

Leaked Euro 7 proposals will prop up carmakers profits, but are so weak that they will do nothing to improve human health

Transport & Environment has obtained a second leak of the European Commission's proposal for new 'Euro 7' air pollution limits for vehicles. The Commission proposals go against the recommendations of its own consortium of experts, known as CLOVE. The new standards for cars and vans that are far less ambitious than any of the scenarios recommended by CLOVE.

These new proposals barely improve the current Euro 6 standard set more than a decade ago. These were inadequate to protect human health at the time, and have been made obsolete by technological progress.

The key failings of the Commission's new leaked draft proposals are:

- Euro 6 petrol limits are kept for cars and completely fails to take into account the technological progress since the Euro 6 limits were set over a decade ago.
- Brake particle limit (7mg/km) which will fail to ensure that the most effective technology to reduce pollution (vacuum aspiration) will be introduced until 2035 despite the technology already being ready, available and affordable
- The on road driving conditions under which limits will be checked are weaker for several criteria such as temperature and altitude than the lowest ambition scenario assessed by the Commission (temperature, altitude).
- Bizarrely driving conditions under which limits apply are more stringent for trucks than cars
- Durability is still poor at 8 years/160,000km for cars, additional durability has been added of up to 10 years, 200,000km but it appears that during that 2 year period even weaker limits will apply. 10 years would still not cover even the average age of EU cars (11.8 years). The U.S.A has much better durability of 240,000km
- 700,000km/15 years does not improve durability for trucks. An additional limit of up to 875,000km could allow weaker emissions limits. It still falls far short of durability in California of 1.3 million km.

Overall it is a weak and shockingly poor proposal. No better than Euro 6 in disguise.

In addition:

Additional pollutants: small particles (down to 10nm) and ammonia limits are included for cars. For trucks ammonia, formaldehyde, methane and nitrous oxide limits are included as well as ammonia and small particles.

Anna Krajinska, Manager, Vehicle Emissions and Air Quality at T&E, said:

“The proposals for cars are so weak, the auto industry might have drafted them themselves. At best the Commission have been fooled by industry claims of the cost burden - the same industry that made record profits last year - at worst they have colluded with industry to ignore their own expert advice. Carmakers' shareholders might benefit from these terrible proposals, but the true cost will be paid in human health across Europe.”

“The Commission explicitly recognises that toxic pollution from road transport is responsible for 70,000 deaths in Europe each and every year. They have done the math and concluded that that is a price worth paying to prop up the profit margins of Europe's carmakers. These proposals will put 100 million very polluting cars on European roads, they will stay there for decades to come, and they will continue to cause death and ill health.”

Euro 7 Background

The European Union is revising its main law limiting pollution from cars, vans and trucks. A new emission standard called Euro 7 has been under development for four years and is expected to be implemented from 2025. The current Euro 6 standard was set more than a decade ago, prior to the Dieselgate scandal, it was inadequate at the time and is now completely outdated due to technological progress.

The European Commission assembled emissions experts from across Europe, known as CLOVE, to independently assess the shortfalls in the current car and truck emission standards, and propose new emission limits and tests based on what is both economically and technically feasible. CLOVE presented recommendations that suggest much stricter limits and rules based on what new emissions technologies, such as e-catalysts, can deliver.

Is air pollution from traffic still such a big problem?

Air pollution in European cities is appalling. It causes around 400,000 premature deaths per year and a wide range of serious illnesses including heart disease, lung disease and cancer. The latest research shows that there is no safe level of air pollution and that road transport is a major cause of toxic air right across Europe.

Despite some reductions in pollution from road transport in recent years, owing largely to the introduction of on-road emissions testing following the Dieselgate scandal, emissions from cars, vans, buses and trucks continue to be the leading source of nitrogen dioxide pollution and the third largest source of fine particulate matter, PM2.5. Internal combustion engines also emit many other pollutants dangerous to health, such as hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide.

T&E forecasts that almost 100 million more ICE cars will be sold between 2025 and 2035 (the proposed date of combustion engine phase out for cars) and 2.3 million trucks. These cars and trucks will remain on the road, on average, for more than a decade and much longer in Eastern

and Southern Europe, often in excess of 15 years. This means there is at least another quarter of a century of polluting cars and trucks on the EU's roads.

Euro 7 is Europe's last chance to slash toxic pollution from engines. An ambitious Euro 7 could reduce NOx pollution from diesel cars by 80% and trucks by 79%, avoiding 35,000 premature deaths by 2050.