oslo Region scale, and sometimes the Oslo Municipality.

How should we use it?

To see where Oslo really excels and can drive home our advantage.

To spot where international perceptions diverge from reality.

To keep track of our innovation ecosystem.

To agree on the gaps and the actionable priorities across Oslo.

To see how government, businesses, start-ups, universities and investors can contribute.

Oslo is

No. 7 performing small city across all measures and benchmarks

Source: TBoC Research

28th in Europe for visibility online

Source: ING

Perceived as a **Top 5 city** in the world for good governance

Source: Brand Finance

Top 6 lowest carbon footprints for the past 5 years

Source: Carbon Monitor

Top 15 globally for concentration of early stage startup capital attracted

Source: Dealroom

No. 11 in Europe for unicorns

Source: Dealroom

36th globally for AI funding

Source: CBRE

14th for working age population growth since 2019

Source: CBRE

Up 20 places for high-level conferences over last 10 years

Source: ICCA

Top 50 best city to visit worldwide.

Source: Euromonitor

Bottom 25% for perceived expat life satisfaction.

Source: Internations

10x its ecosystem value since 2017.

Source: Dealroom

Rated a **top 10 city** 75% more often than 5 years ago.

Source: TBoC Research

No. 3 most mentioned city in sustainable awards and distinctions.

Source: TBoC Research



Progress

10 years of learning to lead the way

Over the past 10 years, Oslo emerged from relative obscurity and began to pick up global accolades. It has now gained more than 100 ratings as a world-leading city in international baselines.

It is only **one of 16 cities anywhere** in the world to have achieved this feat, a remarkable achievement.

There are three dimensions to Oslo’s leadership role:

As standard setter. Oslo consistently rates near the top of the charts for its environmental edge, high-quality transport, and residents’ well-being.

As beacon. Oslo stands out as one of the world’s high trust and best governed cities, in a context where good governance has fallen into shorter supply.

As first mover with a cumulative advantage in green finance and electric vehicles that now generate their own momentum.

Oslo is rated a top 10 city

+75%

more often than in 2019

Oslo in 2025 World No. 1s

Cementing its reputation among the World’s Green Capitals

**1**

Environment, resilience, and green policies

Arcadis

**1**

Sustainable tourism supply chain

Global Destination Sustainability

**1**

Traffic safety

C40 Healthy Neighbourhoods

**1**

Electric vehicles

Smart City Forum

Exciting Top 10s

2nd

Top city: Helsinki

Sustainable Mobility

Oliver Wyman

2nd

Top city: Abu Dhabi

Capital managed by Sovereign Wealth Fund

Global SWF

4th

Top city: London

Green finance reputation

Z-Yen, based on survey of green finance professionals

5th

Top city: Singapore

Most dynamic maritime hub

Menon Economics, DNV

9th

Top city: Singapore

Work-life balance satisfaction for expats

Internations

10th

Top city: Auckland

Access to green space

C40 Healthy Neighbourhoods

Punching above its weight

Oslo’s progress has been in a context of Europe’s relative competitive underperformance, and stronger global competition for companies and capital.

For all-round performance aggregated together, Oslo remains in the top 15 cities in Europe. It is also in the top 10 smaller cities globally. It is important to keep recognising and celebrating these feats given Oslo’s small scale.

Oslo’s outperformance reflects enduring strengths in most sustainability and liveability areas, and improvements in culture, enterprise and profile.

However issues do remain: other cities in Europe have overtaken Oslo since last year on investment appetite, research output and perceived openness.

	Oslo in the world	Oslo in Europe	Oslo among smaller cities globally
2025	31 st	13 th	7 th
2024	29 th	11 th	6 th
2019	43 rd	17 th	10 th

The Business of Cities research, based on 300+ global and regional benchmarks that rate city performance and perception.

Where does Oslo place in Europe?



Oslo’s revealed improvement through the decade

A reliable growth hub. Oslo is proving more stable, with more people in work, more productive jobs, and faster population growth than nearly all larger cities in Europe.

An investable ecosystem. The last 10 years has seen Oslo successfully grow its innovation ecosystem faster than most, and attract more venture capital than Lisbon, Manchester or Chennai.

A capable host. Beneath the radar Oslo now performs more strongly as a destination, with a more competitive set of attractions and a forward looking visitor economy.

Oslo’s most positive moves up the charts in the past 10 years



Oslo is in the running for the world’s best city for people in many key areas

Gap between Oslo and world/European leader in 10 areas where Oslo is among the global top 20%

