

EU leaders talk 2020 climate targets

EU heads of government have for the first time set a target for avoiding global warming for the period after 2012.

At a summit last month, the 25 leaders supported a proposed EU goal that global temperatures should not be allowed to rise to more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. They also supported a call from environment ministers to aim for a 15-30% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from industrialised countries by 2020.

The decision followed a unanimous statement from environment ministers earlier last month, in which they called not only for the 15-30% reductions by 2020 but for a 60-80% reduction by 2050 in line with accepted thinking on critical loads of climate warming gases. The 25 leaders declined to approve the 2050 target.

T&E director Jos Dings said: "This is significant progress, albeit slow progress. It is the first indication that targets are being set for the second Kyoto period.

"At the same time we are entitled to wonder exactly how serious the heads of government are, as they approved the targets for 2020 at a summit where they seemed more concerned with competitiveness. We are not yet convinced that they understand that the competitiveness agenda could undermine environment protection."

CONFUSION

This point was emphasised by the environment ministers, who said there was

"confusion over the status of environment policy" in the Commission's recent renewal of the Lisbon competitiveness strategy.

And a leading transport MEP has accused the EU of abandoning attempts to make transport sustainable. Gilles Savary, a French socialist who is vice-president of the European Parliament's transport committee, told the news service EurActiv: "The dynamic [of EU transport policy] today is essentially road-based." He particularly criticises the way the *Eurovignette* directive has been "manipulated" by road interests, from being an instru-

ment intended to encourage modal shifts to "a road charging tool designed to finance road transport".

The EU leaders' statement comes as another large-scale survey has further illustrated the damage human activity is causing to the global environment. The Millennium Assessment, ordered by the UN secretary general Kofi Annan in 2000, looked at how 25 ecosystems have performed over the past 50 years. It concludes that 15 of them (60%) are being degraded or used unsustainably, it blames the developing world, and says the results could be wars and migration of refugees.

Findings undermine car makers' 120g/km claims

Research in the Commission is believed to have found evidence that forcing car makers to limit carbon dioxide emissions from new cars to 120 grams per kilometre could be justified on economic and social grounds.

Speaking at a T&E seminar earlier this month, the Commission's director of air and chemicals Jos Delbeke said: "Preliminary work indicates that the costs are not as high as the manufacturers have claimed, and that benefits for society may outweigh costs."

This contrasts with claims from the car makers that reducing the average new car from a 140g/km limit to 120g/km would force prices to rise by €4000 per car.

The industry currently has a voluntary commitment to reduce average emissions from new cars to 140g/km by 2008, but environmental groups have for the past

couple of years said this target is unlikely to be met, and there are signs from within the car makers themselves that they may be about to recognise this.

T&E director Jos Dings said: "What is interesting is that while we recognise the manufacturers have upfront investment costs, these are likely to be less than the lifetime fuel and emission savings that can be gained from a 120g/km limit."

WRI REPORT

A new report aimed at investors and published by the World Resources Institute has also cast doubt on the EU car makers' voluntary agreement.

The report, "Are investors driving blindly" by the Swiss consultancy Sam, says two important aspects of the agreement are being kept from the public: information on what part each company

Avoid the charge!



BROSTADEN
Marsvägen

This advert, whose slogan reads "Avoid the charge", is from a real estate company offering property outside the the Stockholm charging zone. The city now has approval for its trial congestion charge. Story, page 2

is playing in reaching the 140g/km target, and data on CO₂ performance of individual companies. It says the absence of this information means investors face "unforeseen risk".

The reticence of the automotive industry over CO₂ emissions contrasts with moves by some companies to bring forward plans for fitting particle filters. See page 3.

- Recent sales figures suggest the boom in sport utility vehicles (SUVs) may have peaked. Even in America, the market share of large and mid-sized SUVs is down to 11% from a peak of 14% in 2002.

- The Commission is consulting on the best way to create long-term competitiveness in the car industry (part of the "Cars21" initiative). The deadline is 14 April, and the questionnaire is at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/automotive.htm>

Stockholm congestion charge trial to begin in January

The trial congestion charge for Stockholm has been given the green light by Sweden's highest administrative court.

The Swedish capital had planned to begin a 13-month trial in June. But a legal challenge connected with the complex financial arrangements that are necessary under Sweden's constitution had put the trial in doubt.

On 30 March the legal challenge was finally rejected, but the time it took to be heard means the trial period will not now start until January. It will run for just seven months until 31 July 2006, with a referendum taking place in September on the same day as the Swedish general election.

