

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

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The European Parliament adopted by 215 votes to 47, with 36 abstentions, a resolution on 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 transports GHG emissions.

Members welcomed the Commission communication on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and highlighted that further coordination and cooperation at EU level is needed in order to decarbonise the transport sector by 2050. They underlined the opportunities for industry, technology and employment presented by the deployment of alternative fuels and the corresponding infrastructure.

Stepping up efforts: Parliament 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 Commissions 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.

Parliament 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.

Stressing the importance of sustainable urban planning, Members suggested focusing efforts on the deployment of specific infrastructure for alternative fuels for public and collective transport services, such as buses, trams, trains, shared cars, taxis and mini vans.

Members welcomed the Commission's initiative for a European alliance for sustainable batteries and supported the establishment of a European production of battery cells based on next generation technologies.

Clean Mobility Fund: the Commission's effort to provide additional start-up funding of EUR 800 million to support the development of alternative fuel infrastructure was 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: Parliament expressed regret that 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 called on manufacturers to step up efforts in this regard. It 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, Parliament 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.