EN
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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(8.1.2026)

The Commission is aware of recent reports by non-governmental organisations regarding the data collected by the European Environment Agency on the CO_2 emissions of plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). The data shows a large gap between the real-world measurements for PHEVs and the CO_2 values stated in the Certificate of Conformity and communicated to vehicle owners, and that these vehicles are currently not realising their potential, largely because they are not being charged and driven electrically as frequently as anticipated. Still, according to the report quoted by the Honourable Member, average real-world CO_2 emissions of PHEVs were 19% lower than those of conventional cars.

The 'zero- and low-emission vehicle' (ZLEV) classification is based on the calculated CO_2 emissions during type-approval and is independent of the vehicle powertrain. ZLEVs are defined in the CO_2 standards Regulation[1] as light-duty vehicles with tailpipe emissions from zero up to 50 grammes CO_2/km.

In 2023, the Commission introduced changes[2] to the utility factor calculation, applicable as of 2025, to ensure that the official CO_2 emissions determined for PHEVs are representative of real driver behaviour. This factor determines the expected share of distance driven electrically based on the electric range of a PHEV. It is used for calculating the fuel consumption and CO_2 emissions during their type-approval.

The Commission has accelerated the work on preparing the review of the CO_2 standards, which will be based on a fact-based analysis, taking into account all relevant technological developments, including as regards plug-in hybrid technologies, and the importance of an economically viable and socially fair transition towards zero-emission mobility.

[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02019R0631-20231203.
[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32023R0443.