

# We build a sustainable Espoo together

Sustainable development is both a necessity and an opportunity for Espoo. As the city grows, we must take care of our residents' and our nature's wellbeing and ensure the comfort and safety of our living environments. We are also being challenged by global crises. Climate change is accelerating, democracy is under threat, and inequality is on the rise. As a pioneering city, we are courageous in searching for new solutions. We also learn from others.

As a City organisation, we are committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Agenda 2030. A city that is ecologically, socially, culturally and economically sustainable can offer a good and safe place to live and realise your dreams. As the Espoo population is growing more diverse, we must ensure equal opportunities for everyone to be included and make a difference. We protect the diverse nature of Espoo and people's access to local natural environments.

The deck of cards you are holding now aims to offer information, in a minimalist visual format, about the progress on the sustainable development goals in Espoo. The cards can be used to support education in schools, as a business card for the City's partners, and as learning materials for everyone who is interested in sustainable development.

We need everyone's contribution to achieve our sustainable development goals  
– We build a sustainable Espoo together.

## **Kai Mykkänen**

Mayor  
Espoo



For more information about our work on the UN Agenda 2030, please contact:  
[ville.taajamaa@espoo.fi](mailto:ville.taajamaa@espoo.fi)

See the extended and annually updated  
digital version of the deck of cards



# 1 NO POVERTY



## 1 NO POVERTY



**End poverty in all its forms everywhere.** *There is little life-threatening poverty in Espoo, but many have difficulties in affording children's hobbies, exercising flexibly, going to cultural events or even ensuring their electricity supply.*

Espoo measures poverty, e.g., by the number of low-income persons and families with children who receive social assistance.

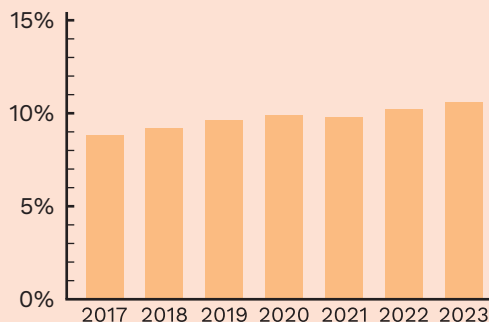
A low-income person is someone who lives in a household whose income is under 60% of the average income of a Finnish household.

Social assistance is granted to families with children whose own income is not sufficient for essential expenses and reasonable housing.

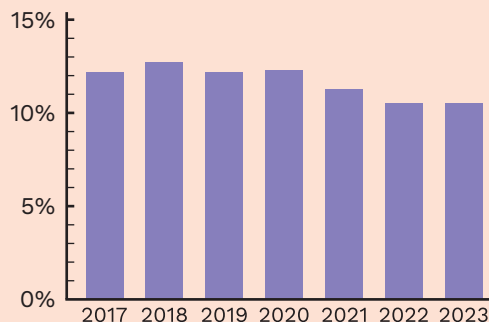
In 2023, 10.6%, or 32,700 persons, of the Espoo dwelling population lived in a low-income household. The percentage of low-income persons in Espoo has grown since the previous year, but it remains clearly lower than in Finland as a whole or in Helsinki, for example.

The percentage of families with children who received social assistance was at 10.5% in 2023. The percentage is higher than in the whole of Finland (8.5%).

**Percentage of low-income persons of Espoo population**



**Percentage of families with children who applied for social assistance in Espoo**



# 2 ZERO HUNGER



## 2 ZERO HUNGER



**End hunger.** Free school meals have been offered in Finland for more than 80 years. However, not everyone makes use of them. Some Espoo residents even have to give up food, medication or medical appointments due to lacking funds. In Espoo, the Family Centre brings the services for families with children into one place.

» Many young people in Espoo skip their school meal.



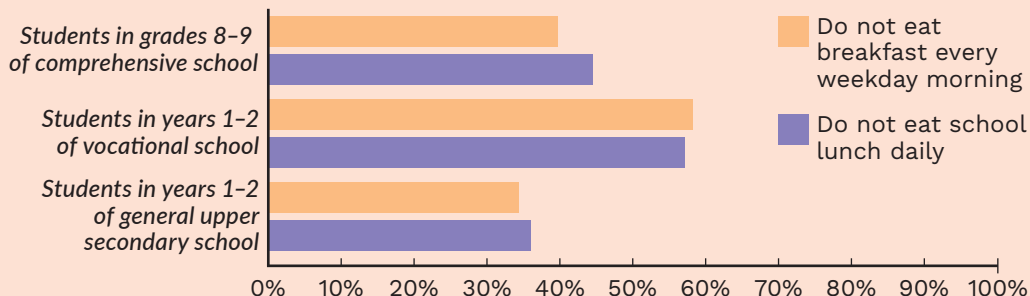
Even though things are generally good in Espoo, not all residents feel that they have access to sufficient food, and they need to skip meals for one reason or another. However, even in places where there is no shortage of food, the food may be of low nutritional quality and have a negative effect on people's health.

