

EU commissioner seeks to reassure VW on CO2 emissions

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EU Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger, pictured on October 3, has written to German car giant Volkswagen maintaining that proposed EU limits on auto carbon emissions were actually relaxed before they were finalised.

EU Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger has written to German car giant Volkswagen maintaining that proposed EU limits on auto carbon emissions were actually relaxed before they were finalised.

According to a letter seen by AFP Thursday, Oettinger said the proposals "reflected not insignificant changes compared with the initial plan."

In July, European Union Climate Action Commissioner Connie Hedegaard proposed sharp cuts to vehicle [carbon dioxide emissions](#), blamed in part for global warming, sparking a warning from carmakers

that they would harm an already struggling industry.

Environmental groups in turn said the plan to slash [CO2 emissions](#) per kilometre to 95 grammes in 2020, from 135.7 grammes in 2011, did not go far enough.

Oettinger's letter was sent shortly after the July announcement to VW head Martin Winterkorn.

It highlighted the fact that the base comparison year had been fixed as 2009 and not 2006—meaning that the reductions sought would not be so onerous while two provisions would allow automakers flexibility in meeting the targets.

Asked Thursday about the existence of the letter, Oettinger's spokeswoman Marlene Holzner said that there was nothing unusual in it.

Oettinger had consulted a wide range of interests on the issue, from environmental groups to [auto companies](#), before the Commission adopted balanced proposals in July, Holzner said.

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