

EU must stick to car emissions deadline

From Mr Jan Peeters and others.

Sir, Ten years ago, we set the goal of 120g CO₂/km average emissions for new cars sold in Europe by 2005 or 2010 at the latest. We did that for good reasons.

With greenhouse gas emissions from transport up by 32 per cent between 1990 and 2004 and oil prices now at \$70 a barrel, the attainment of that goal is now more urgent than it was 10 years ago. There is increased evidence of climate change, to which cars contribute 15 per cent. Yet, despite modest improvements in fuel efficiency, total CO₂ emissions from cars in the European Union are still rising.

Strong measures are necessary to achieve the 15-30 per cent CO₂ reductions target by 2020 that EU leaders called for in their March 2005 summit. The oil used to power cars is a huge cost to the European economy. The annual bill is now almost as much as the entire EU budget.

Serious and legally binding fuel-efficiency standards for cars are one of the most important steps that can and should be taken at EU level. The Lisbon strategy calls for a dynamic and knowledge-based economy. We consider it is wiser to invest Europe's limited resources in advanced fuel-efficient technology than to invest in oil burned unnecessarily in car engines.

We urge the current EU leadership to do what is necessary to ensure that the carmakers and importers of Europe reach the 120g CO₂/km target by 2010 as well as other targets beyond that date.



Exhausted: Europe needs a breather

Jan Peeters,
Former State Secretariat for the Environment, Belgium

Svend Auken,
Former Minister for the Environment, Denmark

Corinne Lepage,
Former Minister for the Environment, France

Edo Ronchi,
Former Minister for the Environment, Italy

Margreeth de Boer,
Former Minister for the Environment, The Netherlands

Elisa Ferreira,
Former Minister for the Environment, Portugal

Pekka Haavisto,
Former Minister of Environment and Development, Finland

John Gummer,
Former Environment Secretary, UK

Brendan Howlin,
Former Irish Environment Minister