T&E's Swedish board member Magnus Nilsson of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SNF) said: "The reduction in the length of the trial period will probably not affect our ability to measure the effectiveness of the charge. But it will mean much less time to bring in revenue, so if the charge is rejected after the trial period, it will mean much more money for the government to pay out as a shortfall."

Apart from a local income tax, the Swedish constitution forbids the raising of taxes by anyone other than the national government, and deciding that the money can be used for a specific purpose ("earmarking") is also not allowed. Therefore, the Stockholm charge has had to be a local initiative taken by the national government, with the equipment procured by the nation, not the city.

When the referendum happens, the result will not be binding on the Swedish parliament, and it may well not be a straight yes/no choice. Nilsson added: "There is

discussion about three choices, with one offering straight rejection, and two different versions of acceptance."

- The Czech government has begun the process that will lead to a motorway toll, by

asking for companies to bid to provide tolling technology. Czech officials say the numbers of lorries crossing the Czech-German border has increased from 13 500 in April 2004 (the last month

before the country joined the EU) to 70 000 now, which ministers say is largely because the tolls on German, Swiss and Austrian roads make the Czech Republic seem cheap.

MEPs shock ministers with cleaner shipping vote

MEPs have challenged ministers and the Commission to agree to considerably stricter limits on sulphur emissions from large ships in an important vote in the European Parliament's environment committee.

Last month the committee voted by 35 to 17 (2 abstentions) to approve the report by the Finnish Green MEP Satu Hassi which proposes a reduction of about 75% in current levels of sulphur content in marine fuels. It also proposes that the current draft directive on marine fuels should refer to the Mediterranean Sea and not just the North Sea, Baltic and English Channel.

The first reading of her report was approved by the parliament but was largely

rejected by ministers, who approved a reduction in sulphur content of just 10% compared with today's levels, and would not include Mediterranean waters.

The fact that MEPs on the environment committee stood by Hassi's original report sends a signal that they are willing to push for higher standards than ministers and the Commission want. Indeed sources in the Council of Ministers expressed surprise at how clear the vote was from the environment committee.

Hassi said: "Now the committee has adopted a good report I will seek the best possible compromise with ministers for a position that best helps the environment."

Her report proposes reduc-

ing the sulphur content in marine fuels to no more than 1.5% within 12 months of the directive being agreed, with a second step to 0.5% in all EU waters by 2014.

The vote is at least partly a success for an alliance of four environmental NGOs, including T&E, who lobbied MEPs. A presentation by the Swedish NGO Secretariat on Acid Rain, a T&E member, at a parliamentary hearing was thought to be particularly influential.

T&E's conference "Greening Motorways of the Sea" in Stockholm this month will reflect the next stage of the shipping debate by focusing more on using economic instruments to reduce other pollutants from shipping. See www.t-e.nu.

Airlines fear some environmental action is inevitable

The realisation among Europe's airlines that some form of environmental pricing is inevitable appears to be growing.

At a high-level aviation and environment conference in Geneva last month, the head of British Airways Rod Eddington said: "The industry must unite to develop an effective strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. If it does not, governments will view the industry as an easy target for taxes to fund non-aviation projects."

Eddington is keen to promote aviation emissions trading, believing it to be better than kerosene or emissions charges. Many of Europe's big airlines are not keen, but

their association AEA appears willing to support a limited emissions trading scheme if no further environmental restrictions or charges on airlines are guaranteed.

T&E has always favoured en route emission charges for aviation over "open" emissions trading, as this can give a "double dividend" of less pollution and more employment, and gives more freedom to set appropriate prices for the aviation sector.

In a separate development, T&E has heavily criticised a report for the Commission into the economic implications of restricting night-time flights from major EU airports. The report says between 360 000 and 500 000

jobs are dependent on night flights, but T&E and other NGOs say its methodology is flawed and its conclusions are meaningless.

- The British government is making €60 million available to build an airport on the British Atlantic territory of St Helena. The announcement coincides with an EU review of state funding for regional airports which could lead to stricter rules on state money for airports.

- The Commission is asking for views on aviation and climate change. The deadline is 6 May, and the consultation questionnaires are at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enviro/ment/climat/aviation_en.htm.

Cars21 can be useful and worthwhile – if it's ambitious!

One of this year's Commission committee creations is the "Cars21" group. It is the baby of the industry commissioner Günter Verheugen, and is aimed at finding ways for the EU car industry to remain competitive in the 21st century.

