

‘120 by 2012 must stay,’ say MEPs

MEPs have sent a strong signal to the Commission and Europe’s governments that the EU’s long-standing commitment on carbon dioxide limits for new cars must be respected.

In its debate on the Commission’s proposals for limiting CO₂ emissions for the period after the current voluntary agreement runs out next year, the European Parliament’s environment committee passed a resolution which rejects many of the watered down elements in the proposals that were published in February.

Most strikingly, the committee said the original target – for the average new car sold in Europe to emit no more than 120 grams of CO₂ per kilometre by 2012 – should remain. The Commission is proposing the 120 g/km commitment should be weakened to 130 g/km for engine technology, with the final 10g to be made up of parallel measures such as increased use of biofuels.

There has also been pressure from the car industry for the 130 g/km commitment to be delayed until 2015, despite the 120 g/km target having been first envisaged for 2005 when CO₂ legislation was first proposed in the mid-1990s.

Weight

But MEPs on the environment committee rejected all this, reinforcing the current “120 g/km by 2012” target and saying there should be a binding target of 95 g/km for 2020 and a further one of 70 g/km for 2025.

Another proposal rejected by the environment committee was the idea of basing CO₂ limits on the weight of a vehicle. Over the summer, leading figures from the car industry publicly called for new standards to be easier to meet for heavier cars, notably sport utility vehicles (SUVs).

But MEPs voted for a proposal that said any categorisation of vehicles should be made not on the basis of weight but on “footprint” (the area between the four wheels), a decision welcomed by T&E. “Giving heavier cars easier CO₂ standards would

be like telling fat people to eat more food,” said T&E director Jos Dings. “If you take away the main incentive for losing weight, you’re going to get heavier cars, which will kill more people, guzzle more fuel and pump out more emissions.”

Slowing down

The vote, which has to be ratified by the full Parliament next month, comes as the rate of progress by car makers on CO₂ reduction is slowing down. Figures obtained by T&E show that European

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OECD calls for an end to EU’s biofuels target

The EU’s target for increasing use of biofuels in transport has received a serious setback, with another call for an end to such targets.

A damning report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published this month says biofuels’ ability to tackle global warming is very limited, and that biofuels are only economically viable with large state subsidies that in turn could lead to rising food prices and damage to forests and wildlife.

The paper goes so far as to call for governments to “cease creating new mandates for biofuels” and to end existing targets. Instead it says technology-neutral policies are needed, such as financial instruments, energy saving and improving vehicle efficiency.

The OECD is the latest in a growing list of respected bodies to cast doubt on the

usefulness of biofuels. Others to express scepticism recently include the World Bank, the International Transport Forum, and the German Advisory Council on the Environment.

Earlier this year, EU leaders approved a goal that 10% of transport fuels should come from biomass by 2020. The goal was criticised by environmental groups for focusing on the technological means and not the desired outcome.

Now Brice Lalonde, the former French environment minister who chairs the OECD’s round table on sustainable development, says the EU may have to reduce its 10% target. “You cannot feed people *and* soak up carbon *and* protect biodiversity *and* fuel cars,” he told the *Financial Times*. “European transport ministers set the target ‘as long as it is sustainable’ – that is a key sentence.”

The Commission is currently working on sustainabil-



A sign forbids entry to woodland in Poland’s Rospuda valley, where the battle continues over whether the Augustow bypass should be built through the Rospuda wetlands. See story page 2 and Editorial page 3.

ity criteria to add to its biofuel proposal, but the OECD says such criteria are hard to enforce and could be invalid under international trade rules. “Though theoretically possible,” it says, “reliance on certification schemes to ensure sustainable production is not a realistic safeguard.”

The OECD’s conclusions are supported by a new book on biofuels published by the American think-tank, the Worldwatch Institute. “Biofuels for Transport” argues that a massive increase in biofuels production could hasten deforestation and biodiversity loss and therefore speed up climate change.

The Commission published a report in July saying the EU’s 10% target could be achieved sustainably without disrupting European markets, but it was based on growing biomass crops in Europe, and few believe the 10% target can be met without large imports of biofuels.

Icao failing in its emissions mandate – T&E

T&E has warned that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (Icao) is threatening to undermine efforts it is responsible for.

Under the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, Icao was appointed as the body responsible for seeing that the air industry addresses emissions from international flights.

But in a statement made in the run-up to the triennial Icao General Assembly later this month, T&E says the UN agency is doing its best to stop the EU from taking action through entering aviation into Europe's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

T&E's policy officer João Vieira said: "After a shameful decade of inaction and obstruction, Icao must now give

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makers cut emissions by just 0.2% in 2006, giving a fleet-wide average of 160 g/km.