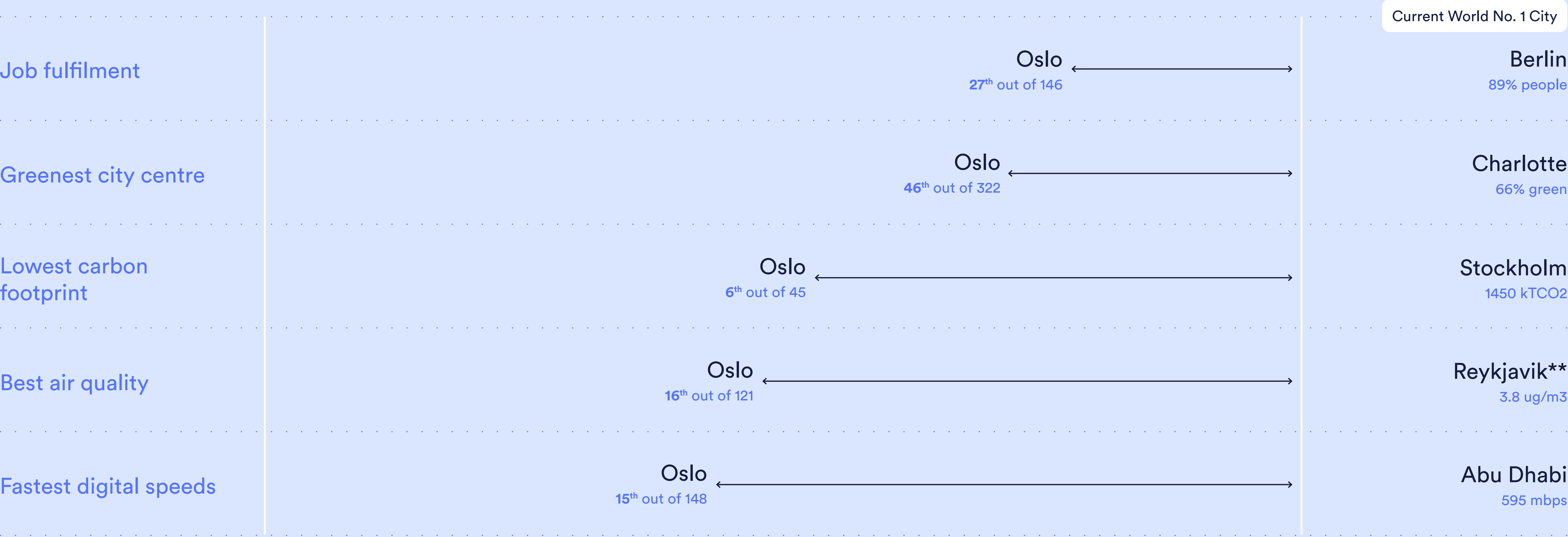


While **Oslo** is now a contender as one of the very best cities at delivering for its citizens, it can look for healthy inspiration from those cities that are at the very top of the tree either on performance or perception.

* in Europe
** among capital cities of more than 300,000 people

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* in Europe
** among capital cities of more than 300,000 people



Perception

A lighthouse on the radar

Despite the rising number of improving growth cities, Oslo has successfully held its ground among the world’s 50 most visible cities (TBoC Research).

This is because Oslo now gains consistent acclaim for issues that occupy global attention: sustainability, social cohesion, good governance, gender equality, and transport.

As a result Oslo is becoming more visible than larger cities

whose strengths are less clearly understood, such as Montreal and Osaka. Oslo is also closing the gap slightly with Stockholm and Copenhagen.

However being visible is not the same as being evocative. Here Oslo is rated slightly further down, at 46th (out of 100 cities. [Brand Finance](#)). This suggests Oslo needs to keep doing more to capture imagination as well as attention.

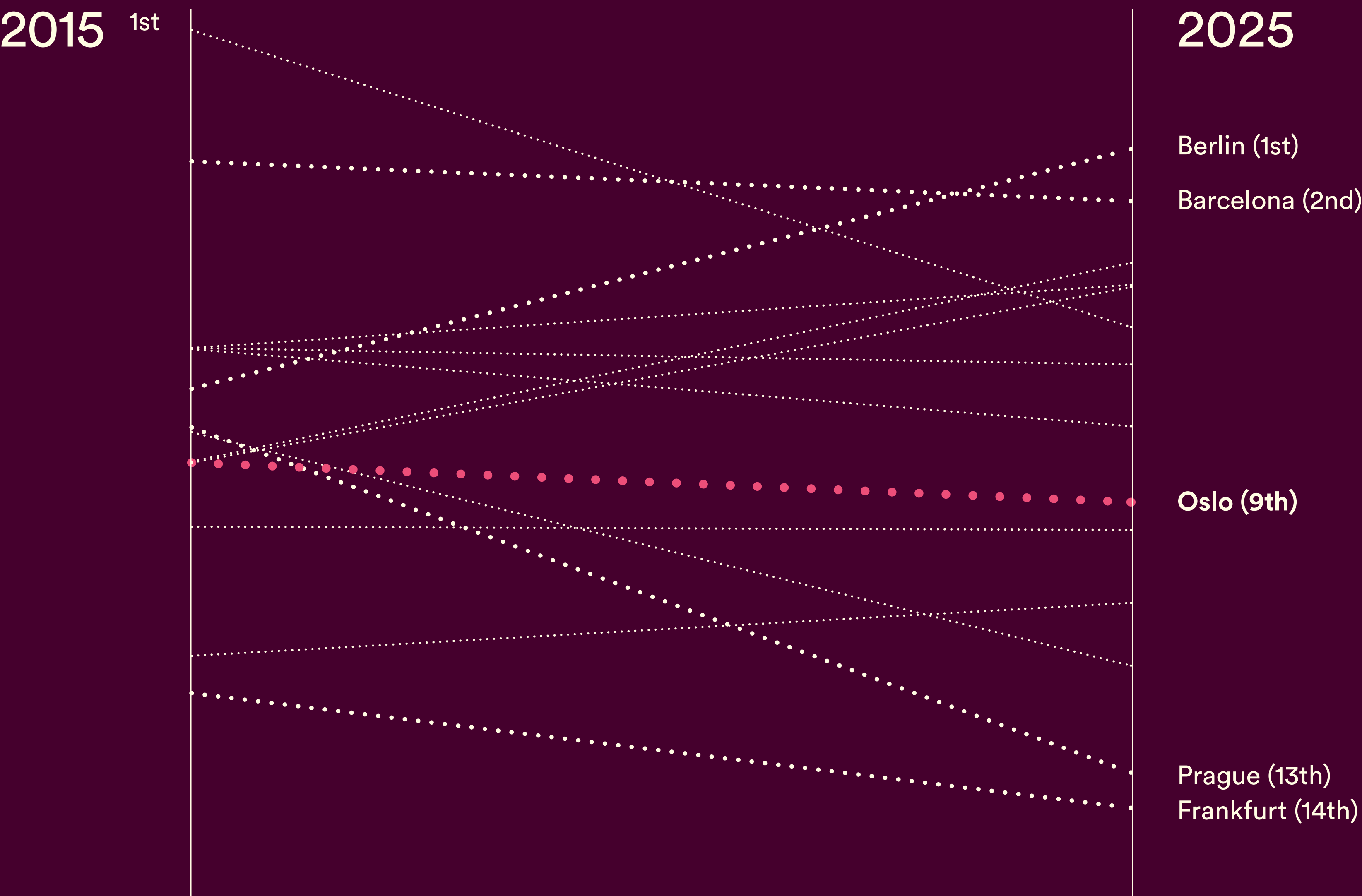
Global visibility rank

Based on no. of benchmarks Oslo appears in



Oslo's appearance rate in the global benchmarks

Oslo has maintained its position among European cities among significant drops and climbs.