T&E has been critical of the unbalanced and heavily industry-biased composition of the group. As the terms of reference say the group is "expected to identify complementary and consistent policies that enhance economic competitiveness, road safety and the environmental performance of vehicles", it is strange that organisations like T&E and our safety counterparts, the European Transport Safety Council, have been left out. But this is the past. The Cars21 group holds

its first "high-level" meeting on 11 April and an open stakeholders meeting on 26 April, so now is the time to look ahead and work out what will make the initiative useful and worthwhile.

In terms of substance, it is absolutely vital that the group fleshes out an unambiguous roadmap towards the 120 g/km CO₂ target, and dares to look further ahead to a time when 100 and 80 g/km limits will have to be met. EU leaders have confirmed they want a 15-30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and given that many of today's new cars will still be on the roads in 2020, only drastic and quick reductions will do if transport is to make anything like a meaningful



Jos Dings
T&E Director
EDITORIAL

contribution to this aim. This will not make cars unaffordable – on the contrary, it is likely to make driving a car even more affordable than it is today, and save the EU dozens of billions annually on oil imports.

In addition, the EU has an enormous responsibility, and opportunity, in setting ambitious environmental standards for its market. Virtually all Asian countries, including China and India (Taiwan and South Korea are exceptions), closely follow EU car emission rules and adopt them quickly. EU leadership pays off here – the more progressive the EU standards, the greater the "first mover" advantage will be. There is more compelling evidence

that strong and well-crafted environmental leadership pays off, as the Harvard academic Michael Porter has so convincingly demonstrated in his explanation of how tackling environmental issues does not restrain growth.

It is encouraging that the MEP Dorette Corbey has set up a parallel "low level group" that aims to take a more progressive stance on the issue and report to the high level group. Ever more stakeholders are starting to get engaged in the process. This is good – it makes it tough for the Cars21 group to just express its satisfaction about voluntary agreements and pursue a "business as usual" course. It is time for the whole fleet to become green, rather than just a few front runners.

Excessive particle pollution adds weight to call for strict Euro-5

More evidence is emerging of cities exceeding pollution limits that are meant to last for a year under EU clean air legislation that came into effect in January.

The legislation sets levels of soot particles which can only be exceeded on 35 days in a year. In February a number of Italian cities saw car bans on certain Sundays as cities hit their 35th day of excessive levels within 60 days of 2005. And last month a number of German cities came under the microscope as citizens and environmental groups made complaints about air quality.

Munich and Stuttgart both recorded their 36th day of excessive soot particles by the end of March, with Düsseldorf and the capital Berlin reported to be not far behind. The maximum permitted level is 50 micrograms per cubic metre.

One German NGO threat-

ened legal action against Berlin, which it said had exceeded the limit 16 times by the end of February, and it was considering similar action against Munich and Dortmund. Meanwhile Düsseldorf said it would ban lorries from certain streets and would ban all vehicles from much of the city if air quality did not improve.

Meanwhile in the Netherlands, activists in The Hague are using the EU legislation as the basis for legal action against the Dutch administrative capital. They want less traffic through their street, "De Veerkades", which is known as one of the most polluted streets in the country.

The Commission has the right to take legal action against countries whose cities fail to conform to the air quality standards.

Concern about the impact of particles on human health is leading to changes in

consumer behaviour. According to a report in the *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper, a significant number of German customers are deciding to wait to buy a new car until particle filters are fitted as standard, or they are buying cars with filters from non-German makers such as Peugeot or Citroën.

Earlier this year the German government agreed to offer state subsidies of €250-€350 for cars fitted or retrofitted with filters (though T&E's German member VCD is angry that little progress has been made since the agreement in January). The Dutch government says it will offer €600 per car from June for new cars with filters.

Such consumer response and the speed with which the tolerance threshold for excessive days is being reached may add to pressure for the "Euro-5" round of polluting emissions standards for new

vehicles to take a strict line on fine particles.

The Commission has suggested the Euro-5 limit for particles will be no lower than 2.5mg/km, but T&E says 1mg is not unrealistic. Europe's top environmental science committee Scher has supported the call for 2.5mg, even though it says research into the impact of particles on health is still inconclusive.

The Euro-5 proposals are expected to be published in July, just before the Commission's summer break.

• Ministers and MEPs have reached agreement on a new directive on car recyclability. The directive will require car makers to ensure at least 85% of the materials in their products are "reusable and/or recyclable". The recyclability directive is intended to make it easy for the targets set out in the 2000 EU End-of-Life Vehicles directive to be met.

EU risking billions of euros on 'unviable transport projects'

T&E has said the Commission is risking large sums of money being spent on transport projects that have not been properly thought through.

The comment came after the Commission last month proposed that the EU could guarantee part of the debt of priority cross-border transport infrastructure projects. The proposal is part of efforts to stimulate private investment in transport projects belong to the trans-European network (TEN).

