

EU lawmakers want to cut car emissions by 40 percent by 2030

October 3 2018, by Raf Casert And Jeffrey Schaeffer



in this Feb. 27, 2018 file photo, a Diesel car runs in Essen, Germany. The German government backed plans to help reduce pollution from diesel vehicles. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner)

The European Parliament wants to cut CO₂ emissions from new cars and vans by 40 percent by 2030 and will try to convince the European Union's 28 nations to back the idea despite objections from the powerful car industry.

The proposed cut agreed on by the legislators Wednesday was a compromise between environmentalists who wanted tougher commitments and those who wanted to avoid too much damage to the auto industry.

The EU nations will discuss the measures further this month. Car producers in the EU are warning that tough cuts would cost manufacturing jobs.

Car emissions have become a big issue in Europe since Volkswagen's scandal in September 2015 in which it admitted to rigging diesel engines to cheat on U.S. emissions tests. That led to a wide-ranging examination of all diesels—and the discovery that many of them emitted far more pollutants on the road than in testing. There was talk of banning older diesels from some cities, and of ending the subsidies for diesel fuel that helped propel sales.

Originally, the parliament's environment committee had wanted a 45 percent cut but, pressured by the biggest political group, the EPP Christian Democrats, it reduce it to 40 percent. The EU's executive Commission had argued for 30 percent.



An hostess stands next to a BMW serie 7 on display at the Auto show in Paris, France, Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, 2018. All-electric vehicles with zero local emissions are among the stars of the Paris auto show, rubbing shoulders with the fossil-fuel burning SUVs that many car buyers love. (AP Photo/Christophe Ena)

EU environment ministers will discuss the issue at their meeting next Tuesday with a final decision not expected before December.

The position of Germany will be crucial. So far, the coalition in the EU's biggest economy had backed the more modest target set by the EU Commission.

The Secretary General of the ACEA European car producers group, Erik Jonnaert, said that "40 percent is in our opinion, over the top" adding that the Commission agrees with them that "everything beyond 30 percent is going to create major social implications."

Experts say that to lower emissions substantially, manufacturers will have to sell more hybrid and electric cars. So far, consumers are hesitant to buy electrics due to worries about their battery range and the availability of recharging stations.



A DS 7 Crossback E-Tense is on display at the Auto show in Paris, France, Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, 2018. All-electric vehicles with zero local emissions are among the stars of the Paris auto show, rubbing shoulders with the fossil-fuel burning SUVs that many car buyers love. (AP Photo/Christophe Ena)

The German Association of the Automotive Industry, which represents leading automakers like Volkswagen and BMW, accused the European Parliament of setting "completely unrealistic targets."

"It is ignoring the technical and economic feasibility" of the proposal,

chairman Bernhard Mattes said in a statement. "It will not be possible to implement the targets in this timeframe," he added, arguing that lawmakers risked endangering jobs in many European countries."

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