

EU rules have failed to cut car CO₂ emissions: report

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The report found the average car mass increased by around 10 percent between 2011 and 2022, while engine power rose by 25 percent.

Bigger, more powerful cars have negated the impact of tighter CO₂ emissions regulations in the EU, a report by the bloc's internal auditor found Thursday.

Since 2012, cars sold in the EU must meet targets for limiting CO₂ emissions, but these had little impact as emissions from [diesel vehicles](#) since then held steady while there was only a small decrease of 4.6 percent for petrol vehicles, according to a report by the European Court of Auditors.

"Continuous improvements in engine technology and the introduction of hybrid powertrains have made engines more efficient, but the increased vehicle mass coupled with more powerful engines outweighs the [technological progress](#) made," said the report.

It calculated the average car mass increased by around 10 percent between 2011 and 2022, while engine power rose by 25 percent.

New car emissions only began to drop significantly in 2020.

"This was mainly due to a significant uptake of electric vehicles, while real-world CO₂ emissions from cars with combustion engines have not dropped," said the report.

It also put the blame for the poor result of the regulations on loopholes that allowed laboratory testing rather than in real world conditions, which automakers exploited to their advantage and led to huge gaps with emissions on the road.

This blew up in the face of automakers in 2015 when US regulators called out Volkswagen for using software to reduce emissions during [laboratory tests](#) in a costly scandal that became known as Dieselgate.

New tests were subsequently introduced which narrowed but did not eliminate the gap with real world driving conditions.

The report noted that while the EU has managed to reduce [greenhouse](#)

[gas emissions](#) in many areas over the past three decades, CO₂ emissions in the [transport sector](#) have continued to grow as the vehicle fleet has grown and emissions per vehicle have not fallen.

It said the transport sector accounted for 23 percent of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2021, with [passenger cars](#) responsible for more than half.

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