### No money for food, medication or medical appointments



In 2023, approximately one in five working-age adults (aged 20–64) had to compromise on food or healthcare due to lacking funds.

### Young people who do not have breakfast or school lunch (2023)



# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

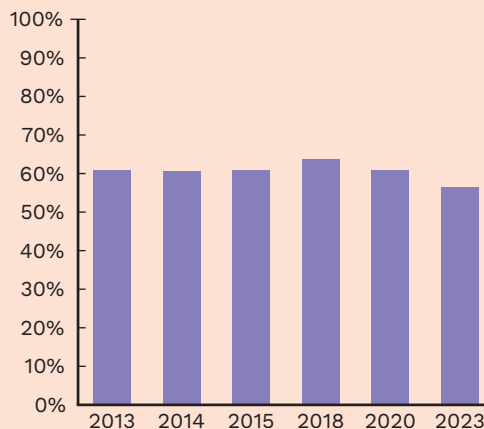


**Ensure healthy lives.** Satisfaction with life and quality of life are essential factors in wellbeing. Satisfaction with their quality of life is related to a person's living environment and expectations. Healthy habits are the foundation of wellbeing.

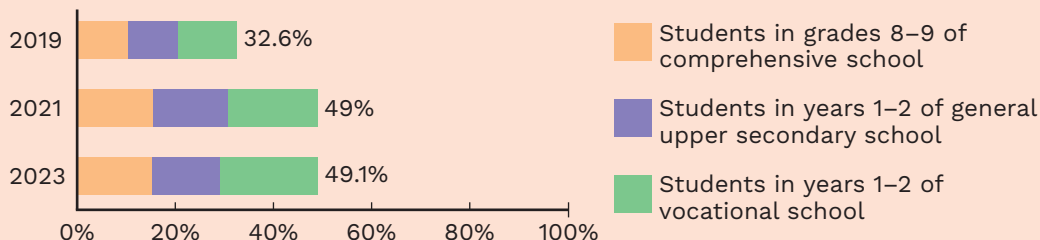
» Loneliness may weaken a person's health and be a risk factor for marginalisation.

People of all ages have a right to a good quality of life. The perceived quality of life refers to an individual's assessment of their life in the cultural environment and value system where they live and in relation to their personal goals, expectations, values and other aspects that are important to them. Among Espoo residents over 20, their satisfaction with their quality of life has decreased somewhat since 2020.

#### Adults who feel their quality of life is generally good



#### Many young people feel lonely





# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION





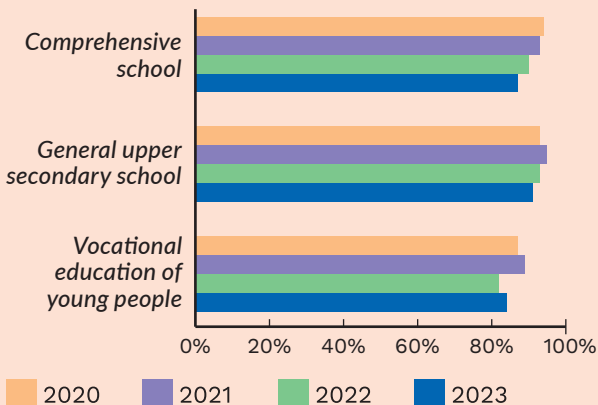
### **Ensure inclusive and equitable education and learning opportunities.**

*Finland employs a compulsory education model, which starts at the age of six and ends when a young person turns 18 or completes secondary-level education. A good education provides good conditions for a successful career.*

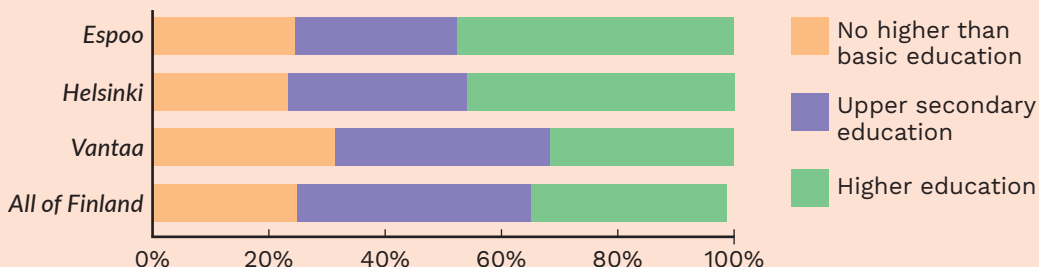
Espoo residents have a higher level of education than the overall population of Finland (and that of neighbouring municipalities). Almost half of Espoo residents have a degree from higher education.