T&E director Jos Dings said: "Private investment tends to sniff out viable investments, so reducing the risks to private capital runs the risk of fast-tracking unviable projects."

T&E's policy officer Markus Liechti said the billions of euros being sought for transport projects made it more important than ever to ensure projects were properly assessed, yet the cost/benefit reports into such schemes were still kept secret. "We need to see more double-checks and no more blank cheques," he said.

A draft regulation on how to finance the transport TENs is currently making its

way through the EU legislative process, with a final decision expected in the summer of 2006.

AIR ALLIANCE CALL

T&E's German member VCD has called on France, Great Britain, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland to form an alliance of states willing to introduce a tax on kerosene for domestic flights and flights within the alliance. The call followed publication of a study by Germany's environment ministry saying there are no legal obstacles stopping the taxation of aircraft fuel on flights within the country and the EU.

RAIL GROWTH

The amount of freight transported through the Swiss Alps by rail grew faster last year than the amount carried by road. Rail transport was up 10% while road was 5% higher. There has also been a 10% reduction in heavy lorries since 2000 as the average load has increased from 6.3 tonnes to 9.6. The Swiss transport and energy ministry says rail's 65% share of Switzerland's transalpine goods market is the best in Europe, and the country's distance-related heavy goods charge has played a large part, along with improvements in quality and productivity in the rail industry.

PARIS CLOSES ROADS

The office of the mayor of Paris says the city plans to reduce traffic in the centre of the French capital. The Green Party official in charge of Paris' transport said four central districts could be closed to all but residents' vehicles by 2012, and in other parts of the city there would be 30km/h zones, road-narrowing and new cycle lanes. The plans have been drawn

up by the same consultancy that worked on London's congestion charge, but there are no plans for a Paris toll system.

CHEAPER DRIVING

Figures from the British government say the cost of owning a car for the UK's 24.5 million motorists has fallen by 11% in real terms since 1975. Then there were half the number of cars, but with rail fares now 70% higher and bus fares 66%, another 12 million have been added. Even since Tony Blair's Labour government was elected in 1997 promising to reduce car dependence, driving is 6% cheaper while bus fares have risen 16% and rail tickets 7%.

CAR BLACK BOXES

A British MP has called for electronic "black boxes" to be fitted in cars to help improve driving standards. Rob Marris says the boxes used in aircraft would record the way a vehicle was driven, and the evidence could be used in the event of a crash. He says it would promote safer driving, which might also benefit the environment.

SPANISH PARADOX

Environmental groups have attacked plans announced last month to build 6000km of motorways in Spain over the next three years. The plan promises both the new roads and a cut in transport emissions, though the latter comes mostly in a plan for 2020 for measures to reduce the environmental impact of road transport. A coalition of Spanish NGOs says the sustainability report included with the plan blames "intensive investment in road infrastructure for promoting indiscriminate use of the car",

and the report admits Spain's greenhouse gas emissions target for 2012 is unreachable.

SLOW ON BIOFUELS

The Commission says 19 governments are facing legal action for failing to put into national law EU legislation on increasing the use of biofuels in transport. All member states should have achieved a 2% share for biofuels in transport by this year, rising to 5.75% in 2010. Both T&E and the oil industry have criticised the legislation. T&E believes biofuels do not hold a large part of the answer to reducing transport's environmental impact.

AND FINALLY ...

A prototype for a hydrogen-powered bicycle has been unveiled, but the makers say they may have to fit a device to generate noise because the bike's silence could be dangerous. The "Fuel Cell Bike", described by its manufacturer Intelligent Energy as "an emissions-neutral vehicle", is said to have a top speed of 80km/h. But it is as quiet as a conventional bicycle, so the combination of speed and silence has caused Intelligent Energy to develop a "vroom" switch which the rider can turn on or off.

New Publications and Events

- **Air Pollution from Ships**, briefing document by 5 NGOs (inc T&E). www.t-e.nu

Events

- **Better Public transport for Europe**, T&E/ICLEI Siptram workshop, 19 May, Brussels. www.t-e.nu

- **World Fair of Natural Gas and Hydrogen Vehicles**, European Natural Gas Vehicle Association, 8-10 June, Bolzano (I). www.engva.org

Bulletin

T&E Bulletin is the official news sheet of the European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E). It appears 10 times a year and is free to members of the Federation.

T&E has 40 members registered in a total of 21 countries. It lobbies for an environmentally sound approach to European transport issues.

The next issue will appear in early May. The deadline for contributions to reach either the T&E secretariat or the editor is Monday 25 April 2005.

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