

## Environment ministers want flexible air pollution targets

Environment ministers demanded flexibility in meeting EU air quality targets, after dropping a cap on methane emissions from draft pollution rules.

Governments were split on whether the proposed reduction goals for 2030 should be legally binding or non-binding. Poland demanded the targets be pushed back to 2040 and Hungary said the bill should be scrapped, while others called for review clauses to be inserted in the legislation. The revised National Emissions Ceiling Directive (NEC) puts controls on different types of air pollution in each member state. Its overarching goal is to cut the number of premature deaths caused by air pollution by half by 2030. The United Kingdom and France want flexibility until 2030 based on the United Nations Gothenburg Protocol. It would allow a target to be adjusted to take account of unforeseen circumstances. The Czech Republic put forward a separate flexibility proposal. The plan, backed by Hungary, Poland, Estonia, and the Slovak Republic, would allow governments to make up emissions shortfalls in one gas, with surplus reductions in another. The bill is currently in front of Parliament and will be put to the vote. Council and Parliament are expected to adopt a position on the draft NEC Directive in September 2015.

(Source: Euractive)

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/health-consumers/environment-ministers-want-flexible-air-pollution-targets-315401>

## ACEA – Passenger car registrations up 1.3% in May

Figures from the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) showed the demand for new passenger cars in the EU increasing for the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive month (+1.3%) in May 2015, totalling 1,109,893 units. However, it was the lowest percentage increase since the beginning of this period of consecutive growth. Looking at the major markets, results were diverse: France (-3.5%) and Germany (-6.7%) faced a downturn, while Spain (+14.0%), Italy

(+10.8%) and the UK (+2.4%) contributed to the overall expansion. Demand for new passenger cars was largely supported by the EU's new member states (EU12), especially Poland (+11%) and the Czech Republic (+17.6%). Five months into the year, new passenger car registrations increased (+6.8%), totalling 5,805,367 units. All major markets posted growth, contributing to the overall upturn of the EU market over the period. Registrations in Spain (+21.7%), Italy (+15.2%), the UK (+5.7%), France (+3.8%) and Germany (+3.6%) increased compared to the same period one year ago.

(Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/passenger-car-registrations-6.8-over-five-months-1.3-in-may>

## ACEA – Auto industry calls on Europe to rebalance CO2 policy

The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association's (ACEA) President, Carlos Ghosn, underlined the importance of rebalancing the EU's CO2 emissions reductions agenda and the auto sector's global competitiveness. The ACEA President's call to EU policy makers coincides with the launch of a study by FTI Consulting on the potential effects of decarbonisation on the competitiveness of the European automobile industry. Presently, CO2 reduction from road transport relies entirely on progress made in controlling emissions from new vehicles. The [FTI study](#) found that this system manages to be both expensive and ineffective because it does not address the bulk of the vehicles already on the roads. As it is, meeting the 95g CO2 target will cost manufacturers and estimated €1,000-2,000 per car by 2020. (Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/european-auto-industry-calls-on-europe-to-rebalance-co2-policy-in-the-inter>

## Air Quality – EU takes Belgium and Bulgaria to court

EU regulators are referring Belgium and Bulgaria to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg over the quality of their air. The Commission has also issued a final warning to Sweden that it needs to take action.

- Data showed Bulgaria had persistently failed to comply with legal limits on levels for PM10.
- Belgium's track record has improved, but not sufficiently, with excessive levels of PM10 and nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide.
- Sweden is also exceeding EU legal limits on pollutants and has been sent a warning, which if ignored could also lead to court action.

The European Court of Justice has the power to impose daily fines if member states are found to be in breach of EU law. The other nation previously singled out for failing air quality targets is Britain, which has been given until the end of this year to submit new plans to the Commission on how it will tackle levels of nitrogen dioxide.

(Source: Euractiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/health-consumers/eu-sends-belgium-and-bulgaria-court-over-air-quality-315532>

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## EP: new political group

This week, the formation of the new Europe of Nations and Freedoms (ENF) group in the European Parliament was announced by far right leaders Marine Le Pen (France) and Geert Wilders (Netherlands).

The new group will be co-chaired by MEPs Marine Le Pen (Front National) and Marcel de Graaff (Dutch Freedom Party). The group consists of 36 members including one British MEP, Janice Atkinson (former UKIP), who was named vice-chair of the group.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-33147247>



## Week ahead

### European Commission

Monday 22 June

- A new start for Europe: Opening up to an ERA of Innovation
- TEN-T Days 2015: Connecting Europe
- European Alliance for Apprenticeships - Innovating the future of vocational education and training

### European Council

Monday 22 June

- Foreign Affairs Council – on EU strategic partnership with China

Tuesday 23 June

- General Affairs Council – will conclude preparations for the European Council meeting of 25-26 June

Thursday 25 – 26 June

- European Council – to discuss migration, the review of the European security strategy, economic issues, digital single market and EMU

### European Parliament

Monday 22 June

- IMCO – Commission Communication “A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe”

Tuesday 23 June

- ITRE – Development and implementation of the European Industry Agenda

Thursday 25 June

- ENVI – Reduction of pollutant emissions from road vehicles
- ECON – statistics concerning balance of payments, international trade in services and foreign direct investment

### European Parliament Plenary

Wednesday 24 June

- European Fund for Strategic Investments Report
- Review of the economic governance framework
- Decision adopted on the action plan for a fairer corporate tax system in the EU