Espoo residents are happy with the education services, as over 90% of them believe the services are handled well or very well in Espoo. As for early childhood education, the satisfaction rate is slightly lower (82%), but it has increased from the 2022 level.

### **How well are the following services handled in Espoo** (‘very well’ or ‘well,’ % of respondents)



### **Population aged 15 or older by education level (2023)**



**5**

**GENDER  
EQUALITY**



## 5 GENDER EQUALITY



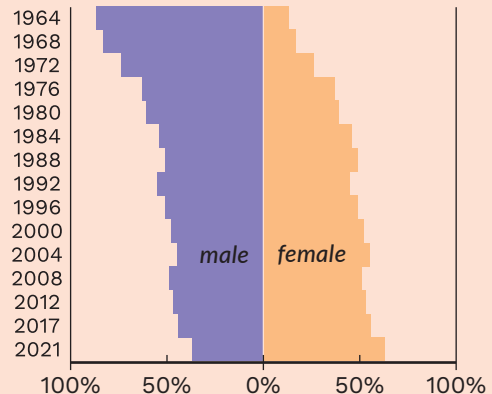
**Achieve gender equality.** Democracy requires that everyone has the opportunity to influence their community, regardless of gender. Young women and minorities, in particular, face hate speech, which reduces their willingness to engage in politics.

It can be considered a manifestation of gender equality that everyone has the opportunity to reach the highest political positions. In a municipality, this would be the council, which wields the highest decision-making power.

Gender is a matter of self-identification for each person. The freedom to live your life without experiencing physical threat or sexual violence or harassment is an essential factor in realising gender equality.

Have the phenomena of physical threat and sexual violence become normalised in our culture?

**Male and female representation in Espoo City Council**



**Physical threat and sexual violence experienced by young people (2023)**

	Physical threat		Sexual violence	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Students in grades 8–9 of comprehensive school	23.8%	14.5%	6.5%	11.4%
Students in years 1–2 of vocational school	13.4%	18.8%	5.1%	16.2%
Students in years 1–2 of general upper secondary school	11.6%	7.1%	3.3%	10.9%

# 6

## CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



**Clean water and sanitation.** In a city, good water supply involves both easy access to clean tap water and good wastewater management. Water supply is at an excellent level in Espoo.

### » Water supply is at an excellent level in Espoo

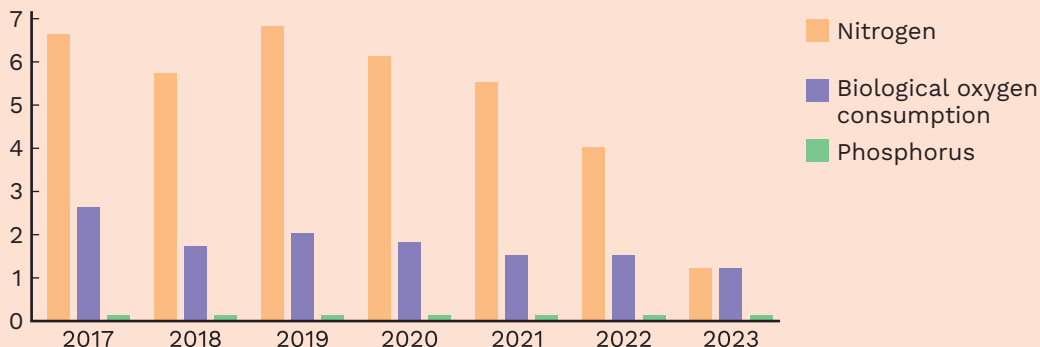


Almost all Espoo homes (98%) are connected to the municipal water and sewage network. The daily water consumption of Espoo residents was about 127 litres per capita in 2023. Consumption has remained at the same level for the past few years.