Top 5 cities most appraised for governance
Brand Finance

Rated 4th globally for trustworthiness
Brand Finance

+ 10 places in 10 years for urban lifestyle cool
Monocle

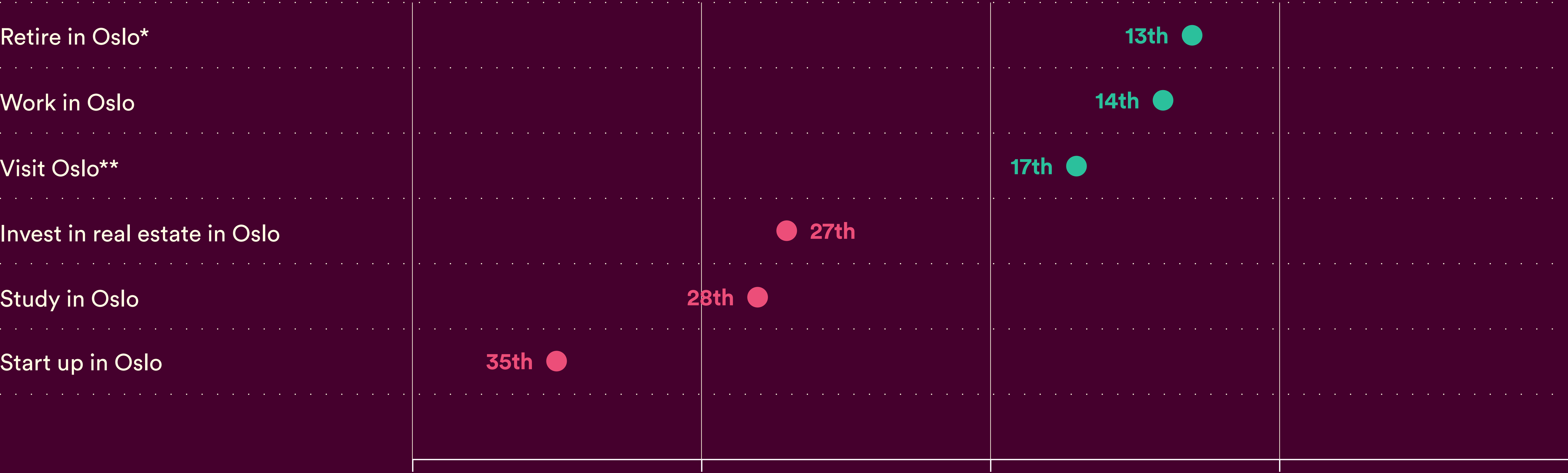
Now a top 30 city for pulling power
Resonance

Outside perceptions of Oslo

I want to...

● 2025 rank

* Estimated position based on previous years
** Not comparable to previous year due to different methodology



Sources: Brand Finance, Internations, Conde Nast, Lonely Planet, European Best Destinations, BBC, PwC/ULI, Startup Heatmap Europe

Position in Europe

Stereotypes die hard

With more cities competing, Oslo has yet to gain more recognition for its:

- **Dining scene.** In 2024, Oslo was featured in only 1 of the 10 food-related global benchmarks despite having 11 Michelin restaurants and 1 of the World's 50 Best Bars. Oslo is also rated the most expensive city for food and drink in Europe, ahead of Copenhagen or Bern. ([Omio](#))
- **Cultural vibrancy.** Oslo's museum decade has yet to register widely on the global stage. However residents see the difference, as Oslo has climbed 6 places for cultural satisfaction, breaking into the top 20 cities globally. ([IMD](#))
- **Tech infrastructure.** Oslo has been falling down rankings for digital speed as other cities have caught up. It does not currently garner any accolades for its digital advantage.



28th out of 60 European cities, the 2nd tier for overall visibility in online and social media conversations

ING



Oslo has not appeared in the last 5 years of TimeOut's best 50 cities

TimeOut

Oslo's reputation gap to outsiders

Perceptions are still stronger among audiences who are familiar than those who are unfamiliar.



