

Newsletter

February – March 2021

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Criticism of the planned Euro 7 standard

The European Commission's proposed Euro 7 standard for cars, vans, trucks and buses is meeting with widespread criticism from industry. It would be tantamount to a ban through the back door on internal combustion engines from 2025 and is premature, according to the German Engineering Federation (VDMA).

In its recently published statement, the VDMA - with around 3,300 members the largest industrial association in Europe - emphasises the essential contribution that the Euro 7 exhaust emission standard will make, but the stricter regulations planned for 2025 are ecologically and economically misguided, as they would mean the abrupt end of the internal combustion engine. According to VDMA President Karl Haeusgen, the use of efficient combustion engines is particularly important in this decade, especially since they can be operated climate-neutrally with eFuels in sight and make the mass of existing vehicles more climate-friendly. An abrupt end to the combustion engine for cars and trucks would not only prevent innovation and progress in this technology, but would also indirectly endanger the security of supply for the people of Europe. Furthermore, a reduction of exhaust emission values at the planned level is unnecessary, because modern diesel engines are already much cleaner than prescribed. According to the German Federal Environment Agency, the real emissions of a Euro 6 diesel car are 40 mg/km, 50 per cent below the current NOx limit. This means that new vehicles are well below the current EU air pollution targets. On the other hand, the EU plans are counterproductive because they ignore climate protection. In addition to the technical and ecological problems, the VDMA also points to the danger of job losses in the automotive and supplier industry. Instead, exhaust gases and CO2 emissions must be reduced with the help of many different new technological developments. The use of hydrogen and synthetic fuels also in new vehicles is just as much a part of this as the

further optimisation of the combustion engine, the use of fuel cell technology and a rapidly growing number of battery-powered vehicles. Such a broad-based modernisation would advance not only the automotive industry but also user sectors such as construction and agricultural machinery manufacturers in their transformation process. Similar criticism was also voiced by the Association of European Automobile Manufacturers (ACEA), the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) and the Committee of French Automobile Manufacturers (CCFA).

Against the background of this vocal criticism from the industry, on 16 February 2021 Thierry Breton, EU Commissioner for the Internal Market, answered a question from Harald Vilimsky (ID/FPÖ, AT) on the planned Euro 7 Regulation. Vilimsky had asked whether the Commission shared the fears of the automotive industry that combustion engines would be phased out as early as 2025 as a result of the introduction of Euro 7, thus destroying Germany's strongest industrial sector. He also asked whether the Commission was aware that the stricter limit values demanded were not technically feasible and therefore not realistic.

Commissioner Thierry Breton replied to the questions by saying that the work on the future Euro 7 emission standard is an important element of the Commission's work towards zero-emission transport in order to protect the health of citizens and the environment while strengthening the competitiveness of the automotive industry. The Commission's aim is to ensure that internal combustion engines operate with the best possible environmental performance. This will also help to regain the confidence of citizens in an automotive industry that protects their health and the environment while strengthening its competitiveness. To support this work, the Commission has commissioned two research projects to develop different scenarios. These scenarios will be further explored in the impact assessment, which will be completed in the second quarter of 2021. One public and two targeted consultations have

already taken place. Stakeholders and Member States are also closely involved in the development of Euro 7 through the Vehicle Emission Standards Advisory Group. The Commission will then be able to present a legislative proposal that takes into account health and environmental aspects as well as technical feasibility and costs.

Further Links:

- [VDMA Press Release](#)
- [Euractiv: EU plotting ban on internal combustion engine as of 2025: industry](#)
- [Request to Thierry Breton](#)
- [Response from Thierry Breton](#)

TRAN: 8th Environmental Action Programme

After the Commission had presented the 8th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for the period from 2021 to 2030 in October last year, the Parliamentary Transport Committee TRAN now also expressed its opinion on 1 February. Environmental Action Programmes provide a general policy framework for the European Union's environmental policy, defining the main medium and long-term objectives and setting them out in a basic strategy, including concrete measures where appropriate. In the draft opinion, TRAN welcomes the proposal to integrate sustainability into all relevant initiatives and projects at national and EU level. It also supports the involvement of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) as being of utmost importance to support the new monitoring, measuring and reporting of this programme and to achieve the objectives of the 8th EAP. Rapporteur Rovana Plumb (S&D, RO) believes that all modes of transport must contribute to reducing all types of emissions. Achieving sustainable transport means putting users at the centre and providing them with more affordable, accessible and environmentally friendly alternatives to their current mobility habits to ensure a fair and equitable transition

that leaves no one behind. The draft goes on to say that in parallel, the EU should promote the production and use of sustainable alternative transport fuels and zero-emission vehicles.

Further Links:

- [8th Environmental Action Programme](#)
- [TRAN Draft Opinion](#)

TRAN: Common criteria for sustainable travel

EU criteria for safe and clean tourism, including a common vaccination card, should be part of a new EU sustainable tourism strategy, the European Parliament's TRAN tourism committee called for on 25 February 2021.

The committee's adopted draft resolution on the creation of an EU sustainable tourism strategy, calls on EU countries to include the tourism and travel sector in their economic recovery plans and to consider a temporary reduction of VAT on these services. The text says the pandemic has shifted travellers' demand towards safer and cleaner and more sustainable tourism. MEPs call on Member States to immediately introduce common criteria for safe travel, with an EU health safety protocol for pre-departure testing and the use of quarantine rules as a last resort.

MEPs call for a common vaccination certificate, which could become an alternative to PCR testing and quarantine requirements once there is sufficient evidence that vaccinated people do not transmit the virus, or for mutual recognition of vaccination procedures. They also stress the importance of using the EU Passenger Locator Form and developing voluntary, interoperable and anonymous apps for tracking, tracing and alerting.

