

2010-04-28

Clean and energy efficient vehicles: European Commission tables strategy

EU supports clean car industry

The European strategy for encouraging the development and eventual widespread use of clean and energy efficient vehicles aims to help the European car industry to strengthen its leading role globally basing its production on clean and energy-efficient technologies. This strategy is laid down in a Communication, tabled by the European Commission today. It delivers on the consensus between Member States and European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani's commitment to move on from short-term recovery measures to a medium-term orientation that strengthens the competitiveness of the European automotive industry by linking it to clean technologies. The strategy also contributes to the Europe 2020 objectives of smart and sustainable growth. It contains an Action Plan composed of concrete and ambitious measures to be implemented by the Commission.

Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani in charge of industry and entrepreneurship said: "In 2010, the automotive industry enters into a defining phase for its future success. The new European strategy will provide a supportive framework based on a twin-track approach: improving the efficiency of conventional engines and making ultra low-carbon mobility a reality for European consumers. Including all types of vehicles in the strategy will ensure that this parallel approach will strike the right balance between securing the future competitiveness of our car manufacturing industry without compromising our long-term goals for the reduction of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The strategy also aims at achieving common standards for electrical cars so that they can be charged everywhere in the EU."

Important national and regional actions are currently taken by the Member States and by EU's global partners to promote the mass production and market uptake of green vehicles. In parallel, the momentum is building with the industrial plans for the mass market dominance of the fuel-efficient conventional vehicles and an important roll-out of electric vehicles in 2011. With the new strategy, the Commission wants to provide an impetus on the European level and seize the full potential of green vehicles to contribute to fight the climate change, reduce the oil dependency of Europe and revitalize Europe's industrial fabric.

The Commission will among other:

- continue its legislative programme on vehicle emission reduction including its mid term review;
- Supporting research and innovation in green technologies
- propose guidelines for demand-side incentives

The strategy builds on European leadership in climate change fight and establishes bases for European leadership in clean transport.

While the Communication does not make any technological choices, it recognises that until now the European framework has been mostly lacking on electric mobility. With electric vehicles (including hybrids) currently viewed as ready for the mass market and several Member States notably France, Spain, Germany, Portugal and Denmark promoting electromobility, a number of actions announced in the Communication focus on enabling this technology.

- ensure that alternative propulsion vehicles are at least as safe as conventional ones
- promote common standards that will allow all electric vehicles to be charged anywhere in the EU
- encourage installation of publicly accessible charging points

- Promote the development of smart electricity grids
- Update the rules and promote research on recycling of batteries.

For the full list of actions, see [MEMO/10/153](#)

The Commission looks forward to implementing the strategy by working with the Spanish and Belgian presidencies and by re-launching the CARS 21 high-level group.

Background

In 2020 perspective, conventional vehicles are forecast to remain the dominant power-train but matched by a rapid expansion of the electric vehicles. By 2030, the global car fleet is predicted to grow from 800 million to 1.6 billion vehicles and to 2.5 billion by 2050. This will be accompanied by an increasing scarcity and cost of energy resources. These trends will have to be addressed by a step change in technology to ensure the sustainability of mobility in the long-term. The ultra low-carbon electric power-trains and hydrogen fuel cells are the most promising options with that respect.

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