Air pollution: reduction of CO_2 emissions from passengers cars, Community strategy

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The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission focuses its strategy not only on the fiscal element but also on an effort to balance these measures with voluntary agreements and technological development. The Committee considers that the auto sector is highly taxed at the present time, but that it is still possible to restructure these taxes in such a way as to protect the environment. This strategy must encourage consumers freely to choose those vehicles with relatively lower CO2 emissions. Besides these fiscal measures, the Committee thinks that it would be wise to encourage a voluntary agreement with European industry and the importers to achieve these CO2 emission reductions through an increase in vehicle efficiency. This agreement should be based on the following elements: - account to be taken of technical feasibility and economic impact (availability of model, public acceptance, export opportunities). It should be possible to achieve the proposed reductions (some 25% on average) in all existing market segments taken together. - a precise timetable to be drawn up, to ensure that the consumption targets are met as soon as technically feasible. - an independent inspection system to be set up to monitor compliance with the voluntary agreements; - the industry to be involved more closely with the Task Force on the Car of Tomorrow; - the compatibility of this strategy with both EU and WTO competition rules to be assessed; - the important aspects of labelling to be included in these voluntary agreements so as to improve the process of choice by future users. If the level of compliance with the voluntary agreements is inadequate, the Commission should prepare a legislative framework to make the measures proposed in the present strategy mandatory.