



European Federation for
TRANSPORT and ENVIRONMENT

News Release

CARS 21 High Level Group: EU Weakens Clean Car Strategy

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Brussels – The CARS 21 'high-level group' of car industry executives and European Commission officials has failed on its promise to deliver a “clean” and “lean” strategy for new cars, says the European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E). The ten-year road map for European car regulation published in today's final report contains no new policies to combat rising overall emissions and several existing policies are set to be weakened.

On carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, the European Commission now advocates an “integrated approach”, whereby the car industry's own responsibilities to cut emissions are shifted to others. This contradicts the existing strategy agreed by ministers in 1996 that said the EU's CO₂ reduction target for new cars could be “supplemented” with other measures. The new approach also ignores last month's call from the European Parliament for “mandatory limits for CO₂ emissions from new vehicles” (1).

On EURO 5, the emissions standard for particles and other pollutants, the Commission have stated their intention to propose a limit for harmful nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions from diesel cars that is weaker than all the options it considered six months ago. If approved, European car makers will soon begin selling dirtier diesel cars in their home market than they export to buyers in the United States. More worryingly, in T&E's view, the ten-year road map published today does not contain any reference to a EURO 6 proposal which is needed to clean up diesel cars.

On greenhouse gas emissions from car air conditioners, the group supports the weak position of EU ministers for rules that do not cover all harmful gases and allows for an extended phase out.

Jos Dings, Director of T&E said, “Instead of coming up with a plan to clean up new cars, the group has simply dismantled or watered down elements of the existing strategy. Commissioner Verheugen, the chairman of the group, has repeatedly called for Europe to produce the 'cleanest' cars in the world - but the EU is further from reaching this goal today than it was before CARS 21 was set up.”

Notes:

- (1) European Parliament resolution on "Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change" (2005/2049(INI)) – 16 November 2005

Further information:

Jos Dings, Director, T&E +32 498 515 319 jos.dings@t-e.nu

Dudley Curtis, Communications Officer, T&E +32 2 289 1042 dudley.curtis@t-e.nu

About T&E

T&E is Europe's principal environmental organisation campaigning specifically on transport. Members are drawn from NGOs in nearly every European country, all of whom promote a more environmentally sound approach to transport. www.t-e.nu

