

ING GLOBAL CITIES
DIGITAL VISIBILITY SERIES
2023

Europe's Most Talked About Cities

2023

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Where digital visibility leads, investment follows



ING Media's research into Europe's most talked about cities, now in its fifth year, provides vital insight into the impact of digital messaging on regions and cities as brands, how this affects investment, where talent concentrates and their reputation as destinations.

ING has identified and ranked the top 60 European cities according to their share of online conversations. While the ranking of Europe's most visible cities has remained largely unchanged, the overall number of mentions has

increased 13%, driven by a return to events and attractions which were stymied by Covid-19 lockdowns.

This year we have extended the research. With the return of coercive hard power in Eastern Europe, the value of cities' persuasive soft power needs re-emphasising. Hard power is visible and destructive. Measuring soft power is a challenge, as it is an often-undefinable construct. In response to this we have created a unique set of indicators to investigate how top European cities compare, measuring

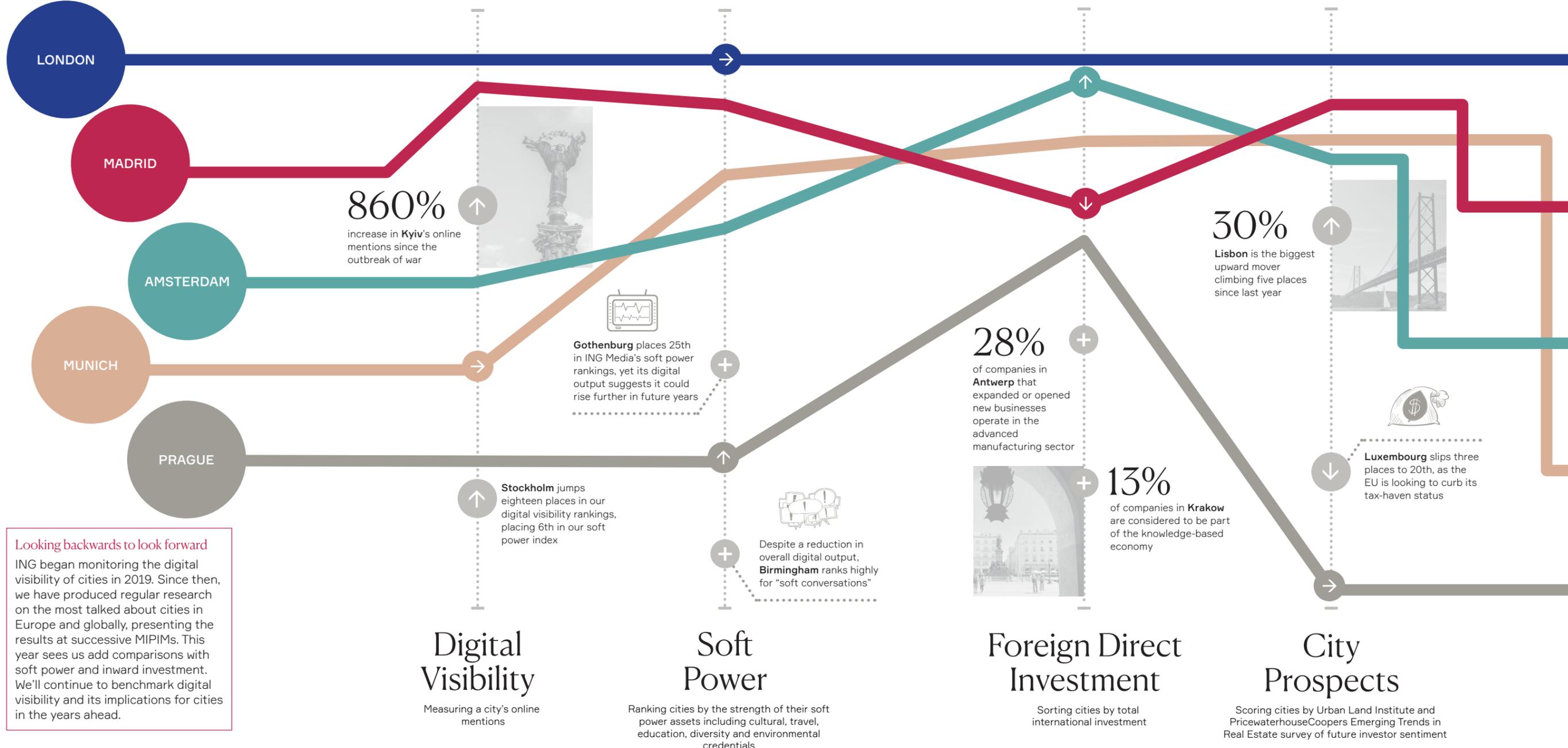
the influence of culture, travel, education, diversity and environmental credentials. Those cities that benefit from soft power can expect to draw higher levels of foreign direct investment. Allied to this we compare city investment and development prospects against the cities' digital visibility data; both important elements of a city's branding.

