Weakening of 2035 target a blow to Europe's EV leadership, but the future remains electric

Brussels, 16 December 2025 – The European Commission's weakening of its 2035 target for zero-emission car and vans sales will negatively impact investment certainty in Europe's e-mobility ecosystem, but the continent's future remains electric. Over [200 European business leaders]() had in September called on President von der Leyen to deliver a clear 2035 electrification investment signal in today's review. Today's proposal positively maintains Europe's overall focus on electrification for 2035, but the industry is left disappointed by the lowered ambition and extended lifetimes for transitional or unscalable technologies.

Chris Heron, Secretary General of E-Mobility Europe, commented on today's proposal: "While China accelerates, Europe is hesitating, and hesitation is not a strategy. Changing the rules midway through the game undermines business confidence after companies have already committed capital and built factories around a 100% trajectory. But once the dust has settled, we're confident the core of the 2035 framework will still matter more for the market than today's exemptions. The world's transition to electric vehicles is irreversible, shaped by cost and efficiency".

The European Commission has proposed reducing Europe's 100% zero-emission car and van sales target to a 90% emissions-reduction goal, alongside new allowances for hybrids and fuels. This would allow a share of plug-in hybrids and other ICE-based vehicles to remain on the market in 2035, with potential to account for over a quarter of new car sales based on preliminary estimates (dependent on final rules).

The European Commission also launched a new corporate fleets legislation, battery booster package, and automotive omnibus alongside today's CO2 limits proposal. The industry is pleased that these files have been delivered, while highlighting missed opportunities - especially the exclusion of heavy-duty vehicles from the corporate fleets proposal despite industry calls for a stronger e-trucks demand pathway.

The Commission's 2035 weakening comes in a year where European and global electric car and van sales are breaking records. Europe's electric car market in 2025 is recording the highest growth rate of any mass market, including China. But China already has a major head start, with a 50% market share for electrified vehicle sales and a dominant position in software and supply chains.

Chris Heron continued: "It's the wrong time for Europe to take the wind out of its own sails. Europe's electric car markets are growing strongly in 2025, yet by reopening the door to plug-ins, hybrids, and unscalable biofuels, we risk slowing ourselves down in a highly competitive global race. The future of transport is electric; Europe needs to recommit to building it as we move forward".

E-Mobility Europe urges the Council and Parliament to prioritise actions for further accelerating EV uptake and securing value chains in their upcoming negotiations – but not confuse today's picture any further.

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About E-Mobility Europe: E-Mobility Europe is the voice for Europe's collective electric vehicle ecosystem, with over 80 members including national EV associations, vehicle manufacturing, infrastructure, supply chain, fleet owners, and technology. We advocate for Europe's successful transition to electric vehicles, in a way that benefits both the region's people and its industries.