

EU reaches deal to ban sale of new combustion-engine cars by 2035

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A car is surrounded by exhaust fumes as it is parked with a running engine in Berlin [File: Michael Sohn/AP Photo]

Brussels, October 29 (RHC)-- The European Parliament and EU member countries have reached a deal to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035. European Union negotiators sealed on

Thursday night the first agreement of the bloc's "Fit for 55" package set up by the Commission to achieve the EU's climate goals of cutting emissions of the gases that cause global warming by 55 percent over this decade.

The European Parliament said the deal is a "clear signal ahead of the UN COP27 Climate Change Conference that the EU is serious about adopting concrete laws to reach the more ambitious targets set out in the EU Climate Law." According to the bloc's data, transport is the only sector where greenhouse gas emissions have increased in the past 30 years, rising 33.5 percent between 1990 and 2019.

Passenger cars are a significant polluter, accounting for 61 percent of total CO2 emissions from EU road transport. The EU wants to drastically reduce gas emissions from transport by 2050 and promote electric cars, but a report from the bloc's external auditor showed last year that the region is lacking the appropriate charging stations.

"This is a historic decision as it sets for the first time a clear decarbonisation pathway – with targets in 2025, 2030 and 2035 and aligned with our goal of climate neutrality by 2050," said Pascal Canfin, the chair of the environment committee of the European Parliament.

"This sector, which accounts for 16 percent of European emissions at the moment, will be carbon neutral by 2050," Canfin added.

World leaders agreed in Paris in 2015 to work to keep global temperatures from increasing more than 2C (3.6F), and ideally no more than 1.5C (2.7F) by the end of the century. Scientists even the less ambitious goal will be missed by a wide margin unless drastic steps are taken to reduce emissions.

"The EU is taking the scenic route, and that route ends in disaster," said Greenpeace EU transport campaigner Lorelei Limousin. "A European 2035 phase-out of fossil fuel-burning cars is not quick enough: New cars with internal combustion engines should be banned by 2028 at the latest," she said.

"The announcement is a perfect example of where politicians can bask in a feel-good headline that masks the reality of their repeated failures to act on climate," Limousin added. The European Parliament and member states will now have to formally approve the agreement before it comes into force.

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