The draft resolution also calls on the Commission to introduce an EU hygiene certification label that could certify minimum standards for the prevention and control of the COVID-19 virus and help restore consumer confidence in the tourism and travel industry. MEPs also welcome the "Re-open EU" portal and call on EU countries to provide the

Commission with clear information on the application or lifting of future restrictions on free movement. MEPs also advocate looking beyond the pandemic and replacing the 2010 EU tourism strategy to maintain Europe's position as a leading tourist destination. Finally, the text calls on the Commission to set up a European Tourism Agency.

The resolution on the creation of an EU sustainable tourism strategy must now be adopted by the plenary of the Parliament, possibly during the second session of March.

Further Links:

- [Procedure File: EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism](#)
- [Re-open EU](#)

TRAN: Roadworthiness Package

The current EU rules on periodic roadworthiness testing of vehicles contribute to road safety, but an update is inevitable in view of emerging implementation shortcomings and new car safety systems, say TRAN MEPs in their adopted draft resolution of 25 February 2021.

The draft resolution on the road safety aspects of the roadworthiness package, recognises that the implementation of EU rules has helped to improve the quality of periodic roadworthiness tests and thus contribute to road safety. However, there is still room to introduce more mandatory provisions in the next update, such as on load securing or information exchange between member states, to support the EU vision of zero road fatalities by 2050, MEPs add. They note that in 2019, around 22,800 people died on Europe's roads and around 135,000 were seriously injured (23 per cent less than in 2010), and this is still far from the target of halving this rate between 2010 and the end of 2020.

MEPs first call on EU countries to facilitate the exchange of information on roadworthiness tests and mileage, stressing that the development of a new vehicle information platform could speed up the exchange of information. In addition, EU citizens should be better protected against fraud

and have complete information on the history of their cars. Therefore, transport MEPs call for information on accidents and the frequency of significant malfunctions to be exchanged between EU countries as well.

In addition, the committee calls on EU countries to step up their efforts to reach the target of 5 per cent minimum checks (percentage of registered vehicles on their territory), as already pledged in 2018. The text also advocates the implementation of roadside checks for two- or three-wheeled vehicles, as motorcyclists are considered vulnerable road users and the number of fatalities among them is decreasing at the slowest pace of all vehicle users in the EU. The decline in roadside checks of commercial vehicles over the last six years and the cuts in national budgets for road safety enforcement are a very worrying trend, the draft text says. MEPs also regret that EU rules do not require mandatory inspection of load securing, which is an important element of road safety. They therefore call on the Commission to propose minimum requirements in this area (use of appropriate equipment and training), which could become part of an updated EU rule.

New cars will have to be equipped with the new advanced safety and driver assistance systems from 2022, the draft says. MEPs call on the Commission to include these systems, as well as eCall, a life-saving emergency call device, as part of future regular vehicle checks. MEPs also call on the Commission to consider the inclusion of new means of transport - e-scooters, onewheels or hoverboards - as part of the upcoming revision of the current rules.

The draft resolution on the road safety aspects of the roadworthiness package must now be voted by the plenary of the Parliament, possibly during the second March session.

Further Links:

- [Procedure File: Roadworthiness Package](#)

ACEA, T&E and BEUC: Europe's charging infrastructure

On 11 February 2021, ACEA issued a joint appeal with the European non-governmental organisation Transport & Environment (T&E) and the European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC), calling on Europe to accelerate the development of charging and refuelling infrastructure and to step up its commitment so that the lack of charging and refuelling infrastructure does not become a bottleneck for e-mobility.

The organisations point out in their joint letter that according to the European Commission, at least three million public car charging points are needed by 2029, including one million by 2024, to meet the CO2 fleet targets for cars and vans agreed in 2019. Ten times more charging points are needed in private and professional environments. This is the only way to ensure adequate access for the at least 30 million electric vehicles expected on Europe's roads by 2030 under current targets. According to the European Alternative Fuels Observatory, there are currently around 225,000 public charging points: 44,000 of them are in Germany. Even here, we would have to install 2,000 new public charging points every week from now on. But in the entire year 2020, only 10,000 new charging points were added in Germany.

This rather unusual alliance of the car industry with environmental and consumer protection associations shows the urgency of the issue. The EAC has also been pointing out the significance of expanding the charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure for some time. “One million electric cars alone on German roads, as the federal government once forecast for 2020, are not yet on the roads today, but the rapidly increasing demand for climate-friendly mobility solutions is irrefutable. On the one hand, it concerns the actual availability and affordability of equivalent suitable alternatives to conventional combustion vehicles. On the other hand, the parallel creation of a comprehensive refuelling and charging infrastructure is

indispensable in order to create real incentives to purchase such cars and to be able to contribute to the desired transport transformation as a consumer.”, explained EAC President Bernd Opolka.

Further Links:

- [Joint Letter from ACEA, T&E and BEUC to the European Commission](#)
- [EAC: With alternative propulsion systems across Europe](#)

Calendar

Meeting Dates

Council

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council 03/06/2021

Competitiveness Council 27/04/2021

Council of Justice and Home Affairs 11-12/03/2021

Council of Environment 18/03/2021

Plenary 08-11/03/2021 (Agenda)

Committees

Environment (ENVI) 15-16/03/2021 (Agenda, tba)

Internal Market / Consumer (IMCO) 17-18/03/2021 (Agenda)

Justice & Home Affairs (LIBE) 15-16/03/2021 (Agenda, tba)

Transport (TRAN) 15-16/03/2021 (Agenda)

EAC (internal)

(Hybrid) General Assembly in Berlin 23/03/2021