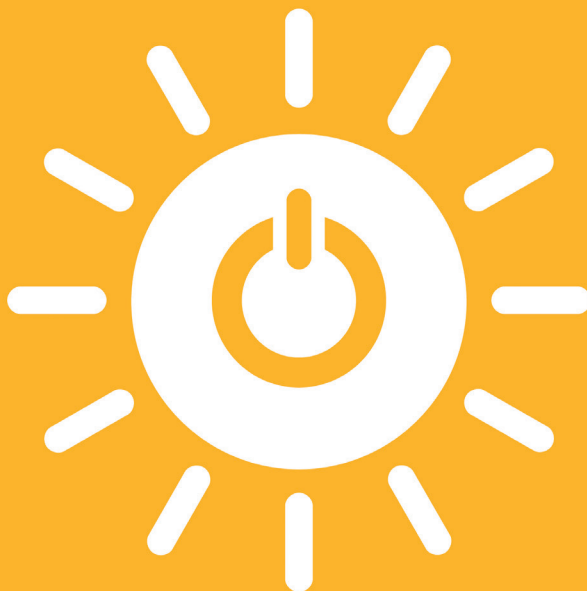
Wastewater load refers to the amount of various substances that the residents, companies and other operators in the area let into water systems along with wastewater. The most commonly monitored figures are the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen, and the amount of oxygen being consumed by the substances in wastewater. The aim is to reduce the wastewater load.

Wastewater load in Espoo has decreased since 2019.

**Community wastewater load in Espoo** (daily grams per capita)



# 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

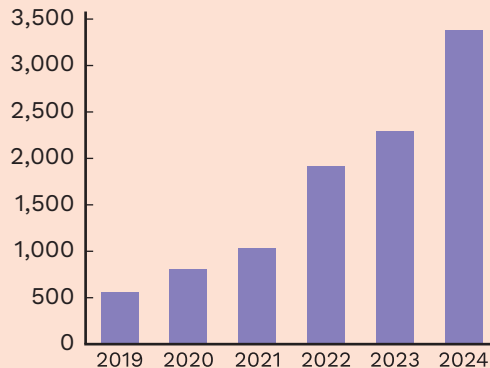


**Clean energy.** Energy involves things such as the production, distribution, storage, energy efficiency and energy conservation of heating and electricity. The aim is to provide all residents and companies with low-emission, reliable and reasonably priced energy.

Energy production generates most of the City's climate emissions. Most of these are generated from district heating. Espoo, along with the energy company Fortum, is committed to reducing carbon emissions of district heating in the 2020s. Using coal in Espoo's district heating production ceased in April 2024.

Other uses of renewable energy are also a way to reduce emissions. By reducing energy consumption, we can achieve financial savings and reduce the pressure to increase energy production and develop the electrical grid.

**Number of solar panel systems in Espoo**



**Total emissions of district heating in Espoo (1,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e)**





**8**

# DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH





**Work and economic growth.** The City of Espoo is actively working with the local employers and R&D operators to promote sustainable economic growth, increase jobs and improve employment rates. The City offers entrepreneurs, companies and jobseekers high-quality and effective services and attracts new companies and investments into Espoo.

Meaningful work, sufficient pay and good working conditions are important factors in an individual's wellbeing. Most jobs are in private companies. In addition to companies, prominent employers also include the City of Espoo and Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County.

Espoo's innovation community creates notable innovations and new businesses that promote sustainable development.

The post-pandemic decrease in unemployment took a turn for the better in spring 2023 when unemployment started increasing, instead.

# EUR 182 million

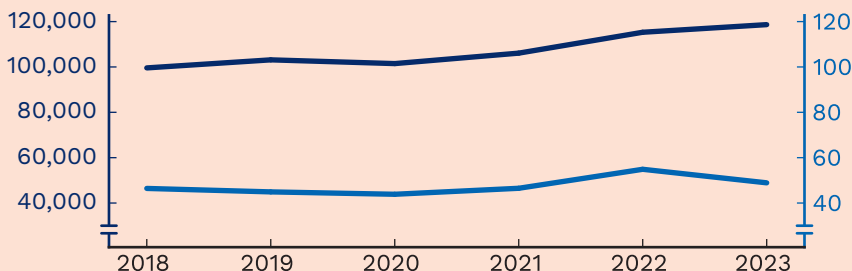
» Funding raised  
by Espoo-based  
start-ups in 2024



## Trend comparison of turnover and number of employees

Number of employees

Turnover (EUR bn)



# 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**Innovation and infrastructure.** Infrastructure, meaning services and structures, will be needed to allow for a sustainable economic sphere. For example, company turnovers are on the increase in the area around the West Metro line. The light rail line Raidejokeri, which started operating in autumn 2023, will allow for increased sustainable mobility and vitality, for its part.

The City's measures in construction and steering construction work impact the building of sustainable infrastructure. Cooperation and partnerships with universities, other education and research institutions, organisations and businesses allow for new innovations and economic sustainability.