This represents the smallest annual improvement since the current voluntary target of 140 g/km by 2008 was agreed in 1998. T&E says it makes it "almost certain" that this target will be missed.

The Parliament's position will be used as input to a formal legislative proposal the Commission is expected to publish early next year.

US ruling could allow Californian standards

A judge in Vermont has ruled against a coalition of American car makers in allowing two states to enact California's "Clean Air" standards.

The case is thought to be a landmark ruling in the dispute on whether California and a range of other US states will be allowed to set standards designed to reduce greenhouse gases from new cars by 30% by 2016.

its full support to emissions trading and other measures to combat rapidly growing aviation emissions. The EU must be prepared to go it alone if Icao gives anything less than full backing to the emissions trading plan."

In an attempt to highlight how Icao has obstructed the action it is responsible for promoting, T&E has drawn up a history of Icao actions on aviation and the environment since just before Kyoto (see panel).

Aviation in ETS

Meanwhile the battle to work out the detail of aviation's entry to the ETS continues.

Earlier this month, the European Parliament's transport committee tried to water down the proposal by requesting a delay in the entry from 2011 to 2012, calling for 80% of emissions permits to be handed free to airlines, and asking for the cap on emissions from aircraft to be based on the period 2007-09,

Walking the key to tackling climate and obesity

The "twin crises" of global warming and obesity could be tackled effectively if walking was recognised more as a means of transport.

That is the message from a new report published last month by the London-based Institute for European Environmental Policy. It says if all drivers were to replace 6 kilometres per week of car journeys by walking – totalling about an hour a week – it would save more than 15% of the total emissions from passenger cars.

The report "Unfit for Purpose: How car use fuels climate change and obesity" is based on British figures, but the authors say the message is valid throughout Europe. They argue that

not the 2004-06 the Commission is proposing.

A day later, members of the EP's environment committee, which has the lead role on this dossier, took the opposite view. MEPs from all political groups called for a more stringent cap, and said at least 50% permits should be paid for via an auctioning process. The environment committee will vote in early October, with the full Parliament adopting its position in mid-November.

The environment committee's position echoes a report published a week earlier by Friends of the Earth, which said the Commission's proposals for aviation entering the ETS would have very little impact on the sector's contribution to climate change.

The report "Aviation in a Low-Carbon EU" was written by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in Great Britain, and calls for both the ETS to be strengthened and additional measures to reduce the growth in flights.

renewed efforts to promote walking as transport would be vastly cheaper than dealing with the consequences of widespread obesity and climate change.

Carolina Valsecchi of the

Poland stops work on bypass for now

Poland has backed down for the moment on the controversial Augustow bypass, saying it will not resume construction work until its dispute in the European Court of Justice has been resolved.

Work was stopped for the nesting season of certain birds protected under EU habitats legislation, but this was due to end on 31 July, and the Polish government had said it would resume

10 years of Icao inaction and obstruction

1996 ... requested that states do not apply fuel taxes as an environmental measure.

2001 ... confirmed 1996 resolution; rejected the concept of CO₂ emissions standards for planes; refused to endorse a closed emissions trading scheme for aviation.

2004 ... removed emissions charges from the list of options for at least three years; rejected the idea that it (Icao) should set up a global emissions trading scheme for aviation.

By the end of 2004, states wanting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from aviation while acting within Icao's guidelines had just one option left: entering aviation in their own emissions trading schemes. Now Icao wants to undermine the EU's attempt to do even this.

IIEP said: "The twin crises of obesity and climate change are clearly interlinked through the switch from muscle power to engine power for transport. Concerted action is needed to reverse this trend."

building work on 1 August.

But at the end of July, the Commission requested an emergency court order against work continuing, and obtained an official declaration from the Polish government that it would not resume work. The Polish prime minister Jaroslav Kaczynski confirmed this, saying there would be no construction work in the Rospuda valley "until Poland wins the case".

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Bypass or impasse? Finding a win/win solution in Augustow

Environmentalists versus security guards (or are they vigilantes?), road safety versus nature, residents versus tourists. These are the either/or ways in which the debate over the proposed Augustow bypass in Poland is being reported and hyped.

