
Gemeente
Amsterdam


Comune di Bologna


EINDHOVEN


City of Enschede


GDYNIA
CITY OF
GDYNIA


City of
Gothenburg


Gemeente
Groningen


Gemeente
Haarlem


Leiden


LISBOA
CÂMARA MUNICIPAL


Nijmegen


Città di Palermo


VILLE DE
PARIS


Porto.


City of
Rotterdam


's-Hertogenbosch


VREDE
EN
RECHT
Den Haag


GEMEENTE TILBURG


CITTA' DI TORINO


City of Utrecht


AJUNTAMENT DE VALÈNCIA
REGIDORIA DE MOBILITAT SOSTENIBLE
I INFRAESTRUCTURES DE TRANSPORT PÚBLIC


WAŁBRZYCH


zakochaj się
w Warszawie


gemeente Zaanstad
ZNSTD


Zwolle


POLIS
CITIES AND REGIONS FOR TRANSPORT INNOVATION


TRANSPORT &
ENVIRONMENT

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
Mr. Frans Timmermans

Commissioner for Transport
Ms. Adina Vălean

Commissioner for Environment
Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius

Commissioner for the Internal Market
Mr. Thierry Breton

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms
Ms. Elisa Ferreira

25 March 2021

Dear Executive Vice-President, dear Commissioners,

Subject: Cities and civil society ask for at least half of new vans to be zero-emission in 2030

Vans are the Achilles' heel of the European road transport policy. They are the fastest growing road[1] transport sector in the EU, and a rising source of air and climate pollution, especially in urban areas. Yet, they are often exempt from safety and environmental policies, such as driving regulations or tolls (unlike trucks) and benefit from less stringent CO_2 targets than cars. To clean up the air in cities - and meet the EU climate neutrality objective - we, the undersigned, call for the European Commission to **urgently prioritise zero-emission vans** in the upcoming revisions of the CO_2 standards Regulation and the Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Directive (AFID).

Van use is booming. Sales of new vans (light commercial vehicles) increased 57% between 2012 and 2019[2]. This trend is set to continue with more and more vans used to transport goods, as the surge of e-commerce during the pandemic has shown[3]. Vans today represent 14% of NOx emissions from vehicles in cities[4]. Based on data from Paris, vans emit on average around three quarters more NOx per kilometer compared to passenger cars[5]. With 70% of Europeans living in urban areas,[6] NOx and other pollutants coming from the rising number of vans must be tackled without delay. Vans are also the fastest growing source of CO_2 emitted from road transport. Since 1990, while CO_2 emissions from cars and trucks have

[1] Source: Member states reporting to the UNFCCC.
[2] EEA, Monitoring of CO2 emissions from vans – Regulation 510/2011. Link
[3] OECD, *E-Commerce in the time of COVID-19*. Link.
[4] T&E calculations based on JRC, Urban NO_2 Atlas Link.
[5] T&E calculations based on remote sensing by the ICCT in Paris found the average light commercial vehicle emitted 0.8gNOx/km as compared to the average passenger car at 0.46 g/km. Link.
[6] Eurostat, urban and rural living in the EU. Link.

both increased by around 20%, vans emissions have grown 58%[7]. **To clean-up the air and meet our EU climate target, we need zero-emission vans as soon as possible**.

In 2020 only 2% of new vans were electric[8], despite cost parity with diesel already for smaller vans[9]. Cost parity for medium and larger vans will be reached in 2022 and 2023. Demand will therefore grow sharply during the 2020s while the key barrier remains a lack of supply. Fleet operators have been ordering electric vans from start-ups because traditional manufacturers are not able to meet the demand, e.g. UPS has ordered 10,000 e-vans from Arrival[10]. **This shows that the current van CO_2 standard regulation is not driving the market**. Ambitious CO_2 targets to reduce emissions are the solution as the car market has shown: in 2020, 10.5% of new car sales in the EU were electric, more than tripling the 3% share of 2019, despite the pandemic[11].

To achieve climate neutrality by 2050, and to clean up the air as soon as possible, we are calling on the Commission to include the following measures as part of the revision of the CO2 standard regulation for vans and the AFID:

- **All new vans must be zero-emission by 2035 at the latest.** Cities are leading the way with access restrictions for internal combustion engine vehicles, setting a clear pathway to phase out diesel and petrol vans, some of these restrictions applying in 2025 and many more following by 2030[12]. The EU should endorse this movement with an EU-wide phase-out date for internal combustion vans.

- **To unlock the supply, at least 50% of new vans sold must be electric in 2030** and ideally significantly more than 50% considering the growing number of cities introducing zero-emission zones,[13] for which sufficient e-van output is vital.

- **Incentives for plug-in hybrid electric vans (PHEVs) must be avoided**, noting the lessons from passenger cars where the average real-world emissions of plug-in hybrids are two to eight times higher than those recorded in lab testing.[14]

- Accelerated deployment of charging infrastructure is needed to support the uptake of zero-emission vans. To achieve this, an ambitious revision of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID) should deliver on setting **binding national targets on the number of public fast and ultra-fast chargers for electric vans** with chargers located in active collaboration with cities.