The City aims to rely on its support measures and generally business-favourable atmosphere to attract new innovative companies and investments to Espoo. This has succeeded, as Espoo

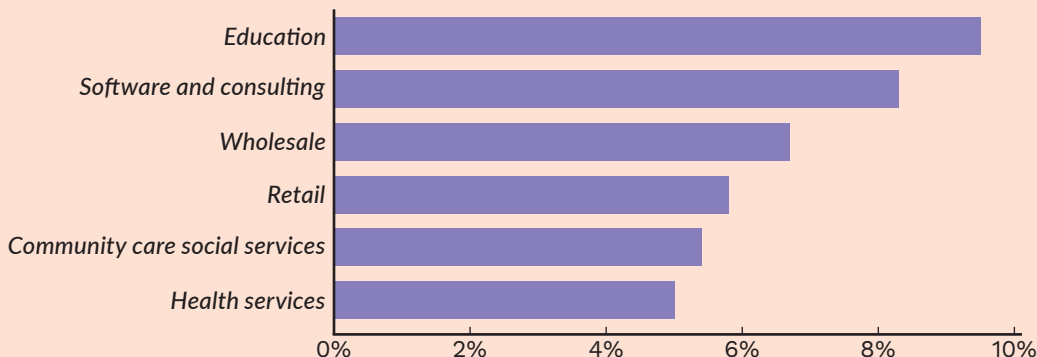
# 1,400

» Patent applications filed by Espoo residents in 2023

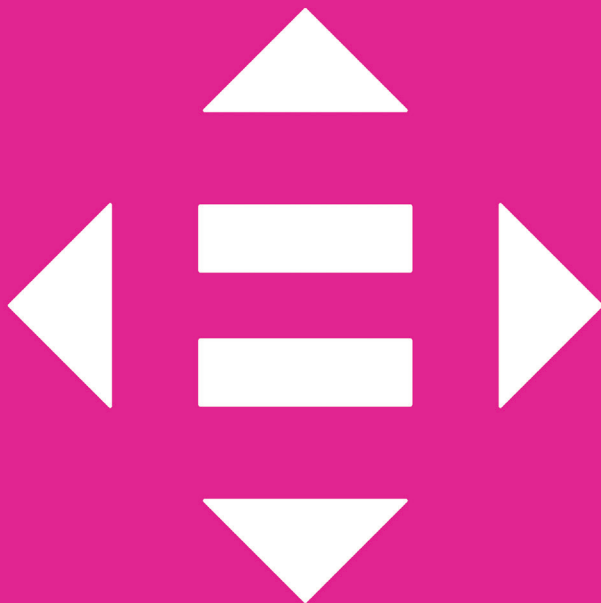


was sixth in the comparison of patent applications submitted in European cities in 2023, with its 1,400 patent applications.

### **Largest industries in Espoo by number of jobs** (percentage of all jobs in 2023)



# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



**Reduce inequality.** The socio-economic qualities of the Espoo population, such as their income level, education and health, are the best in Finland. The percentage of the population who speak a foreign first language will grow in the future. This is taken into consideration in City operations, especially in services related to education and employment.

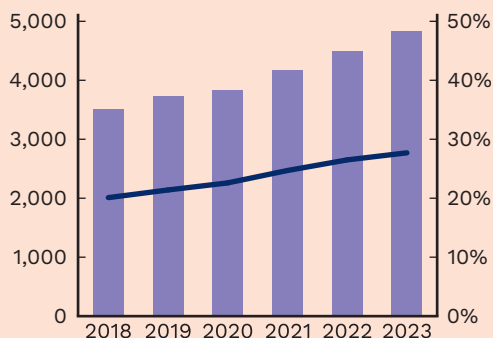
» Offering equal education opportunities to all population groups contributes to the development of the Espoo community



In 2023, 8.4% of graduates from Finnish-language general upper secondary schools spoke a first language other than Finnish. In vocational schools, this percentage was 25.2% of graduates. The number of students who speak a foreign language, meaning a first language other than Finnish or Swedish, and who complete a vocational upper secondary qualification is increasing rapidly.

The number of children who speak a foreign language attending early childhood education (daycare) has grown steadily over the past few years. In 2023, over one in four children in early childhood education spoke a foreign language.

**Children speaking a foreign language in early childhood education**



■ Number of children  
— Percentage of children attending early childhood education



# 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





**Make the city safe and sustainable.** Rapid population growth, the ageing population and the increase in the foreign-language population will also increase service needs in Espoo and challenge both sustainable construction and service production. Facilitating mobility is an important aspect of a functional city.

