

To:

Commission President von der Leyen  
Vice-President Timmermans  
Commissioner Breton  
Commissioner Vălean

Cc:

Pascal Canfin MEP  
Karima Delli MEP  
Ms Svenja Schulze, German Federal Minister for the Environment

Brussels, September 11<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Subject: Call on the European Commission President to set an EU-wide end date for sales of internal combustion engine cars and vans by 2035**

Dear President von der Leyen,  
Dear Vice-President Timmermans,  
Dear Commissioner Breton,  
Dear Commissioner Vălean,

To meet the commitments of the Paris Climate Agreement and avoid the catastrophic consequences of the climate emergency, our economy must be fully decarbonised by 2050. In Europe transport emissions are the largest contributor with the least progress to date: e.g. the CO2 emissions from new cars increased for three years in a row to 2019<sup>1</sup>. To be on a pathway to zero emissions, all cars, vans, trucks and buses must be zero emission by 2050. Given the average retirement age of light-duty vehicles of around 15 years<sup>2</sup>, all new cars and vans must be zero emissions no later than 2035. Heavy-duty vehicle sales should follow suit not long afterwards.

There is no time to waste and the time to set an ambitious direction towards zero emissions mobility in line with the European Green Deal ambition is now. If the current CO2 targets for cars and vans in 2025 and 2030 are not increased, there will be no significant investment into electric cars or vans from 2022 until 2029<sup>3</sup>. This is in spite of the fact that the technology is there,

<sup>1</sup> EEA, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/average-co2-emissions-from-new-cars-vans-2019#:~:text=The%20EEA%20has%20published%20the,of%20CO2%20per%20kilometre.>

<sup>2</sup> Ricardo (2015), prepared for the EU Commission,

[https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/transport/vehicles/docs/ldv\\_mileage\\_improvement\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/transport/vehicles/docs/ldv_mileage_improvement_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The ICCT, <https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/CO2-EU-update-aug2020.pdf>

investments are flowing into electrification in Europe and the electric vehicle market is soaring<sup>4</sup> despite the pandemic.

European citizens are also on board: a recent Pan-European city survey has shown that two in three support banning polluting cars from cities<sup>5</sup>, highlighting that consumers are willing to move around more sustainably but often lack the right alternative to do so. Setting a clear signal that car manufacturers should go for zero emission vehicles only will ensure people enjoy a wider access to cleaner cars to the benefit of the environment and of consumers' wallets, especially low and middle-income ones<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, accelerated electrification will lead to a reduction in harmful pollution which could lead to significant social benefits and reduced healthcare expenditures.<sup>7</sup>

We, the undersigned, therefore call on you during your deliberations on the 2030 Climate Target Plan to:

- Set an EU-wide phase out of new internal combustion cars and vans (including hybrids) by 2035 and allow individual member states to ban combustion engines earlier
- Strengthen the car and van CO2 targets in 2025-2030 to increase the supply of electric vehicles across Europe, their adoption by consumers and accelerate the transition to e-mobility in line with cost-effective technology update in the 2020s
- Support an ambitious plan for jobs for Europe, including using the Just Transition Fund and the future ETS revenues for reconversion plans and skills development in the regions that today rely on fossil fuel economy
- Review the European infrastructure law (AFID) so it ensures seamless charging coverage in public and private buildings, in cities, across main EU roads as well as destination and public charging for commercial vehicles
- Recognise the efforts of public and private enterprises to electrify their fleets and support their efforts in making fleets zero emission by 2030
- Ensure that the Next Generation EU targets zero emission mobility solutions, and not allow governments to use the EU public money on any fossil fuel technology or infrastructure

<sup>4</sup> The International Energy Agency, <https://www.iea.org/news/electric-car-sales-this-year-resist-covid-19-s-blow-to-global-car-market>

<sup>5</sup> Transport & Environment: No going back to pre-Covid air pollution levels - opinion poll (by YouGov), June 2020, <https://www.transportenvironment.org/press/no-going-back-pre-covid-air-pollution-levels-opinion-poll>

<sup>6</sup> Link to the summary of BEUC's national TCO studies [http://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2018-113\\_when\\_will\\_electric\\_cars\\_be\\_an\\_affordable\\_option\\_for\\_european\\_consumers - a5\\_format.pdf](http://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2018-113_when_will_electric_cars_be_an_affordable_option_for_european_consumers - a5_format.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://epha.org/ce-delft-health-impacts-costs-diesel-emissions-eu/>

Going 100% zero emissions will require an enormous transformation of Europe's automotive industry and cannot be achieved without support from European, national and local governments. This includes transitioning the supply chains from fossil fuels to electrification, notably batteries, motors and green hydrogen. This also means an accelerated effort to roll-out seamless AC, DC and high-power charging at home and in offices, across business premises and alongside all European roads to tackle range anxiety and provide European consumers with a hassle-free charging experience.

Crucially, this must be a fair and just transition that leaves no one behind in the fossil age. While there will be more new jobs on balance<sup>8</sup>, targeted support must be provided to regions whose economic development today is heavily reliant on fossil fuels. This necessitates ambitious reconversion towards future-proof industries, workforce reskilling and updated training programmes. To make this a reality, the new Next Generation EU recovery package should only allow for zero emission solutions and not allow a penny spent on fossil fuels such as diesel engines or natural gas infrastructure.

We hope Europe takes the lead in achieving zero emissions mobility and honours the commitments under the EU Green Deal strategy. Setting an ambitious roadmap to discontinue sales of conventional engines will provide the necessary clarity to focus the efforts of all stakeholders to achieve this goal.

We hope our call makes it to the 2030 Climate Plan and remain at your disposal for any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Stakeholders

<sup>8</sup> EU Electromobility Platform, [https://www.platformelectromobility.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/European-Platform-for-electromobility%20%99s-position-on-Green-Deal\\_FINAL-2.pdf](https://www.platformelectromobility.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/European-Platform-for-electromobility%20%99s-position-on-Green-Deal_FINAL-2.pdf)