We show how effective communications is the main driver of these pillars – and what this means for future growth prospects.

The real impact of digital visibility

ING Media has selected a number of European cities as case studies to show how digital visibility influences soft power, foreign direct investment and overall city prospects. We have also highlighted the best city-specific stories for each.

- A city's prospects are not determined by one single element – but improving digital visibility can lead to improved performance.
- Brand building and a positive communications campaign elevates visibility, activating a city's soft power.
- An elevated soft power profile can improve FDI, as investors seek to deploy capital into cultural assets to exercise their own soft power and ESG compliance.
- Future city prospects are dependent on a variety of social and economic indicators, yet scoring highly in digital visibility and soft power, directly influences future investor intent.
- The global energy crisis illuminated conversations around the most energy-resilient Nordic cities, with **Stockholm** (+20), **Copenhagen** (+3), **Helsinki** (+3) and **Oslo** (+2) all ranking higher than in 2021.
- **Glasgow's** digital output returned to a more familiar ranking position after its boost from COP26 – revealing the true power of global events.
- Cities can outperform capitals. **Istanbul** continues to outperform **Ankara**, and **Porto** beats **Lisbon**.



Looking backwards to look forward
 ING began monitoring the digital visibility of cities in 2019. Since then, we have produced regular research on the most talked about cities in Europe and globally, presenting the results at successive MIPIMs. This year sees us add comparisons with soft power and inward investment. We'll continue to benchmark digital visibility and its implications for cities in the years ahead.

ING Cities Ranking

Crowned Jewel

1st - LONDON

London tops our digital visibility ranking for a fifth consecutive year. Also leading our soft power ranking, the city outperforms all its rivals by cultural measurements and number of visitors. It also comes top of FDI and City Prospect rankings. London's ability to communicate its strengths effectively means it is well positioned to retain its position in the future.

Food to Finance

3rd - MADRID

The Spanish capital's soft power ranking is strengthened by UNESCO heritage sites (second only to Rome and Paris) and an established food scene, which means Madrid's continued urbanisation ranks highly for City Prospects. Madrid consolidates its third place in our digital visibility rankings despite being 4% less active than in 2021.

Hotels and Doughnuts

7th - AMSTERDAM

An economy grounded in tourism continues to encourage high levels of FDI. Future sentiment is driven by a commitment to 'doughnut economics', an ambition to ensure everyone has access to a good quality of life, without putting more pressure on the planet. As a result the city has increased its digital visibility by 26%, elevating its city brand.

Green Talent

11th - MUNICH

Munich has increased its digital visibility by 35%, showcasing its environmental credentials by topping the green element of our soft power rankings with high air quality and plentiful open public space. Allied to this, it is using its ability to entice talent to the city to draw in FDI. Munich's city prospects remain high despite its position as a mature investment market.

Knowledge is Power

35th - PRAGUE

Prague excels as a European city with one of the largest numbers of international students. In FDI terms, the city is ranked highly in Human Capital and Lifestyle categories owing to its excellent universities. Prague has increased its digital visibility by 21% since 2021. With over 30,000 businesses in the knowledge economy, a concerted effort to communicate that success would improve its future city prospects.

Scan here for a digital copy of the report, additional city rankings and future research on digital visibility, soft power, FDI and city prospects. Or go to ing-media.com



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complex worlds of *property, investment, architecture,*
regeneration and *culture* to help *brands, organisations*
and *cities* thrive in a CONNECTED WORLD.

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