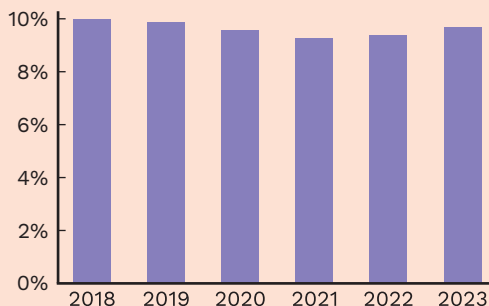
**9.7%**



» Percentage of persons living in cramped homes of all households (2023)

In 2023, a little under one in ten households (= persons living permanently in the same dwelling) were living in a cramped home. The percentage is higher than the national average.

**Percentage of households living in cramped homes of all households**



**Fully electric and hybrid cars**

**23%**

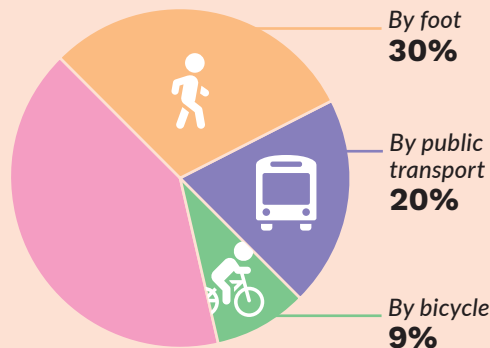
» of the vehicle population (2024)

**50%**

» of first registrations (2024)

Sustainable mobility is an essential part of Espoo's goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

**More than half of all trips are taken by sustainable transport modes**





# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



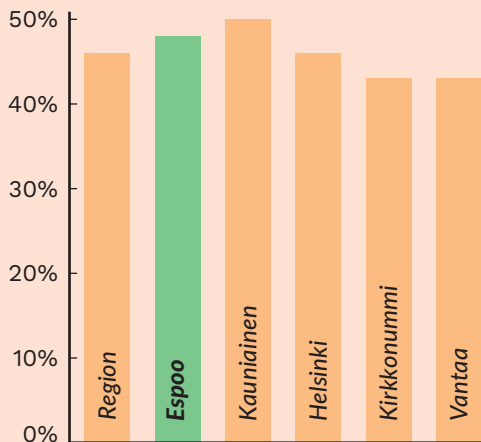
**Sustainable consumption and production patterns.** The City of Espoo promotes sustainable public procurements and encourages all communities in the city to operate sustainably in their production and distribution chains. The consumption choices made by residents and housing companies are an important part of sustainable development and responsibility.

It is responsible to only buy new things when you need them, share products and services, and repair and reuse old things. Climate emissions show how we live and consume. Of consumption-based emissions, more than two thirds are generated by services, food and goods produced outside of Espoo.

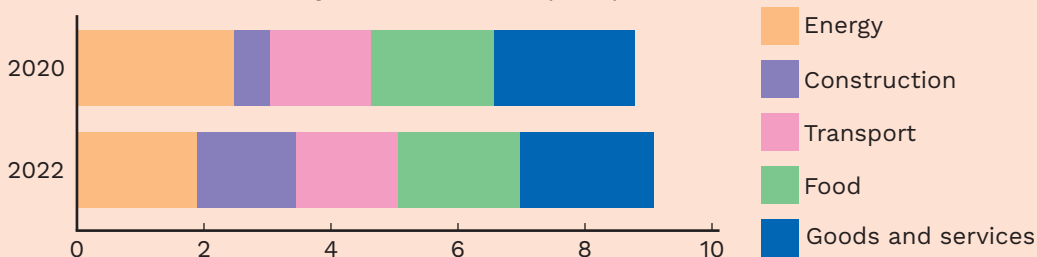
In 2023, Espoo households' amount of waste per capita was the lowest in the Metropolitan Area, while the recycling rate was the second-highest after Kauniainen.

One third of consumption emissions came from energy consumption and construction in 2022.

**Recycling rate of domestic waste (2023)**



**Climate emissions of consumption (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per capita)**



# 13

# CLIMATE ACTION





**Take action to combat climate change.** Espoo has the ambitious goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The definition of carbon neutrality is that a city only generates the amount of emissions that it can offset in a year.

The Carbon Neutral Espoo 2030 Roadmap is Espoo's plan to tackle climate change. It outlines the city's actions and collaboration with residents and partners to reach its carbon neutrality goal. The main sources of emissions are building heating, transport, and electricity use. These emissions are being reduced through cleaner electricity production and the growing use of electric vehicles. The use of coal in district heating ended in April 2024. The Climate Watch platform also tracks the city's climate actions and showcases Espoo's Climate Budget.

