



Bund für  
Umwelt und  
Nahverkehr  
Deutschland

ECOLOGISTAS  
en acción



NOT SAFE, NOT CLEAN,  
NOT COOL

Friends of the Earth Europe  
MEDIA ADVISORY  
For immediate release: Tuesday 26th August 2008

\*\*\*\*\*

## CITIZENS RALLY FOR FUEL EFFICIENT CARS AHEAD OF KEY VOTES BY MEPs

\*\*\*\*\*

Brussels, 25 August 2008 – Citizens around Europe are asking MEPs to support tough measures to reduce the fuel consumption of new cars by 25% by 2012 ahead of key votes in the European Parliament.

Friends of the Earth Europe and its partners in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, [1] are calling on MEPs to strengthen plans to force car manufacturers to improve fuel efficiency standards.

\*\*\*

\* The results of a five country opinion poll showing widespread support around Europe for improved fuel efficiency will be published by Friends of the Earth Europe on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008

\* A website - [www.forlesspollutingcars.com](http://www.forlesspollutingcars.com) – gives more information about the proposed legislation and encourages citizens to write to their MEPs to ask for tougher measures

\* A display of vintage and contemporary cars, designed to show the lack of progress by carmakers on fuel efficiency, will be staged by Friends of the Earth Europe in Place Luxembourg outside the European Parliament in Brussels from 11am on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September ahead of the industry committee vote

\*\*\*

## BACKGROUND

Cars currently represent 12% of all carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the European Union, a major cause of the greenhouse effect. These emissions are continuously increasing. There is an urgent need to act in order to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by cars.

When the European Parliament resumes on 1<sup>st</sup> September MEPs will debate the Cars Directive which covers CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of vehicles sold in Europe.

What does the Directive propose?

- Starting from the year 2012, vehicles sold in Europe should emit an average of less than 130grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre travelled, as opposed to the current 160g CO<sub>2</sub>/km.
- Fines will be put in place for manufacturers who fail to respect these limits: 20 Euros per vehicle per gram of CO<sub>2</sub> above the limit in 2012 ; then 35 Euros in 2013 ; 60 Euros in 2014 ; and 95 Euros in 2015 and beyond.

## WHY WE MUST GO FURTHER

Friends of the Earth Europe and car efficiency campaigners believe the proposal in its current form will be ineffective and is calling on MEPs to go further to reduce the climate impact of cars. The groups are calling for the Directive to be reinforced in three crucial aspects:

- **The CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre limit is not low enough:** In 1998, the car industry promised to reduce levels to 140g of CO<sub>2</sub> per km by 2008, and 120g of CO<sub>2</sub> per km by 2012. Ten years on it has failed to keep these promises. Emissions are 160g/km on average in 2008, and it is now suggested they will reach only 130g in 2012. **We call on MEPs to fix a clear limit of 120g of CO<sub>2</sub> per km by 2012, by law. This would represent a petrol saving of 1.5 l/100 km per car compared to the current average.**
- **The Directive does not fix any targets beyond 2012 to continue the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.** We call on MEPs to fix long term objectives now of 80g of CO<sub>2</sub>/km by 2020 and 65g CO<sub>2</sub>/km by 2025. **This would mean the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars could be doubled in the long term.**
- **The penalty system does not do enough to encourage manufacturers to adopt the best standards.** We call on MEPs to impose a fine of 150€ per gram of CO<sub>2</sub> above the limit and per vehicle as of 2012 to act as a deterrent. The European Commission has already indicated that this level of penalty is necessary in order for all the manufacturers to respect the objectives.

The Cars Directive, as proposed, backpedals compared to previous proposals and allows the car industry to postpone its efforts to increase fuel efficiency.

The objective of 120g of CO<sub>2</sub>/km could already be achieved. It is simply a case of each car needing to be as efficient as the most efficient car in its category already on the market!

It is important for the 2020 objective to be ambitious enough, to encourage car manufacturers to put more energy efficient cars on the market – fuel cell or electric cars for example.

These technologies are already operational. For example, General Motors delivered this with the EV1 in 1996 and today the Californian Company Teslamotors even offers an electric sports car. Numerous other brands have plans for electric cars on the drawing board which are waiting to be commercialised. Technological innovation and efficiency in the struggle against global warming must be boosted.

However, this problem does not solely concern global warming. **Cars which emit less CO<sub>2</sub> are also more economical** with regards to fuel, something which is of increased significance given current high **oil prices and crisis of purchasing power**. According to the European Commission, the plan would allow each owner to save 2700 Euros in fuel expenses over the lifetime of the car.

For more details see [http://www.foeeurope.org/cars/Documents/FOEE\\_position\\_statement.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/cars/Documents/FOEE_position_statement.pdf)

## TIMELINE

1. On 1st September 2008, the Industry Committee of the European Parliament will examine the Directive and put forward its opinion. Some amendments that have been put forward would make the draft even more ineffective than the proposal from the European Commission.
2. On 9th September the Environment Committee of the European Parliament will examine the Directive and put forward its opinion.
3. The opinions from these two groups are crucial because they will form the basis of advice to all MEPs who will vote on the Directive in October.

## CONTACTS

For more information please contact:

Jeroen Verhoeven, Car Efficiency Campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe: Tel: +32 2542 6101 and +32 477 463181(Belgian mobile), [jeroen.verhoeven@foeeurope.org](mailto:jeroen.verhoeven@foeeurope.org)

Francesca Gater, Communications Officer, Friends of the Earth Europe, [francesca.gater@foeeurope.org](mailto:francesca.gater@foeeurope.org), +32 2 542 6105, +32 485 930 515

\*\*\*

## NOTES

[1] In the UK: Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland, and The Alliance Against Urban 4x4s

In France: Réseau Action Climat France (RAC-F)

In Germany : BUND

In Spain: Ecologistas en Accion

In Italy: Amicis de la Terra

Friends of the Earth Europe is the largest grassroots environmental network in Europe. It campaigns for sustainable and just societies and for the protection of the environment; unites more than 30 national organisations with thousands of local groups and is part of the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International.