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EU sets CO₂ emission targets for cars – Win-win for consumers & environment

BEUC today welcomes the European Commission's proposed emission targets of 95 grams of CO₂/km for the average new passenger car by 2020. This law, when adopted by European Parliament and EU Member States, will reduce Europe's CO₂ emissions and lead to substantial fuel savings for car drivers.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation, commented:

"Soaring fuel prices have been nightmarish for most European car drivers in recent times. By obliging car companies to reduce their fleet's CO₂ emissions, consumers will save money at the petrol pump. Our estimates show that car drivers can save between €344 and €465 depending on whether they drive a new petrol or diesel car¹."

The proposal follows European Union efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% before 2020. The new 95 grams target would reduce average fuel consumption by up to 1.52 litres per 100 kilometres².

With 83.3%³ of inland passenger transport within the EU accounted for by passenger vehicles, cars are essential to European consumers' mobility. Data shows that in recent years people actually travel more instead of reducing the kilometres they cover in their car, highlighting the ever-increasing importance of fuel costs to household budgets⁴.

Monique Goyens said:

"Fuel prices know only one direction and projections expect them to continue rising. As consumers depend on their cars to get to work or bring their kids to school, saving on fuel costs is essential."

"Substantial recent CO₂ reductions have shown car makers' protests against the current targets to be wide of the mark. We believe the new 95 gram target is achievable and urge European legislators to start considering even more ambitious targets for 2025 and 2030. This would protect consumers from hikes in fuel prices and help industry invest in the long run."

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Note to editors:

¹ 94% of German consumers value fuel consumption as a very important or important criterion when buying a car (Dena, 2012). 91% of UK respondents say that they are fairly, very or extremely worried about fuel prices (Which?, 2011).

² Calculations are based on emission factors for petrol and diesel supplied at public refuelling stations as indicated in the 2011 Guidelines to Defra / DECC's GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting (<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/reporting/pdf/110707-guidelines-ghg-conversion-factors.pdf>): 2.6480 for Diesel (100% mineral diesel) and 2.3018 for petrol (100% mineral petrol).

³ Number for 2008, source: Eurostat.

⁴ Kilometres travelled by passenger cars on average increased by about 1.6% per year between 1995 and 2007.