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Date: 08/11/2017
Reference: BEUC-PR-2017-018

EU proposal on CO₂ targets for cars not going the full mile

Today, the European Commission released its proposal on new CO₂ targets for passenger cars in 2025 and 2030. The proposal is a reflection that the EU is struggling to choose a clear direction when it comes to clean cars.

The European Commission aims to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars by 15% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 (the baseline being 2021). BEUC had argued for a reduction of at least 40% by 2030.

But these targets are only as good as the monitoring programmes that are in place. The latest research^{1 2} shows that real-world CO₂ emissions are much higher than official laboratory values. While the Commission intends to better monitor real world values, it is a pity that it still fails to include an on-the-road test during a car's type approval process.³ We must avoid a repetition of a scenario where progress is only made on paper, rather than in the real world.

Disappointingly, the Commission failed to set a binding market share – also known as a 'mandate' – for electric vehicles. Such a mandatory share, which already exists in other parts of the world⁴, would have rewarded and/or penalised car makers for their efforts to move to cleaner technologies. Without such penalties, it is doubtful that electric cars will be brought to market rapidly, meaning that consumers will not benefit from a reduced cost of driving anytime soon.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General, commented:

"The proposal shows that the European Commission is only trundling along in its attempts to make the EU's cars cleaner. Do they opt for a robust, long-term strategy to bring technologies to market that will cut emissions and the cost of driving? Or do they hold back, so as not to upset the vested short-term interests of the European automotive industry?"

"It appears that, once again, it is the latter. For example, we are worried by the decision not to include a binding market share for electric vehicles. Why is there so much resistance to this, while European car makers are preparing to comply with similar legislation in China? Is there a reason to withhold European consumers from choosing innovative technologies?"

"It is now up to the European Parliament and Member States to strengthen the Commission's proposal. Research⁵ shows that swift EU action is needed to tackle the lack of consumer choice when it comes to cleaner cars. Only this will rid us of the perennial 'chicken or egg'-syndrome when it comes to their uptake. And this uptake will benefit consumers' wallets, as electric vehicles are expected to become cheaper than petrol/diesel cars during the 2020s."

¹ International Council on Clean Transportation (2017) [From laboratory to road: A 2017 update](#)

² [The great fuel consumption scam](#)

³ More info on the ongoing reform to the EU car type approval process here: <http://www.cartestingmaze.eu/>

⁴ In China and the U.S. state of California, for example

⁵ There are still fewer than 50 models of cleaner cars on the market. These may not even always be available to consumers at car dealerships. The number also contrasts with a market of 400+ petrol and diesel vehicles. More info [here](#).

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This press release is part of an activity which has received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Consumer Programme (2014-2020).