46th ↓

Nordic average: 40th

For how much Oslo's brand resonates with the global public

Source: Brand Finance, out of 100 cities

Oslo does not get as much credit in visitor awards, accolades, and 'top' lists



People who don't know Oslo now rate the city nearly as highly as people who do

75th

Nordic average: 65th

For how familiar the global public is with Oslo

Source: Brand Finance



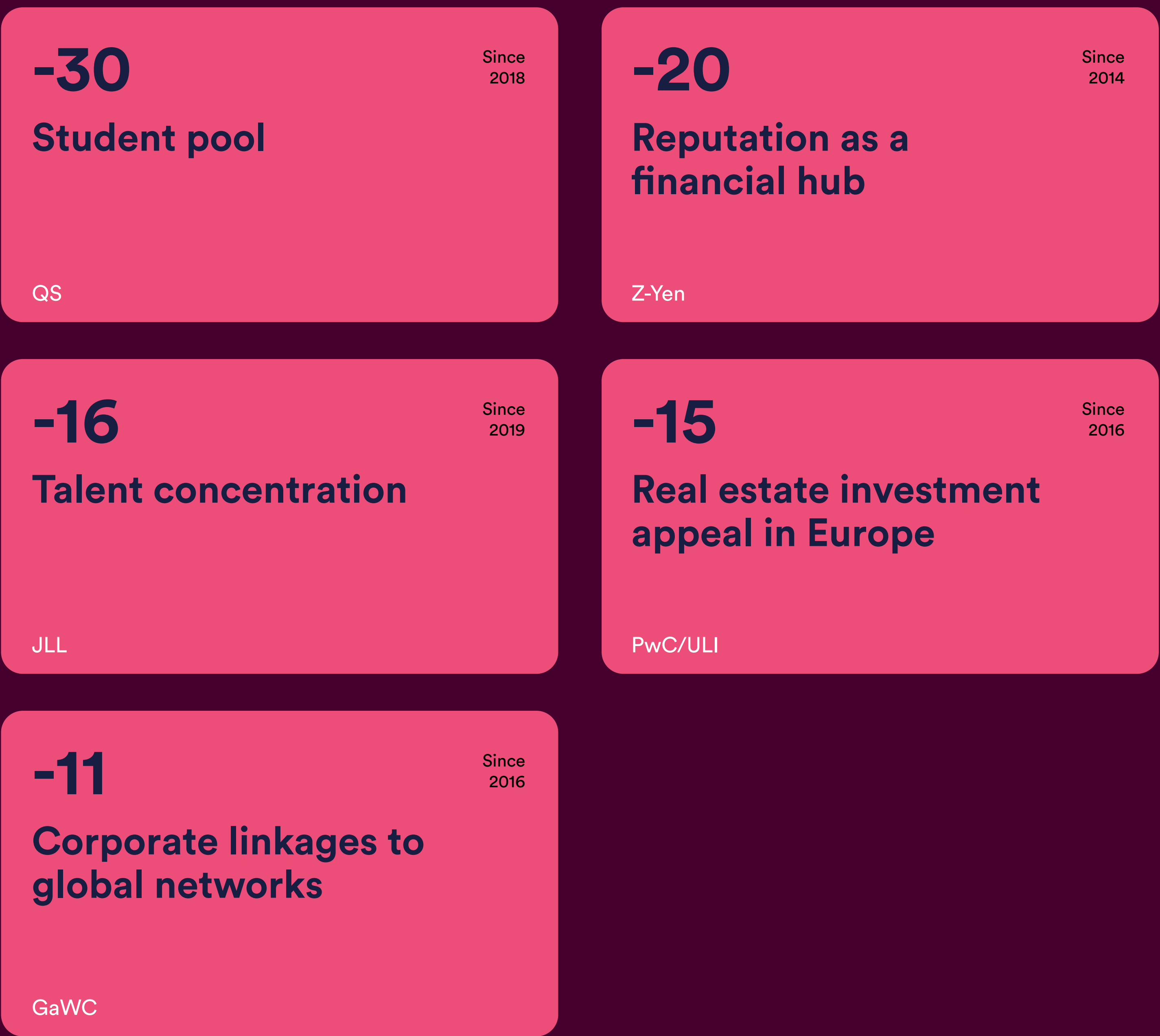
Living with the global competition

As the global flows of talent, capital, and corporate investment change, Oslo has to be mindful that:

- Many other cities have acquired the scale or reputation as corporate hubs - from Dublin to Melbourne and Kuala Lumpur.
- More cities are competing successfully at the top end of higher education, attracting larger clusters of international students
- The larger scale of other cities makes it possible to hold bigger concentrations of professional talent.
- Many 2nd and 3rd tier cities have successfully positioned themselves as value bets for both people and investment.

Over the last decade, talent expectations have placed more emphasis on cities’ affordability, openness and lifestyle diversity. Here, Oslo’s perceptions and performance are still not as favourable as they could be.

5 areas where competitors have moved ahead in the past decade





Innovation

Oslo’s enterprising decade

Oslo has steadily gained recognition as one of Europe’s most dynamic small hubs for investing in great ideas and companies.

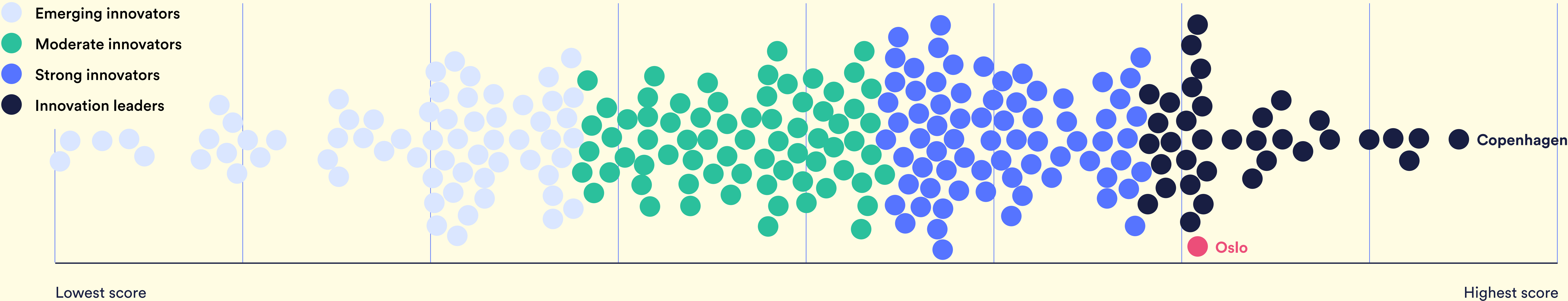
Annual venture capital grew 13x since 2014 to \$650 million in 2024.

The result is today Oslo sits among the most innovation-intense regions globally.

The strengths that stand out in the ratings are fintech, clean and green tech, maritime tech and life sciences.

An improving norm of open data and digital collaboration has helped foster more larger VC deals and scale-up companies.

Oslo’s innovation ecosystem is rated an established ‘leader’ by the EU



Source: European Regional Innovation Scorecard. Based on investment, innovation activities, workforce, business and academic environment and impact.

Innovation headlines in Oslo

Upward moves on commercialising

↗ In the top 35 globally for rate of VC attracted in the last 5 years

Source: Dealroom

↗ 11th in Europe for unicorns produced over time

Source: Dealroom

↗ One of the big 20 across Europe and MENA for all-time VC track record.

