Deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels in the European Union: time to act

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report by Ismail ERTUG (S&D, DE) in response to the Commission communication on the deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels in the European Union: time to act.

Transport is the only major economic sector in the EU where greenhouse gas emissions have increased since 1990. It is responsible for 23% of CO2-emissions, and this share is still growing. Road transport represents almost 75% of all energy used in transport and causes almost 73% of transport's GHG emissions. 94% of Europe's transport sector is depending on oil, 90% of which have to be imported, including from some countries with an unstable political situation.

In order to keep the increase in the global temperature to well below 2°C while pursuing the 1.5°C target as signed up to in the Paris Agreement, road transport needs to be **fully decarbonised** with zero net emissions by 2050 at the latest. A shift to alternative fuels can help achieve this goal, although **conventional fuels will still be needed** for the foreseeable future until such time as demand can be met in full by alternative fuels.

Deficits of existing directive: Members called on the Commission to bring forward a revision of Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and to focus on its proper implementation, taking into account that only 8 of 25 Member States have so far fully implemented it.

The Commission's evaluation of the National Framework Plans (NFPs) reveals differing levels of effort, ambition and available funding between Member States and that the deployment of alternative fuels falls short of being comprehensive and evenly distributed.

The Commission is invited to:

- replace the system of NFPs with more efficient instruments, including concrete, **binding and enforceable targets**, to formulate sustainability criteria;
- take into account the projected and realised uptake of alternative-fuel vehicles and their technological progress, allow Member States **flexibility** in determining how to reach the targets, and pursue the goal of having a trans-European infrastructure network for all alternative fuels that is accessible, compatible and interoperable;
- create a level playing field between the different alternative fuels ensuring technology neutrality;
- assess the feasibility of **life-cycle assessments** for all alternative fuels, batteries and powertrain solutions;
- complement the climate-related goals of Directive 2014/94/EC with additional clean air measures following the fitness check of the EU Ambient Air Quality Directives.

Improved batteries: Members stressed the importance of the technological advances that are already under way or in the pipeline in the fields of batteries, hydrogen and energy storage. New infrastructure must be adaptable to changes, both in terms of volumes and in terms of technologies. They stressed, for example, that a massive increase in the number of electric vehicles coupled with an increase in the range of those vehicles to **400 km** will have an impact on the deployment density of the network of charging stations, as well as on the type of charging required.

The report supported **electrified roads** that allow electric vehicles to charge as they drive stating that this may be a solution to reducing battery size and, consequently, the prices of new vehicles.

Members called on the Commission and Member States to particularly turn their attention to the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure for **collective and public transport services**, such as buses, trams, trains, shared cars, taxis and mini vans, as well as for bicycles, scooters and motorcycles.

Financing alternative fuels infrastructure: the Commission's effort to provide an additional **EUR 800 million** as start-up financing to support the uptake of alternative fuels infrastructure has been welcomed. However, Members expressed doubt that the leverage will be sufficient given the projected need for EUR 5.2 billion up to 2020 and an additional EUR 16-22 billion of overall investment up to 2025.

The Commission is urged to **increase the initial funding**, to support not only the deployment but also the operation of such infrastructure.

Taxation: Members noted that taxation has a major impact on the price competitiveness of alternative fuels. They called on Member States to **review their energy taxation frameworks** in order to facilitate and incentivise the uptake of low-carbon and carbon-free alternative fuels and to remove present disparities in energy taxation between different transport modes.

An alternative industrial policy: Members expressed regret **t**hat progress regarding the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and the availability of alternatively powered vehicles is too slow, with only 19 Battery Electric Vehicles and 25 Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles available in 2017 compared to 417 models with internal combustion engines, and calls on manufacturers to step up efforts in this regard. They emphasised the connection between the availability of alternatively fuelled vehicles, the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and consumer demand for these technologies and highlighted, in this regard, that moving towards **alternative fuels and powertrains** could help the industry to be globally competitive and keep high-quality jobs in Europe.

Lastly, the report called for the **deployment of multi-energy stations** so as to avoid the creation of various different distribution networks for each type of power supply. Most charging of electric vehicles will occur at home or at work, complemented by charging at public and semi-public places such as supermarkets, train stations or airports. In this regard, a greater focus on smart charging solutions is needed, grid stability must be ensured and self-consumption enabled.