

Public fleets to move towards zero-emissions vehicles - slowly

The Platform for Electro-Mobility welcomes the partial agreement reached on 11 February by all European Institutions on the Clean Vehicles Directive (CVD).

While the odds of finding an agreement looked poor in the second-half of 2018, the Romanian Presidency succeeded in turning the tide and reaching a consensus among negotiators, in time for the text to be approved before the next European elections in May. Failing to do so would have delayed this piece of legislation for a significant amount of time, a resource which is becoming increasingly finite in the competition with other markets and the fight against climate change.

Thanks to national public procurement targets for road vehicles, the CVD paves the way for a broad deployment of clean vehicles across Europe, as opposed to the current patchwork of local and regional initiatives. It also sends a clear signal to public authorities and industries alike that zero-emission vehicles should be prioritised in the next decade.

More specifically, the national public procurement targets for light-duty vehicles (ranging from 18.7% to 38.5%, depending on population and GDP) will increase the adoption of electric cars and vans by public authorities and utilities, showing Europeans that electric vehicles are a viable option, today.

For clean buses, the agreed procurement targets ranging from 24% to 45% in 2021, and from 33% to 66% after 2025 - half of these should be zero-emission - will help to stimulate the market for electric buses, which are critical components to a sustainable urban transport system.

Yet, the agreed targets barely exceed market forecasts, and we regret that the ambitious objectives originally proposed by the European Parliament were not retained in the final text. Last but not least, by accepting that buses powered by a broad range of technologies, including some fossil fuels, could qualify as “clean”, the negotiators have missed an opportunity to place the European Union on course to fully decarbonise public fleets in the next decade and meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

In light of this, the Platform for Electro-Mobility repeats its call to move towards 100% zero-emission vehicles by 2030, the only solution for Europe to fully decarbonise road transport by 2050.