Source: Dealroom

More diverse specialisms

✓ Now rated in top 30 life sciences hubs globally

Source: Savillas

✓ 8th in Europe for fast-growing SaaS firms

Source: Sifted

✓ Remains a top 20 global fintech hub

Source: IFZ Fintech Index

✓ Top 10% for share of new jobs in Digital & Engineering

Source: TBoC Research based on 40 global cities

1st

Source: Nature, among 12 small cities

10th

Source: TBoC research, based on Sifted. Out of all European cities.

for its innovation culture, support to start-ups and collaboration

Presence of European fastest-growing start-ups


Innovation headlines in Oslo

Oslo’s innovation imperative is to move decisively on the talent and R&D to meet the opportunity in contested science and technology industries.


Other cities are expanding their talent pipeline. Oslo is not yet a go-to location for international innovative companies, which suggests it needs to keep developing more critical mass in cutting edge specialisms and a wider variety of qualified people across key disciplines and experience levels.

Meanwhile, Oslo has to respond to the fact many cities have been figuring out how to generate more R&D intensiveness, scientific output and industry-academia collaboration.


Depth of talent pool remains a risk

 Fallen outside the top 10 in Europe for degree attainment, overtaken by Copenhagen, Zurich.

Source: Eurostat


 High-tech jobs base – Oslo is outside the top 25 in Europe.

Source: Eurostat


 Middle of the pack for tech industry employment growth over the past 5 years.

Source: CBRE

Others have more R&D drivers

 Down 22 places for leading R&D-spending technology companies.

Source: HSE

 The most innovative fast-growing companies typically have 10x as many jobs in a global city than they currently do in Oslo.



Destination

Oslo's growing destination appeal

Oslo's investment in museums, and the growing credibility of its dining and music scenes, are driving a faster uptick in visitors.

Oslo is a more established event and convention choice, a backdrop to more global movie productions, and the city's skyline and streets are gaining more renown.

The next step is to develop a year-round proposition and experiences for more generations and audiences.

Cost also remains a barrier, especially for younger and more budget-conscious visitors.

4th

Source: Planet Cruise

best city to
see live music

5th

Source: IMDb

up-and-coming
European
city for cinema

+20
places for

Source: ICCA

high-level conferences
since 2014

Among
10 least

Source: Backpacker Index

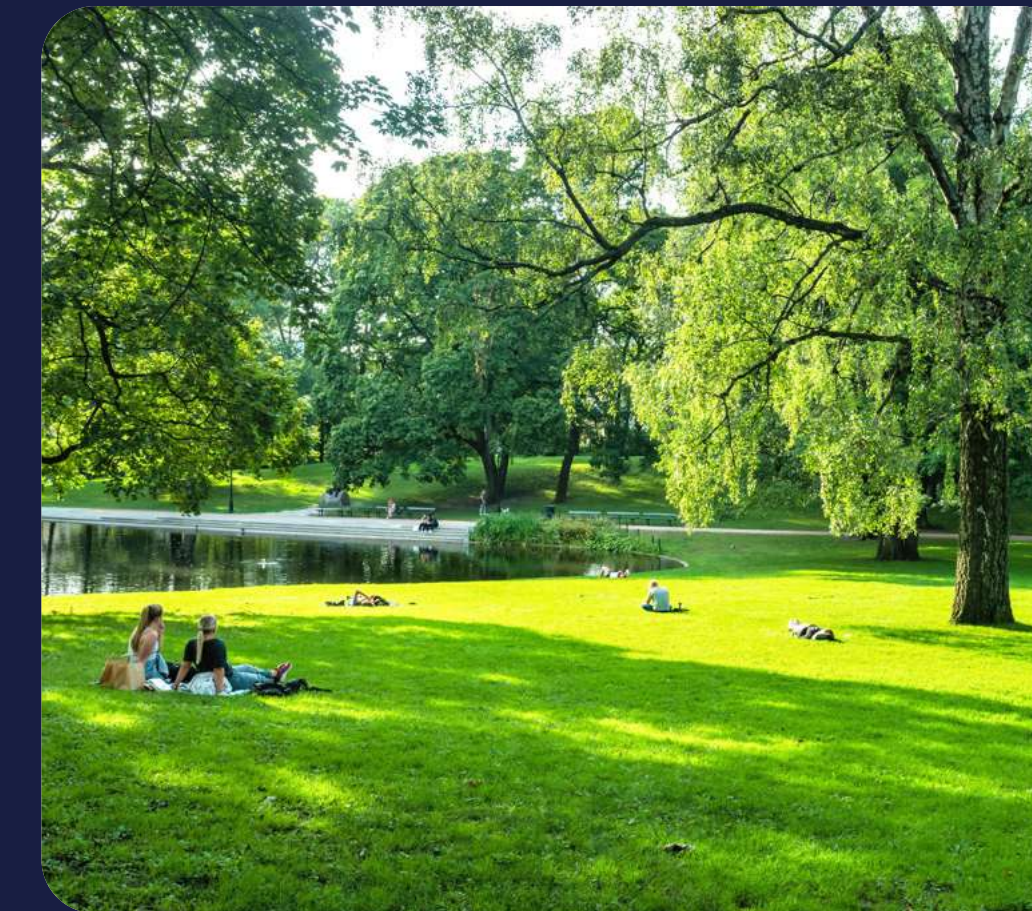
budget friendly
destinations for the
past 10 years

Oslo's visitor identity is building

- In global media Oslo now gains **13%** more coverage of its visitor assets than the average of similar high calibre cities.
- Overall sentiment about the visitor offer is **15%** more positive than comparable capitals.

But tasked to keep differentiating among the Nordics

- Global media coverage is still 10% below other Nordic capitals.
- Sentiment about Nordic capitals' visitor offer is even more positive at **+43%**.
- Growth in expressed interest in travel to Oslo is **1% down** on other Nordic capitals over the last 2 years.



"Norway 's capital manages to combine the urban pleasures of a bustling city with the easy-going lifestyle of a city where nature is omnipresent."

