

Tackling CO₂-emissions from cars – European Commission's proposal for a revised strategy to reduce CO₂ and improve fuel efficiency from light vehicles

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Cars are an important part of the everyday lives of a large number of Europeans, and the automotive industry is a significant source of employment and growth in many regions of the EU. However, car usage has significant impacts on climate change, with about 12% of the overall EU emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the main greenhouse gas, coming from the fuel consumed by passenger cars. Even though there have been significant improvements in vehicle technology – in particular in fuel efficiency which also means lower CO₂ emissions - this has not been enough to neutralise the effect of increased traffic and car size. While the EU as a whole has reduced its emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by just under 5% over the 1990-2004 period, the CO₂ emissions from road transport have increased by 26%.

In this context the European Commission adopted in February 2007 a Communication outlining a revised strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars based on an integrated approach and aimed at reaching the EU objective of 120 g CO₂/km by 2012. An outline of the revised strategy will be presented, together with background information derived from the impact assessment supporting the strategy (for more details http://ec.europa.eu/environment/co2/co2_home.htm).