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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.5.2026)

The Omnibus IX (Automotive)¹ introduces a new sub-category for small electric passenger cars M1 ('M1E'), based on a maximum length of 4.2 metres. This legal definition of small electric cars can be used for targeted simplification and support measures to incentivise production and uptake of small electric vehicles.

The proposal to amend the Regulation setting CO₂ emission standards for cars and vans² provides that, until 2034, for the purpose of calculating a manufacturer's average specific emissions of CO₂, each new zero-emission vehicle of category M1E and made in the EU shall be counted as 1.3 vehicles.

Based on stakeholder consultation and an analysis of the available electric models on the market, a maximum length of 4.2 metres is considered appropriate to boost the small cars segment, but also to serve the mobility needs of most European households.

The establishment of a discrete threshold leads to inevitable edge effects irrespective of the choice of the threshold value. However, a gradual transition would cause complications in compliance and lead to a lack of transparency that the Commission considers disproportionate, in particular in the context of a simplification omnibus.

Comparisons show that the most energy-efficient electric vehicles on the EU market³ have a length below 4.2 metres. In addition, a small vehicle takes less material to be built.

¹ COM(2025) 993.

² COM(2025) 995.

³ In terms of watt-hours per kilometer (Wh/km).