

Dr Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European Commission;  
Teresa Ribera Executive Vice-President  
for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition;  
Stéphane Séjourné Executive Vice-President  
for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy;  
Wopke Hoekstra Commissioner  
for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth;  
Apostolos Tzitzikostas Commissioner  
for Sustainable Transport and Tourism

**Date 20 November 2025**

**Object: European Cities and Regions Call on the EU to Maintain the 2035 CO<sub>2</sub> targets for cars and vans**

We, representatives of European Cities and Regions, wish to express our deep concern about the recent announcement to bring forward the review of the EU framework on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for road vehicles and the risk of weakening of this important and powerful directive. **At a time when our communities continue to suffer from the impacts of climate change and air pollution, we must not roll back our ambitions.** Cities across Europe are proving that phasing out polluting vehicles is both feasible and beneficial: delivering cleaner air, healthier lives, good green jobs, and stronger local economies.

**Air pollution remains one of the most urgent health threats** in our cities and regions, with a staggering [94% of urban residents exposed to harmful levels of pollution](#). The 2035 target supports the ambitious action we are taking to fight this urgent threat to our communities and comply with the [EU's Ambient Air Quality Directive](#), through local action. In Brussels, [deadly black carbon pollution fell by 60% due to the Low Emission Zone](#) (LEZ); in Germany, [children growing up in LEZs are prescribed 13% less asthma medication](#) by age five. These actions would be undermined and stalled by removing clarity and direction for the clean vehicle market, and opening the door to synthetic fuels, which have been demonstrated to be as toxic as petrol and diesel. We must prevent further harm to the [disadvantaged communities that are already the most vulnerable](#) to the devastating impacts of air pollution in our cities and regions.

**Electrification is already driving job creation, competitiveness and innovation.** The market is already moving. Current EU standards have helped reduce CO<sub>2</sub> by pushing technology innovation and allowing cities and regions to electrify their public fleets, alongside expanding charging networks and creating world-leading low- and zero-emission zones. Aggregated demand alongside clear, coherent policy de-risks supply chains and allows certainty for investment by both cities and businesses - strengthening Europe's automotive industry. This ensures that Europe's businesses can compete in a thriving, innovation-led global urban mobility market, without anyone being left behind.

This transition is also a jobs engine, capable of fuelling a thriving and sustainable European automotive sector: in Italy alone, transport decarbonisation could [unlock 90,000 new green jobs](#)<sup>1</sup>, pointing to millions across the Union. A thriving automotive sector supports our cities, ensuring skilled jobs and the availability of vehicles to serve everyone's needs - both here in Europe and across the world. Weakening the 2035 target would jeopardise these investments and the industrial certainty needed to compete globally.

**Europe's credibility and leadership on the global stage depend on keeping its commitments.** Maintaining the 2035 phase-out is vital to demonstrate EU leadership in climate diplomacy and empower other governments to act. This is also a security issue - without a strong commitment to the 2035 target, Europe will remain dependent on importing fossil fuels from countries that, given the current political climate, are not aligned with its interests. As city leaders, we want the European continent to take pride in having the first zero-emission cities, inspiring other regions to follow our lead. We ask that we be enabled to do so.

Weakening the EU's 2035 commitment would undercut pioneering local efforts, undermine Europe's global standing, and send the wrong signal to industry and citizens alike. One thing is clear: this political hesitation will ultimately push away consumers from EV adoption.

Cities, businesses, and investors (as underlined in the recent [industry letter](#)) are united: the 2035 ICE phase-out must be maintained. European mayors stand ready to accelerate the transition with the right frameworks, ensuring a healthier, fairer, and more competitive Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris and C40 vice chair  
Giuseppe Sala, Mayor of Milan and C40 vice chair  
Eirik Lae Solberg, Governing Mayor of Oslo and C40 vice chair  
Mathias De Clercq, Mayor of Ghent and President of Eurocities  
Jaume Collboni, Mayor of Barcelona and Vice-President of Eurocities  
Martin Horn, Mayor of Freiburg and President of ICLEI Europe

Bruno Bernard, President of Lyon Métropole  
Haris Doukas, Mayor of Athens  
Piia Elo, Mayor of Turku  
Christophe Ferrari, Mayor of the Municipality of Le Pont-de-Claix and President of Grenoble-Alpes Métropole  
Heiða Björg Hilmisdóttir, Mayor of Reykjavik  
Pierre Hurmic, Mayor of Bordeaux  
Arjen Kapteijns, Deputy Mayor of The Hague  
Matteo Lepore, Mayor of Bologna  
Ray McAdam, Lord Mayor of Dublin  
Harry Mergel, Mayor of Heilbronn  
Aleksander Misalski, Mayor of Kraków  
Ilmari Nurminen, Mayor of Tampere

---

<sup>1</sup> From C40 research, jobs estimated in Italian cities include 65,000 from mode shift, 20,000 from efficient and electric passenger transport, 3,000 from improved freight logistics and 2,000 from urban planning actions to improve mobility.

Erik Pelling, Mayor of Uppsala

Klaas Ruitenbergh, Regional Minister of the province of Gelderland

Carola Schouten, Mayor of Rotterdam

Lars Weiss, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen

Prof. Dr. Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg

Tina Zapf-Rodríguez, City Councillor of Frankfurt am Main

With the support of C40 Cities, Eurocities, ICLEI Europe and Polis