Le Figaro



"Oslo's urban planning operation is impressive. They are even adding a beach to a very modern housing neighbourhood..."

La Vanguardia



"Norway's healthy urban heart combines the joys of country living with the conveniences a city has to offer."

The Daily Telegraph

Local place identity has room to deepen

Global media is starting to recognise Oslo’s distinct mosaic of places. Oslo is now **8%** above average for the share of coverage of the city’s places, natural and visitor amenities.

Visitor interest in Oslo's specific places has increased **17%** in two years, faster than the rest of Norway (although slower than Copenhagen - +29%).

Yet interest in Oslo's place offer is only **1/6th** that of Norway’s – lower than Copenhagen, Dublin and Amsterdam’s share of their countries, although 2x higher Auckland’s share of New Zealand.

Revealing Oslo’s character and authenticity

Visitors do not perceive Oslo's local charm and distinctiveness as often as in other cities.

- Oslo's welcome and authenticity is **18%** less often noted than in other centres, 21% below Amsterdam.
[Source: TripAdvisor](#)
- The breadth of curated 'local' experiences is **74%** narrower than other cities, adjusted for visitation.
[Source: Airbnb & Tripadvisor](#)

Bjørvika

"And yet it seems [Oslo's] time has come: new architecture and design, nature, understatement and Nordic irony."

"A city with a surprise around every corner"

The New York Times

Aker Brygge

"Aker Brygge district [is] the beating heart of the city."

Le Figaro

"Oslo has awakened from its slumber since the turn of the millennium and is boasting new architectural wonders near the harbor and coast."

Bild

Grünerløkka

"Any trip to Oslo should include a visit to Grunerlokka; to Oslo what Williamsburg is to New York, or Dalston is to London."

The Times

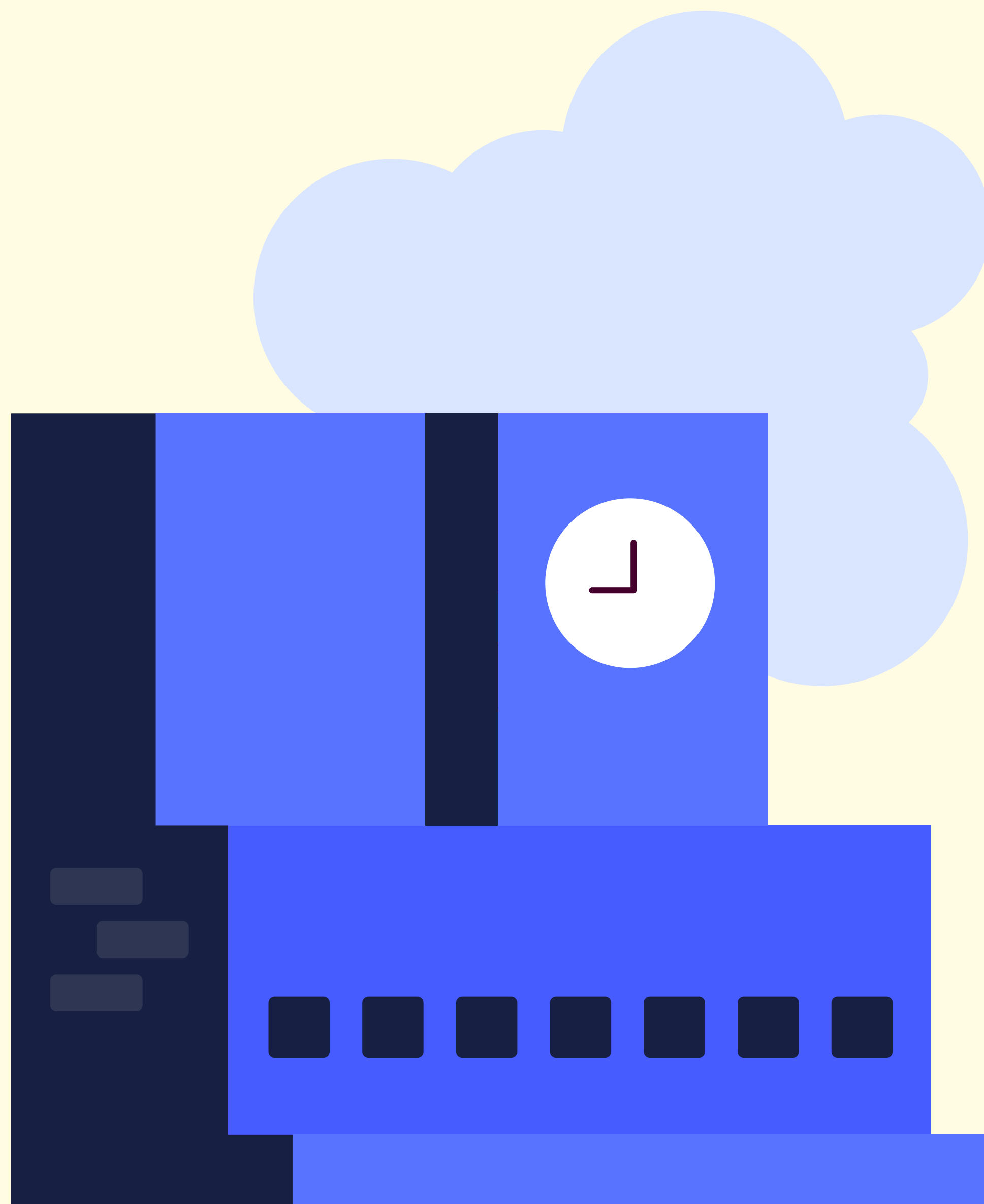
"The **Tjuvholmen** neighborhood, one of the newest urban developments in Oslo, is a compendium of modern architecture, very lively terraces"

La Vanguardia



Oslo and Norway

Oslo and Norway



Not only is Oslo's reputation strongly shaped by the reputation of Norway. Its prospects also rely on strong enabling frameworks set at a national level on trade, business, taxation, immigration, R&D, diplomacy, and systems integration.