---

[7] Source: Member states reporting to the UNFCCC.
[8] Based on Dataforce data.
[9] Already today there is evidence of e-van leasing contracts offered for less than the cost of the equivalent diesel van. Link.
[10] Electrive (2020), UPS invests in Arrival and orders 10k electric vans, 30 January. Link.
[11] Transport & Environment (2020). Mission (almost) accomplished. Link.
[12] The ICCT (2020), The end of the road? An overview of combustion-engine car phase-out announcements across Europe. Link.
[13] Website summarizing urban access regulations in the EU. Link.
[14] The ICCT, Fact sheet: Real-world usage of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Link; Transport & Environment (2020), Plug-in hybrids in new emissions scandal as tests show higher pollution than claimed. Link

- For a comprehensive charging ecosystem, **support should also be provided for the deployment of charging infrastructure at the depot** (overnight charging) and **at distribution hubs** (charging while loading and unloading).

Finally, we urge you to find an effective legislative solution to allow EU cities to exchange the data needed to enforce zero- and low-emission zones against vehicles registered in other Member States, and we are strongly concerned about the length of time it is taking to find a solution[15].

The forthcoming proposals to revise the van CO_2 emission performance standards and the AFID represent a once in a decade opportunity to decarbonise vans - and we urge you to take it.

Yours sincerely,

Signatory cities: Amsterdam, Bologna, Eindhoven, Enschede, Gdynia, Gothenburg, Groningen, Haarlem, Leiden, Lisbon, Łódź, Nijmegen, Palermo, Paris, Porto, Rotterdam, s'Hertogenbosch, the Hague, Tilburg, Turin, Utrecht, València, Walbrzych, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Zaanstad, and Zwolle.

Signatory organisations: POLIS, Transport & Environment

Contact persons regarding this letter for the respective cities and organisations are listed below:

Geert de Jong
Program director Sustainable Transport - City of Amsterdam
g.a.dejong@amsterdam.nl

Claudio Mazzanti
Assessore Politiche per la Mobilità e Quartieri - City of Bologna
assessoremobilita@comune.bologna.it

Monique List-de Roos
Alderman Mobility and Transport - City of Eindhoven
m.list@eindhoven.nl

Benjamin Groenewolt
Beleidsadviseur Mobiliteit - City of Enschede
b.groenewolt@enschede.nl

Wojciech Szczurek
Mayor of the City of Gdynia
sekr.a@gdynia.pl

Johan Sävhage
CEO, Göteborgs Stads Leasing AB - City of Gothenburg
johan.savhage@gsl.goteborg.se

Sjouke van der Vlugt
Policy Officer City Logistics - City of Groningen
sjouke.van.der.vlugt@groningen.nl

Robbert Berkhout
Alderman Sustainability, Economy and Mobility - City of Haarlem
secretariaat.berkhout@haarlem.nl

[15] We understand that the Commission (DG MOVE) declined the option of extending the directive governing the cross-border exchange of information related to traffic offences, but tendered for pilot projects involving the sharing of information.

Ashley North
Councilor Durability, Mobility and Management of Public Space - City of Leiden
a.north@leiden.nl

Pedro Machado
Mobility Advisor to the Deputy Mayor - City of Lisbon
pedro.machado@cm-lisboa.pt

Grzegorze Justynski
Chief specialist for electromobility - City of Łódź
g.justynski@uml.lodz.pl

Harriët Tiemens
Vice mayor for Climate and Energy, Green and Water, Housing and Mobility - City of Nijmegen
h1.tiemens@nijmegen.nl

Prof. Giusto Catania
Assessore alla Mobilità - City of Palermo
giusto.catania@comune.palermo.it

David Belliard
Deputy Mayor in Charge of Transport - City of Paris
press@paris.fr

Maria Teresa Stanislau Almeida Domingues
Advisor for the City Councillor for Transport - City of Porto
teresastanislau@cm-porto.pt

Judith Bokhove
Vice Mayor for Urban Mobility - City of Rotterdam
j.bokhove@rotterdam.nl

Ufuk Kâhya
Vice-Mayor / Alderman for Sustainable mobility, Talent development and Welfare
Member European Committee of the Regions
- Municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch
u.kahya@s-hertogenbosch.nl

Liesbeth van Tongeren
Alderman for Sustainability, Environment and Energy Transition - Gemeente Den Haag
liesbeth.vantongeren@denhaag.nl

Oscar Dusschooten
Alderman zero emission mobility - City of Tilburg
oscar.dusschooten@tilburg.nl

Ing. Maria la Pietra
Assessore alla Mobilità - City of Torino
segreteria.assessorelapietra@comune.torino.it

Eelco Eerenberg
Alderman Zero emission mobility - City of Utrecht
eelco.eerenberg@utrecht.nl

Giuseppe Grezzi
Deputy Mayor for sustainable mobility and public space - City of València
mobilitatsostenible@valencia.es

Mateusz Nowicki
Inspector in the Environment and Climate Office - City of Walbrzych
m.nowicki@um.walbrzych.pl

Leszek Drogosz
Deputy director of the Office for Infrastructure - City of Warsaw
ldrogosz@um.warszawa.pl

Anna Badenska
Specialist in the Department of Coordination of Transport Projects - City of Wroclaw
anna.badenska@um.wroc.pl

Lenny Beijerbergen
Senior woordvoerder - Gemeente Zaanstad
l.beijerbergen@zaanstad.nl

William Dogger
Wethouder - Gemeente Zwolle
w.dogger@zwolle.nl

Giacomo Lozzi
Senior Project Manager
Coordinator Urban Freight at POLIS
GLozzi@polisnetwork.eu

James Nix
Freight Manager
Transport & Environment (T&E)
james.nix@transportenvironment.org