I recently went to Augustow to see for myself the reality of the proposed bypass that has become so controversial and has involved the intervention of the European Court of Justice. It is a classic case of a dispute that has been whipped into something that it isn't, and there is a lot of potential for a win/win solution. But for that to happen there will need to be an outbreak of common sense. And as the Augustow bypass has become so high-profile, it has become a testing ground for the credibility of EU environmental legislation, so the stakes are very high.

It's easy to sympathise with Augustow's residents. Standing next to the road passing through the town, shaken by the trucks thundering past, it is clear that something has to be done. An estimated 4500 lorries per day take this road, which connects Poland to the Baltic states. Road safety provision is completely lacking, there are no pavements and, apart from one set of traffic lights, no crossings – not even for children to get from their school to the bus stop on the other side. Even if road safety infrastructure were improved, the sheer volume of traffic would still be unacceptable, especially in terms of noise.

But the proposed solution is to build a bypass – part of the Warsaw-to-Helsinki *Via Baltica* road – through the wetlands of the Rospuda valley, a site protected by both

EU Natura2000 and Poland's "Area of Silence" status. The area is known as "the green lungs of Poland", and is a central part of the area's attractiveness to tourists. Augustow draws income for its bars, restaurants and

guest houses from tourists attracted to sailing on Rospuda lake, sunbathing on the banks or taking kayak trips into the valley. Walkers and cyclists can enjoy a newly renovated path – paid for by the EU! – along the banks of the lake. Will the area be as attractive with a major highway running through it?

There is likely to be a viable alternative. Most green groups accept that a bypass is needed, and are working with civil engineers to put forward sensible, environmentally audited suggestions for an alternative route which would, among other things, protect Augustow's tourism industry. The engineers themselves are sceptical about the Rospuda route, as the wetland area is prone to fog and icy conditions (thus requiring



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regular de-icing), and they are doubtful whether they can ensure that no harmful substances will get into the eco-system's water courses.

Yet local media and the town's mayor have encouraged local residents to pit themselves against environmentalists. Posters around Augustow encourage residents to report anyone suspected of trying to disrupt construction of the bypass to a "rapid response unit" or the police. The "unit" appeared to be two security guards in a black van who gave the impression more of vigilantes than officials. Daytrippers are currently sharing the forest – much of which has trees marked for felling – with security guards, brought in to protect the site.

Given that there are many other cases like Augustow all over the EU, particularly in the new member states, the credibility of the EU's environmental legislation is at stake over the outcome of this bypass. The EU needs to get tough, especially as

Poland stands to receive almost €60 billion of regional support between now and 2013, much of it earmarked for transport. The Polish government still has to negotiate the programme with the Commission, so this is Brussels' chance to stress that projects that do not satisfy environmental legislation will not receive funding.

But the Commission also has to tread carefully. Some commentators have suggested that Poland's history of being squeezed between bigger nations over several centuries has created a "them versus us" climate that provides an emotional motive for fighting rules imposed from outside the country. This may be the same in other new member states. The Commission will therefore not want to use the big stick every time there is a problem like Augustow.

Maybe the answer lies in giving member states guidance on better application of environmental legislation and open and transparent decision-making in relation to major infrastructure projects.

Seminar on dealing with emissions from shipping

T&E is co-hosting a seminar next month on shipping and the environment.

The seminar will focus on a discussion of potential policy options to deal with emissions from ships, presenting research on the advantages and disadvantages of several policy instruments in the context of the slow progress being made under the International Maritime Organisation.

The results of the seminar will be fed into Europe's efforts in working with the IMO, and possibly also used in drawing up a unilateral strategy if EU decides to carry out its threat to take

action outside the IMO.

The conference – organised by the Portuguese presidency, the German Environment Office (UBA), the International Council on Clean Transportation, and T&E – takes place on 17

October in Brussels and is free of charge.

To register, email info@transportenvironment.org. To find out more about the programme, contact João Vieira at joao.vieira@transportenvironment.org.

Meyer joins T&E team as policy officer

T&E has a new policy officer, but she is no stranger to the Brussels NGO scene.

Kerstin Meyer has joined the T&E staff after four years working for the European Environmental Bureau on air pollution issues (fine particles), noise, urban environment and nanotechnology. She will concentrate on the

issue of cars and CO₂.

German by nationality, she studied political science and sociology at Freiburg university, and was also active in the local environmental movement there.

She speaks German, English, French and a little Dutch.



Corbey calls for biofuels sustainability criteria in fuels directive

The leading MEP dealing with the Commission's plans to cut lifecycle carbon emissions from fuels has warned that sustainability criteria for biofuels are needed to prevent wider social and environmental problems.

