

PRESS RELEASE

On the debate about EU's “combustion engine ban”: maintain 100% CO2 emission reduction in 2035, change the basis for assessment

Berlin, May 30, 2024: In March 2023, the European co-legislators made the decision as part of the CO2 fleet regulation for cars and light commercial vehicles that only zero-emission vehicles may be registered from 2035. The CO2 regulation for trucks, which was passed this year, follows a similar path. Based on the so-called “tailpipe” approach, only vehicles that do not produce any emissions at the tailpipe are declared zero-emission.

“We must consistently reduce CO2 emissions in the transport sector. That is why the 100% target must not be questioned. Rather, we need to change the basis of assessment to achieve the target,” says Ralf Diemer, CEO of the eFuel Alliance. “If we change the basis of assessment, we avoid favoring technologies and fully integrate the carbon footprint of an energy source into the consideration.”

In the meantime, various concepts are circulating with which the basis for calculating CO2 emissions can be changed. These include a voluntary crediting system for OEMs, a carbon correction factor that takes into account the amount of climate-friendly fuels on the market and the definition of a new vehicle class that is fueled exclusively with renewable fuels. The so-called “Stuttgart Group”, a consortium of automotive and fuel companies as well as associations for renewable fuels, is working on the latter. The results will be part of the EU Commission’s recommendation, which will specify in autumn how eFuels can contribute to CO2 neutrality in road transport.

“We got pragmatic solutions are on the table. We have numerous levers that can decisively advance the energy transition in the transport sector. Nobody has to choose just one technology, on the contrary. Electromobility is a key factor, as is the use of hydrogen and renewable fuels. If we manage to emphasize the different advantages of the technologies in regulatory terms, they will support each other in achieving the net zero target,” adds Diemer.

So far, only the emissions at the tailpipe have played a role in the definition of a zero-emission vehicle. Electricity purchases, emissions from raw material extraction, vehicle production, transportation and recycling are not covered by current regulations. “We need to find a regulatory way to ensure that Climate Action covers the life cycle of a technology. Focusing purely on real-life operation is only shifting emissions to other parts of the value chain and in some cases to other regions of the world,” criticizes Diemer.

“In our view, the top priority is to reduce dependence on fossil fuels as quickly as possible,” Diemer explains. A major building block for the success of the energy transition in the transport sector is the climate impact of the existing fleet. Only an ambitious national implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive III (RED III) can activate this. RED III has a direct influence on the share of renewable fuels in the overall fuel mix. If this can be increased to a European average of 5% in 2030 by setting ambitious quotas, 60 million tons of CO2 will be saved each year. This corresponds to the annual emissions of 40 million cars.

Switzerland recently demonstrated that the blending and subsequent creditability of synthetic fuels is also feasible for new vehicles from a regulatory perspective. Swiss legislators accepted that the real fuel mix already does not consist of 100% fossil fuels. With the implementation of a crediting system, the CO2 emission reduction of renewable fuels is to be deducted from the total emissions in future. Switzerland does not question the important contribution of electric solutions in road transport.

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>>>The eFuel Alliance e.V.<<<

The eFuel Alliance is an interest group committed to promoting political and social acceptance of eFuels and to securing their regulatory approval. We represent more than 170 companies, associations and consumer organizations along the eFuel production value chain. We stand for fair competition and equal competitive condition for all relevant emission reduction solutions. We are firmly committed to further climate change mitigation and seek recognition for the significant part eFuels can play in sustainability and climate protection. Our aim is to create the conditions for the industrial production and widespread use of CO₂-neutral fuels from renewable sources of energy.

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