As with other capital cities, these frameworks are usually intended to reflect the advantages that Oslo generates in terms of tax revenue, skills, productivity and brand - that the whole nation benefits from.

There are many areas where Norway's current performance reflects positively on Oslo's competitiveness – the rule of law, government effectiveness, high trust,

and green credentials. Norway's brand is among the top 20 most admired globally and its residents are viewed to be among the happiest in the world.

These raise Oslo's appeal to residents, visitors and investors alike – especially in a times of turbulence in other nations.

But there are also areas where national deficits also constrain Oslo's potential or expose weaknesses.

Oslo has to stay vigilant that national frameworks uphold the city's capacity to achieve its long-term ambitions.

Norway's fundamentals reinforce Oslo's competitiveness in 3 key areas:

Good governance

Norway is 3rd for Governance Performance, and 2nd for Prosperity Governance

Sustainability

Norway is 3rd behind Switzerland and Sweden for 'acts for the environment'

Talent

Norway is 7th for Talent Competitiveness

These help Oslo to be rated Top 5 for Governance, and top 15 for Talent Conditions.

In some areas Norway's national credentials only partly deliver for Oslo:

Innovation. Norway is 21st in Global Innovation Index while Oslo remains outside the top 100 S&T clusters. This reflects nationwide issues of knowledge absorption and diffusion.

Global brand. Norway is 17th for all round national brand, whereas Oslo is only 46th (Brand Finance).

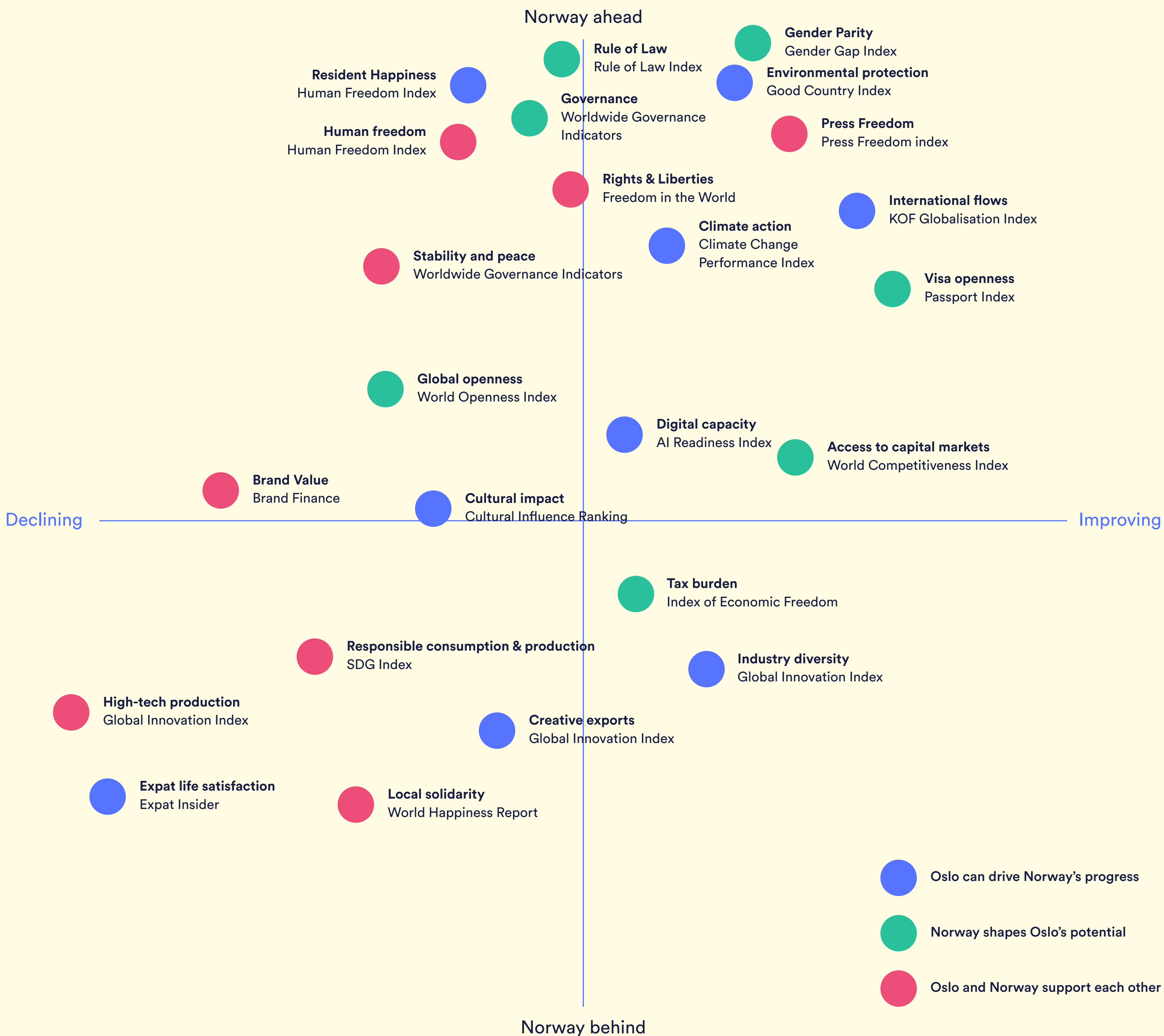
And there are areas where Norway's progress is a drag on Oslo's ambitions:

Decarbonisation. Greenhouse gas reductions in Oslo are happening at nearly twice the pace (28% to 15%) of Norway as a whole (2009-2022).

Digital leadership. Norway's moderate progress on internet adoption and bandwidth constrains the market for Oslo businesses (NRI)

Influence. Norway has lost 10 places in global peace index in 10 years, and in another measure it has lost 20 places.