Dorette Corbey, the Parliament's rapporteur on proposals to revise the EU's fuel quality directive, is worried that sustainability criteria will find their way into the EU's biofuels directive – a separate piece of legislation – but not into revised fuel quality standards.

Corbey has proposed a set of amendments to the EC's proposals, which will be discussed this autumn. She says the revised directive must include criteria ensuring that the biomass used to produce fuels is "at least partly traceable" and that all firms in the biomass chain are properly certified on social and environmental criteria. Otherwise, she says, reducing lifecycle emissions from fuel production could come at the cost of deforestation, water shortages and social inequity.

However, she could face opposition from MEPs who support the idea of sustainability criteria but not in this piece of legislation.

T&E the principle of sustainability criteria, as the worst biofuels can be worse for the environment than traditional petrol and diesel.

MILAN CITY CHARGE

City authorities in Milan have approved a city centre charge to start this autumn aimed at reducing congestion and tackling air pollution. The system will operation from 07.00 to 19.00 via a system of electronic monitoring devices at 42 entry points to the city centre, and the charge will range from €2 to

€10 depending on the emissions of the car. Milan is one of Italy's worst cities for air pollution.

- The Stockholm city congestion charge returned last month after a successful trial in 2006. Drivers pay between 10 and 20 kronor (€1.07-2.14) whenever they pass an electronic pay station on the edge of the charging zone. There are few changes from the trial, notably the abandonment of direct electronic debits from a driver's bank account.

SHIP PILOT

Germany's Environment Protection Agency has published a study on reducing shipping emissions in the Baltic Sea. "Market-Based Instruments for Abatement of Emissions from Shipping" has been led by the Swedish transport economist and former T&E president Per Kågeson. It proposes a pilot scheme for the Baltic, which would include setting up a common authority for all Baltic states that would collect a mandatory charge reflecting a ship's NOx emissions in Baltic waters, and also a SOx charge for any ship using fuel with a sulphur content of 0.5% or more.

SUV BAD VALUE

Sport utility vehicles are proving a bad investment, according to a British car valuation agency. Research by the agency, CAP, shows SUVs lose value much more quickly than average medium-sized cars – a three-year-old SUV has lost 33% of its value over the past two years, compared with 25% for average family cars. CAP says there could be many reasons, ranging from negative publicity, tax increases, and the fact that there are a lot more SUVs in circulation so they have lost their exclusivity value.

STANDARDS FOR JOBS

Tougher fuel economy standards would offer a massive boost to the US economy, according to the latest report from the Union of Concerned Scientists. The UCS is a group of environmentally aware American academics, and their latest report says technology that is already available could cut national oil use by 1.6 million barrels of oil per day. This would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles by 260 million tonnes and create more than 240 000 jobs by 2020.

LORRY BAN

Austria wants to ban lorries carrying certain goods from a 12km stretch of the Inn Valley motorway to improve air quality, but the Commission has said this would break EU rules. Austria, which has struggled to keep its Alpine air quality at levels the EU promised when the country joined in 1995, says it needs to ban lorries carrying waste, cereals, steel and cars from two stretches of the A12 to bring NOx down to agreed levels. The European news service *Ends Daily* says Brussels has told Vienna its plans are incompatible with EU law as they would "severely impede the free movement of goods" and "would not appear to lead to any significant improvement in air quality."

FISHING FOR SUBSIDIES

A group of environmental NGOs has accused the Commission of giving hidden subsidies for environmentally damaging boats used by fishermen. In July the Commission published a regulation on "de minimis" state aid to the fisheries sector, but six NGOs say this will be used as a fuel subsidy,

which in turn will generate further overfishing by making fuel cheaper and thus encouraging fishermen to fish more and longer. The six say fishing enterprises are set to receive up to €30 000 of state aid every three years.

MORE FOR GREENER?

A sample of 25 000 EU citizens has shown that a majority would be willing to pay more to use less polluting transport, though most would want the limit set at 10% more. The findings come in the latest Eurobarometer poll, which also indicated that 90% of respondents believe improved public transport would be the best solution to traffic problems in their area.

GOOD RISK?

The German insurance company Allianz has teamed up with WWF to offer cheaper car insurance for people who drive cars that are better for the environment. Allianz and WWF are working out a system of integrating carbon dioxide emissions into the insurer's premiums. WWF's motivation is that it could boost the market for smaller cars in Germany, while Allianz sees environmentally conscious drivers as good insurance risks.

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 49 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 mid October. The deadline for contributions to reach either the T&E secretariat or the editor is Wednesday 10 October 2007.

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