

Declaration - fast routes to clean air

European citizens still live with the damaging legacy of Dieselgate. There are more than 43 million polluting diesel cars and vans on Europe's road today, which are one of the main causes of poor air quality in European cities. Of the estimated €62 billion in road transport related healthcare costs in Europe, €52 billion can be attributed to diesel pollution. There have been limited national efforts to address this challenge and almost no EU-wide action despite the serious implications for public health, consumer protection and the environment.

Cities are committed to delivering clean air for citizens. Vehicle bans and low emission zones will continue to be implemented where necessary, alongside other measures, such as the promotion of walking, cycling and ride-sharing, retrofitting and investments in public transport to support modal-shift. This should lead to a reduction in the number of polluting vehicles in cities, which is essential to tackle the growing problem of air pollution, climate change, noise pollution and premature deaths.

City-level action alone is not enough to ensure clean air for all citizens. Europe's major cities are ready to work with the European Union and member states to tackle the legacy of Dieselgate and together achieve smart, clean, healthy and shared mobility for the future.

Cities, environmental groups and the public health community call on the European Union and member states to:

1. Clean up the 43 million existing dirty diesel vehicles across all member states as a political priority for Europe and support cleaner new vehicles.
2. Coordinate the recall and fixing of vehicles at the European level. All citizens have the right to breathe clean air and it is unacceptable that action to date has only happened in a limited number of member states. Action must be taken to prevent the sale and use of polluting cars that have not been fixed and are being exported from the west to the east of Europe.
3. Ensure that all fixed vehicles undergo independent testing in real-world conditions to verify emission performance. This should be supported with the exploitation of new monitoring technology at national level, such as remote sensing.
4. Create a pan-European clean air fund for cities. Funds should be targeted at those cities and citizens that have been affected most by dirty diesel vehicles, using existing national schemes, such as the German Clean Air Fund for cities, as an example. Industry should make a significant contribution that reflects their contribution to poor air quality and healthcare costs and would be in line with corporate social responsibilities.
5. Develop ambitious targets for CO₂ vehicle emissions and extend the reform of the 'Real Driving Emissions' regulation to boundary conditions, with a strengthened periodic testing framework. Implement effective national incentive schemes and taxation, funding for the public procurement of clean vehicles and deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure.