

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004328/25
to the Commission**

Christine Singer (Renew), Isabella Tovaglieri (Pfe), Merja Kyllönen (The Left), Milan Uhrík (ESN), Ondřej Krutílek (ECR), Elsi Katainen (Renew), Katri Kulmuni (Renew), António Tânger Corrêa (Pfe), Friedrich Pürner (NI), Joachim Streit (Renew), Petras Auštrevičius (Renew), Jana Nagyová (Pfe), Ondřej Knotek (Pfe), Asger Christensen (Renew), Carlo Fidanza (ECR), Alexandra Mehnert (PPE), Fernand Kartheiser (NI), Benoit Cassart (Renew), Marjan Šarec (Renew), Paolo Inselvini (ECR), Antonín Staněk (Pfe), Sophie Wilmès (Renew)

(4 November 2025)

Subject: Reassessing the 2035 combustion engine ban in light of advanced biofuels

The EU plans to end the approval of new cars that have internal combustion engines by 2035 in order to accelerate the transition to electromobility. However, recent technological progress calls for a more nuanced assessment.

Studies indicate that higher bioethanol blends, for example E20 instead of E10, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially. When combined with sustainable feedstocks and bio-naphtha, reductions of greenhouse gas up to 40% compared to fossil gasoline appear feasible. Increased demand for ethanol would also strengthen European agriculture, create rural value chains and reduce the EU's reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Against this background, questions arise as to whether a blanket ban on combustion engines limits technological openness and overlooks transitional solutions. For many citizens, particularly in rural areas with insufficient charging infrastructure, advanced biofuels could provide a realistic and more accessible pathway towards decarbonisation.

In this context:

How does the Commission assess the additional climate-mitigation potential of using higher bioethanol blends in the automotive sector?

Submitted: 4.11.2025

Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission

(5 March 2026)

The EU is committed to reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, as enshrined in the European Climate Law ⁽¹⁾. To achieve these aims, the transport sector must reduce its emissions by 90% by 2050.

The regulation setting CO₂ emission standards for new cars and vans ⁽²⁾ is one of the key policies. On 16 December 2025, the Commission put forward a proposal for a revision of the regulation, which provides the industry with flexibilities and enhanced technological neutrality, while maintaining a clear market signal towards zero-emission vehicles.

The proposal provides that from 2035 onwards, manufacturers will need to comply with a 90% tailpipe emissions reduction target, while the remaining 10% emissions will need to be compensated through the greenhouse gas emissions savings from e-fuels and certain biofuels and from the use of low-carbon steel made in the EU.

This will allow for plug-in hybrids, range extenders, mild hybrids, and internal combustion engine vehicles to still play a role beyond 2035.

This also recognises the role of biofuels in the decarbonisation of road transport, including the bioethanol blended in petrol if produced from feedstocks defined in Annex 9 of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) ⁽³⁾.

The RED establishes a policy framework regulating the decarbonisation of transport fuels and energy. It sets a binding target for renewable energy use in transport, and specific sub-targets (5,5% by 2030) for advanced biofuels and renewable fuels of non-biological origin.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1119/oj>.

⁽²⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/631/2024-01-01>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/2413/oj/eng>.