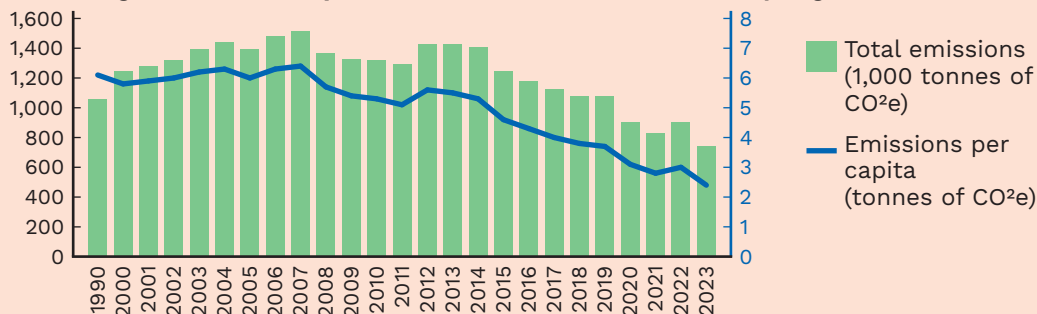
# -18%

» Climate emissions decreased faster than anticipated in 2023. There was a decrease in district heating, electricity for consumption, and transport.

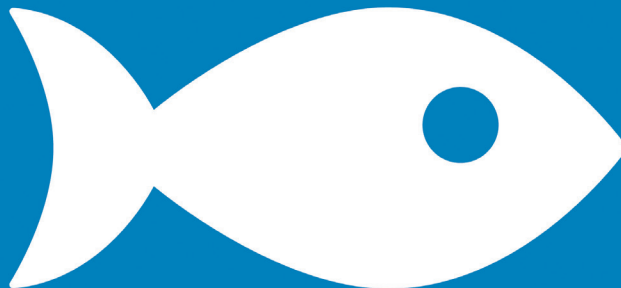
» Espoo's climate emissions per capita are the lowest in the Metropolitan Area for eight years in a row



**Emissions generated in the Espoo area included in the carbon neutrality target**



# 14 LIFE BELOW WATER





**Conserve oceans and seas.** Espoo is a maritime city. Almost half of the area, 216 km<sup>2</sup>, is water, of which the sea area makes up 158 km<sup>2</sup>. Espoo cares about protecting its waters. The Water Protection Action Plan for 2022–2027 lists the actions to improve water quality in the next few years.


## » Espoo cares about protecting its waters.

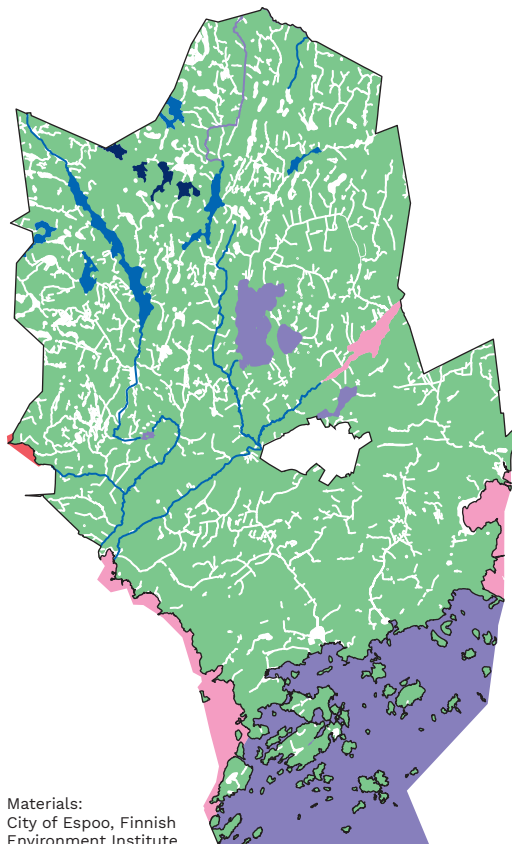


The greatest challenge in Espoo's water protection is reducing the load of nutrients and hazardous substances on water systems as climate change increases runoffs in the catchment area. In a growing city, improving the condition of water systems requires much work and new solutions.

Many Espoo lakes are in good condition, some even in excellent condition. The ecological status of the marine area is poorer: coastal waters are in a satisfactory condition, while bay areas are only in a passable condition.

### Ecological status of water systems (2022)

 Excellent	 Passable
 Good	 Poor
 Satisfactory	 No classification



Materials:  
City of Espoo, Finnish  
Environment Institute

# 15

## LIFE ON LAND



## 15 LIFE ON LAND



**Protect terrestrial ecosystems.** Espoo is growing and being built increasingly rapidly, and dense construction is being directed at areas that used to be in a natural state. Biodiversity is being secured and increased through plans such as the Nature-Smart Espoo roadmap.