Norway's current spectrum of performance



Oslo and Norway together in a changing world

Oslo can drive Norway's progress in:

- **Fast-tracking and demonstrating climate transition.** Through new energy and storage, plus green economy development
- **Diversifying into growth industries.** including those at the intersection of science, technology and creativity that rely on urban settings.
- **Enhancing digital capacity in commerce and society.**
- **Talent appeal.** Through modelling a high quality of work-life.

As other capital cities are learning to, Oslo needs to stay alert and proactive as to how Norway can best shape the city's competitive advantage:

- **The tax frameworks** that encourage fairness and reinvestment.
- **The openness and agility** to the needs of talent, families and capital.
- **R&D and commercialisation.** Through effective coordination and incentives.
- **Norway's system-of-cities** – building stronger links, ecosystems and relationships between Norway's larger cities.



Photo: Getty Images

Peace

Norway’s status as a front-running democracy frames recognition of Oslo

NATION INDEX	POSITION
<div>Freedom Index</div> <div>Source: Reporters without Borders</div>	1 st out of 180
<div>Fragile States Index</div> <div>Source: Fund for Peace</div>	1 st out of 179
<div>Democracy Index</div> <div>Source: Economist Intelligence Unit</div>	1 st out of 167
<div>Open Government</div> <div>Source: World Justice Project</div>	1 st out of 142
<div>Social Safety and Security</div> <div>Source: Institute for Economics & Peace</div>	2 nd out of 163
<div>Rule of Law</div> <div>Source: World Justice Project</div>	2 nd out of 142
<div>Social Governance</div> <div>Source: Anholt & Co.</div>	2 nd out of 50
<div>Corruption Perceptions</div> <div>Source: Transparency International</div>	5 th out of 180

However many other nations now compete for influence and diplomatic reach

NATION INDEX	POSITION
<div>Nation Brand</div> <div>Source: Anholt & Co.</div>	12 th out of 50
<div>Global Soft Power</div> <div>Source: Brand Finance</div>	17 th out of 193
<div>Good Country Index</div> <div>Source: Anholt & Co.</div>	17 th out of 174
<div>Ongoing Domestic & International Conflict</div> <div>Source: Institute for Economics & Peace</div>	49 th out of 163
<div>Global Diplomacy</div> <div>Source: Lowy Institute</div>	42 nd out of 66

Oslo gets ‘good governance’ credit

CITY INDEX	POSITION
Governance and Institutions (SP-ESC) Source: Kutty et al.	1st out of 35
Social Cohesion and Solidarity (SP-ESC) Source: Kutty et al.	2nd out of 35
Smartness Source: IMD	2nd out of 146
Governance Source: Brand Finance	4th out of 100
Governance Source: Oxford Economics	6th out of 1000
Governance Source: Kearney	7th out of 156

Oslo’s advantages on cohesion, participation and influence are less clear cut

CITY INDEX	POSITION
Social Cohesion Source: Anholt & Co.	12th out of 183
Governance Source: Brand Finance	17th out of 174
Corruption as a local concern Source: Anholt & Co.	26th out of 146
Political Engagement Source: Institute for Economics & Peace	67th out of 156

Oslo is currently **World No. 6** for peace city coverage, by overall rate of engagement, news prominence, and online content (last 12 months).

1. Geneva
2. Montevideo
3. Montreal
4. Doha
5. Brussels
6. **Oslo**
7. Berlin
8. The Hague
9. San José
10. Vienna

Source: The Business of Cities Research. Based on analysis of 15 Peace Cities globally. Per capita global references in User Search, News, Digital Content – across key terms in peace, reconciliation, human rights.

Oslo's diplomatic scale

43rd

globally for diplomatic footprint

6th

among small cities (<2m)

Source: Lowy Institute – Global Diplomacy Index

Oslo is still part of a distinguished cohort of cities associated with reconciliation and democratic values.

However:

- The Nobel brand power sees Oslo more narrowly viewed as an ambassador for 'peace' than a bastion of human ideals more generally.
- There are more cities now gaining prominence for parallel roles in their own region or sphere of influence (e.g. Doha, Bogotá, Singapore).
- In 2025 city reputations in this area appear to be more beholden to the behaviour and norms of their respective nation states.
- The reputation value cities can derive is more fragile in a world experiencing rising geopolitical conflict and unilateralism.

Oslo's acquired peace brand has to be continually leveraged in new ways, to broaden the ways that Oslo communicates and commits itself as an international and inspirational city.



Risks and rewards



Photo: Getty Images

Unavoidables for Oslo



Business appeal

Oslo has been falling behind for business activity.

The higher cost of doing business is a factor. Other cities have also been competing aggressively, offering lower tax rates, simplified processes and more affordable talent costs.

Technology competition

Oslo still leads for technology adoption to benefit residents' quality of life. But other cities have caught up when it comes to quality and efficiency of digital infrastructure. Oslo's technological advantages from 10 years ago are no longer enough.

As technology requirements are changing, and demand for energy and data increases, Oslo has to keep investing in its regional scale and infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the innovation economy.

Red flags

National factors appear to see Oslo fall behind on business climate and talent friendliness.

Oslo’s technology edge has been diluted as requirements change and demand surges.

! Commercial scale

Since 2023 Oslo has fallen out of the top 50 for all-round business activity, influence, and connectivity.

Kearney

! Business climate

In 2025 down 6 places globally for the real cost of doing business, based on personal and corporate tax rates.

HSE

! Innovation assets

18 cities have overtaken Oslo for having a more pro-innovation collaboration environment and key assets such as supercomputers.

HSE

! Reputation as a sport city

Down 8 places globally for all-round reputation for sport

BCW

! Digital reach

Down 26 places globally for its digital infrastructure and information/media flows

Kearney

! Broadband speed

Down 23 for fixed broadband speed and down 12 places for mobile broadband speed in 18 months.

Speedtest

What next?

Fit the bill for talent
and technology

Play at Europe's
top table

Convene
whole-of-Norway
approaches

Oslo's story and
its tellers

Unveil Oslo's
places and people

Preserve
hard-won advantages