

CO₂ EMISSION PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR CARS

Regulation (EU) 2023/851 amending Regulation (EU) 2019/631 as regards strengthening the CO₂ emission performance standards for new passenger cars and new light commercial vehicles

WHAT'S IN IT?

OBJECTIVE

Climate ambition

in view of respecting the limit of 1.5°C global warming under the Paris Agreement

100% renewables

accelerating the phase-out of fossils and nuclear

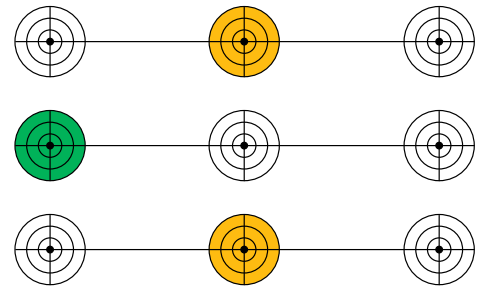
Fair participation

of citizens in the benefits of the European Green Deal

GOOD PROSPECTS
IN VIEW OF
THE OBJECTIVE

MIXED
PROSPECTS

A STEP BACKWARDS,
UNDERMINING
THE OBJECTIVE



WHAT'S NEXT?

STATUS

Entered into force



MILESTONES

By December 2025
European Commission
Delegated Act on full
life-cycle emissions
of light-duty vehicles

In 2026
European Commission
review of the Regulation
and its targets

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR?

RISKS

Speed. Slowing down the EU law's progress or implementation.

Money. Conflict on distributional effects or lack of finance for making this EU law impactful.

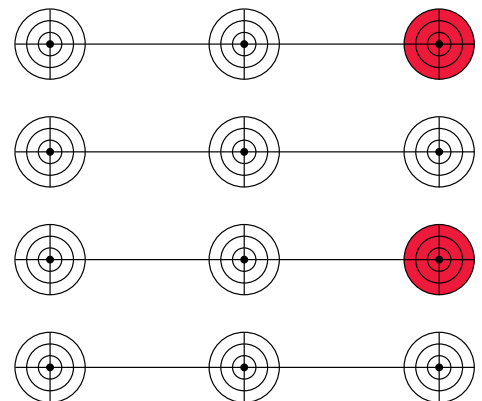
Fossil fuels. Open door to supporting the use of fossil fuels.

Nuclear power. Open door to supporting the use of nuclear power.

LIMITED RISK

MEDIUM RISK

HIGH RISK



NO RISK

N/A NOT APPLICABLE



Learn more

eu.boell.org/green-deal-risk-radar

WHAT'S IN IT?

 **Climate ambition**

Contributes to the overall EU climate targets by setting an objective to reduce transport emissions by 90% by 2050 (compared to 1990 emissions). This is to be achieved by reducing emissions from all new cars by 55% by 2030 and from all light duty vehicles by 50% (both compared to 2021 emissions), complemented by a target to have all cars and light duty vehicles be zero emissions battery electric vehicles, fuel-cell and other hydrogen powered vehicles by 2035. However, ensuring that transport achieves the required emission reductions would require a phase-out of the internal combustion engine already as of 2030. In addition, the interim target of 15% reduction by 2025 is too low to bring about sufficient progress in view of the 2030 target.

 **100% renewables**

By 2035, all new cars and light duty vehicles should be driven fully by renewable energy.

 **Fair participation**

The Regulation clearly states that the transition must be just and inclusive, leaving no one behind, and thus calls for ensuring that mobility is affordable for and accessible to all, especially commuters without access to quality public transport or other mobility solutions. Particular attention should be given to the impact this transition will have on small and medium-sized enterprises and vulnerable regions and communities that depend on the presence of an intensive automotive industry.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR? RISKS

 **Speed**  **Money**  **Fossil fuels**  **Nuclear power**

In particular, the 2035 target for all new cars to be emission free is being heavily criticised by a coalition of conservative and right-wing politicians, governments and car companies. It will be crucial to ensure the 2026 European Commission assessment sticks to (or strengthens) this timeline.

‘If we have the majorities in the next European Parliament, we will permit combustion-engine cars again. [The ban] was a serious industrial policy mistake.’ – MANFRED WEBER, EPP PRESIDENT, EURACTIV, 30 MAY 2024

‘... the 2035 climate neutrality target for cars creates predictability for investors and manufacturers. Getting there will require a technology-neutral approach, in which e-fuels have a role to play through a targeted amendment of the regulation as part of the foreseen review.’ – URSULA VON DER LEYEN, POLITICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2024–2029, 18 JULY 2024

WHAT'S NEXT?



STATUS

Entered into force on 15 May 2023**Transposition by EU Member States**

Most measures will be implemented EU-wide. Member States' main contribution will be to provide alternative fuels infrastructure such as electric vehicles charging stations on which they will need to provide two-year progress reports.

Revision clauses and reporting duties

In 2026, the European Commission (EC) shall review the effectiveness and impact of this Regulation and shall assess the need to review the targets.

From December 2025, the EC should develop a progress report every two years, in particular to monitor and assess the need for possible additional measures to facilitate a just transition, including through financial means.

By end December 2025, the EC should present a report on funding gaps to ensure a just transition in the automotive supply chain and how to tackle these.

The EC should investigate the impacts of setting minimum energy efficiency thresholds for new zero-emission passenger cars and light commercial vehicles.

The EC will make a proposal for registering after 2035 vehicles running exclusively on CO₂ neutral fuels.

Delegated acts and other related legislative action

By end of December 2025, the EC shall adopt a delegated act setting the methodology for the assessment and reporting of the full life-cycle CO₂ emissions of light-duty vehicles that are placed on the Union market.

By end of December 2026, the EC should develop a methodology to ensure emissions data are adjusted to real-world data.

HOW TO IMPROVE IT? OPPORTUNITIES

A number of the reports and proposals that the European Commission needs to develop can help improve the implementation of, and even go beyond, the current framework. They are all important to monitor and influence.

FURTHER READING

- [Transport & Environment: Car Decarbonisation Roadmap, March 2024](#)