Local nature and conserving biodiversity are important factors in building a pleasant living environment. One way to preserve biodiversity is protected natural reserves. Nuuksio National Park is the largest single protected area in Espoo.

By the end of 2024, protected areas amounted to almost 4,000 hectares, which is 7.5% of Espoo's overall area.

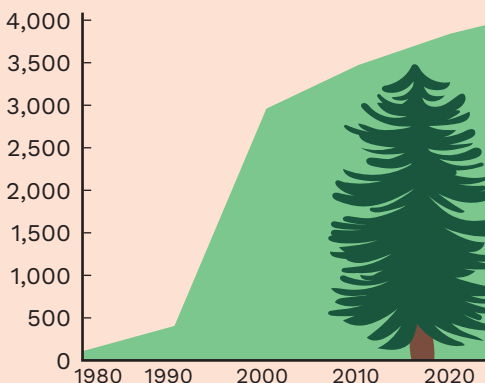
# 7.5%

» of Espoo's  
area  
is protected

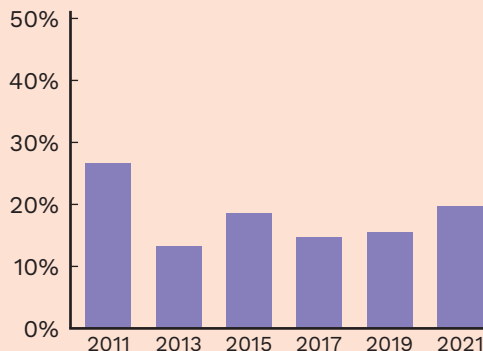


Almost one fifth of Espoo forests were over 100 years old in 2021. The number decreased in the 2010s.

**Protected areas in Espoo (hectares)**



**Share of trees aged over 100 years old in Espoo forest land**





# 16

## PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS





**Build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.** *Trust and involvement in political and social systems is essential in a functional democracy. We hope and consider it to be important that the community's decision-making and activities would involve residents from various backgrounds.*

The City of Espoo continues to employ over 10,000 people, even though the personnel of Espoo social and healthcare services moved to the Western Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County in 2023. In 2023, the City had 10,957 employees.

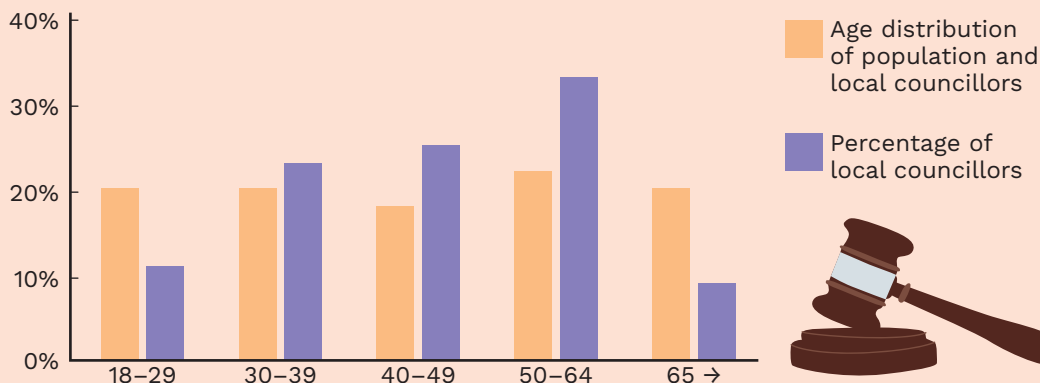
Younger age groups remain underrepresented in the City Council, but their proportion of councillors is higher than that of all local councillors in Finland.

**54.5%**

» of City of  
Espoo  
employees  
feel the  
organisation's  
decision-  
making  
is fair (2024)



**Age distribution of population and local councillors (2021)**



# 17

# PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





**Implementation of sustainable development and partnerships.** Achieving the sustainable development goals requires partnership, inclusion and cooperation. Networks between companies, organisations, other cities, universities and research institutes both in Finland and abroad will allow for efficient learning and exchange of information.

Espoo wishes to be a pioneer in the development of municipal services. Services are developed for residents' needs and in cooperation with residents. In 2023, the City supported organisation activities with 2.5 million euros.

Residents' satisfaction with services is monitored via an annual survey. One essential figure being monitored is the home municipality index, which is a 'satisfaction average' (on a scale of 1–5) calculated from 51 factors being monitored. The satisfaction of Espoo residents has remained at a good level for a long time.

» Doing things together  
is Espoo's advantage



**Development of the extensive home municipality index in Espoo 2013–2024**

