

Electric cars serving climate, employment, environment and social justice: a role for European industries

In the EU, transport accounts for 27% of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions (2017). With a modal share of 82% in 2019 (Eurostat), the car is by far the means of transport used most by European citizens. The passenger car is responsible for around 12% of total EU emissions of CO₂.

In order to become environmentally friendly, our approach to mobility has to change fundamentally. Transport policy should aim to reduce dependence on and use of private cars wherever possible. Beyond the central issue of greenhouse gas emissions, the car has negative and systemic effects, such as inefficiency and congestion, air, noise and water pollution, hegemonic use of public space, sedentary lifestyle, road traffic accidents, urban sprawl, land artificialisation, etc. Hence, a genuine transformation in transportation is necessary. This includes but is not limited to, firstly, the reduction of necessary distances, wherever possible. Secondly, a shift towards active mobility and collective and shared means of transportation. The promotion of public transport, challenging the socially-constructed need of ownership and promoting an efficient service-oriented shared usage are instrumental and allow the reduction of the overall private car fleet. Increasing the use of climate-neutral buses as well as trams and modernising rail-rolling stock will also contribute to the decarbonisation of mobility. Thirdly, a global approach to mobility which takes into account transport but more broadly the determinants of mobility demand: town planning, land policies, greater attention to soaring property prices as well as the social and cultural construction of our way of life. An ecological transport policy is necessarily systemic.

The electric car is neither a solution to all these negative effects, nor is it without negative environmental and social externalities. Nevertheless, electrification can contribute to the decarbonisation of mobility and can be beneficial if implemented via a sustainable vision with environmental and social goals in mind.

Due to the conditions we inherit, shaped for cars, reliable and flexible mobility outside of urban areas is still difficult to achieve. Hence, while wishing to reduce the space occupied by cars, and emphasizing the need to quickly develop the necessary infrastructure enabling a comprehensive modal shift both at urban and inter-urban levels, it is also necessary to support the transition to less-polluting vehicles – away from the internal combustion engine. The electric car can be a partial solution in order to decarbonize road transport.

The European Green Party:

1. Ensuring the sustainability of vehicle and battery production throughout the value chain:
 - Calls for the adoption of stricter CO₂ emission standards for cars in the European Union and reiterates its commitment to the total phase out of the sales of new ICE cars by 2030, considers that electric vehicles are to play a part of a much broader

solution, replacing vehicles running on fossil fuels. Stresses that electric cars substantially improve the environmental performance of vehicles of the same category, both in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, especially in an increasingly carbon-free electric mix, and local pollutants over the vehicle's life, yet there are still particulate emissions associated with braking and tyre wear;

- notes the need to integrate electric cars into a smart electricity system. It is necessary to avoid very large number of vehicles being charged at the same time to limit the strain on the electricity grid with associated costs and pollution. Smart charging can shift charging to times with less electricity demand. We must also build an extensive charging network to allow people to charge their cars outside of their homes;
- calls for a European regulation on the energy consumption of electric cars, defined in kWh per km, to support energy conservation. It is important to manufacture cars that are lighter, smaller and to reverse the trend towards more powerful and heavy vehicles like SUVs;
- encourages the EU and the national governments to implement measures and instruments to strengthen recyclability. We support the principle of a new European regulation on batteries and call for the highest environmental, human rights, social and due diligence standards, for the entire value chain, to be implemented. More specifically, the EGP advocates the most ambitious possible targets established by laws in terms of recycled contents, collection rate and recycling targets, complemented by additional incentive schemes to promote best practices. Moreover, the new regulation should make it mandatory to indicate the CO2 footprint of the battery's production on its label;
- is at the same time concerned with the existing and potential additional environmental and social impacts of mining of critical raw materials associated with the electric car batteries manufacturing, such as Lithium, which is often met with strong opposition of environmental organisations. Stresses in this regard again the importance of minimising the need of additional raw material through an ambitious circular battery economy in Europe;
- is in favour of developing European rules to ensure that electric car electricity consumption is covered with renewable power;
- supports the development of electric car-based electrical grid services (flexibility and storage, vehicle to grid);
- give preference to shared-use and commonly owned electric cars in access to charging infrastructure and parking as well as beneficial conditions of taxation;
- recalls the importance of upstream emissions associated with the manufacturing of cars and the production of fuels, and considers that, beyond the EU CO2 standards, attention should be given to the entire life-cycle of GHG emissions associated with road transport so as to showcase the benefits of alternative transitional paths, such as traffic moderation, urban-sprawl limitation and, above all, the development of walking and cycling;



- Strongly advocates for urbanistic models that minimize the centrality of private cars, by prioritizing a comprehensive sustainable public transport network in combination with active mobility, (supported by a regulated electric taxi fleet), allowing public space to be regained for pedestrians, services and green areas.

2. Favouring a modal shift:

- Proposes that electric cars should especially be supported in areas where public transport and active modes are difficult to achieve, such as rural areas, as well as for people who depend on the use of a car because of physical disabilities. Public transport should however remain the preferred mode of transport. For long-distance travel, the EGP promotes a train-based transport system.

3. EU industrial policy:

- encourages the EU to take any relevant action to promote the interoperability of charging networks across national borders through common EU standards;
- The European Union should develop more Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) under EU state aid rules to support EU industrial research and innovation projects into green technologies. The EU should also support the production of batteries in Europe as an opportunity to reindustrialise our regions and create quality jobs;
- stresses that the EU should help regional and local authorities, companies and employees to anticipate the profound changes resulting from the shift towards electric mobility. In particular, EU Structural and Cohesion Funds could be used in the transition towards the electric car, notably to finance vocational training and the necessary transformations in the sector's value chains.