

German transport minister opposes EU combustion engine ban

June 9 2022, by Frank Jordans



Cars with combustion engines are stored at a container terminal at the harbor in Hamburg, Germany, Monday, March 18, 2022. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Martin Meissner

Germany's transport minister voiced strong opposition Thursday to plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels.

EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back [the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100%](#) by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel.

The plan, which still needs to be approved by EU member states, would significantly boost [electric vehicles](#) because lawmakers refused to exempt cars powered with synthetic fuels from the ban. It will hurt German automakers, who have focused on powerful and expensive vehicles with [combustion engines](#) while falling behind foreign rivals when it comes to [electric cars](#).

"We don't agree with the decisions," German Transport Minister Volker Wissing told reporters in Berlin.

"We want to shape the transformation in a way that is technologically open," he said. "This includes registering new cars beyond 2035 if they are powered exclusively with [synthetic fuels](#) in a climate neutral way."

Synthetic, or e-fuels, are either refined from plants or manufactured using basic chemical processes and electricity. If the electricity is generated with [renewable sources](#), such as wind or solar, then the fuels are considered 'climate neutral' because burning them releases only as much carbon into the atmosphere as was previously removed.



Volker Wissing, now Federal Minister for Digital Affairs and Transport, arrives in a BMW car in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File



A luxury Audi car is surrounded by exhaust gases as it is parked with a running engine in front of the Chancellery in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File



Workers complete an electric car ID.3 body at the assembly line during a press tour at the plant of the German manufacturer Volkswagen AG (VW) in Zwickau, Germany, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Jens Meyer, file



A new electric BMW iX car of German car manufacturer BMW is charging in Munich, Germany, Friday, Oct. 22, 2021. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Matthias Schrader, File



In this Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 file photo, workers complete an electric car ID.3 body at the assembly line during a press tour at the plant of the German manufacturer Volkswagen AG (VW) in Zwickau, Germany. Germany's transport minister said Thursday that he opposes plans to ban the sale of new cars with combustion engines across the European Union in 2035, arguing this would discriminate against vehicles powered with synthetic fuels. EU lawmakers voted Wednesday to back the measure that requires automakers to cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 100% by the middle of the next decade, effectively prohibiting the sale in the 27-nation bloc of new cars powered by gasoline or diesel. Credit: AP Photo/Jens Meyer, file

But critics argue that the limited supply of e-fuels should be reserved for those modes of transport where electrification isn't currently feasible, such as airplanes.

Experts at the Institute of Energy and Climate Research in Juelich, Germany, have calculated that a mid-size car running on synthetic fuel would use seven times as much energy as a comparable electric vehicle.

Wissing is under pressure from Germany's powerful auto lobby group VDA, which criticized the EU Parliament's vote as "a decision against innovation and technology." It is unclear whether his position is shared by the rest of the German government.

Environmentalists cheered the EU vote as a way to chart Europe toward a greener future.

Cars account for about 12% of [greenhouse gas emissions](#) released in the EU. The bloc aims to reduce emissions from all sources to net zero by 2050, and experts say road transport is one of the sectors that needs to reach that goal earlier.

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Citation: German transport minister opposes EU combustion engine ban (2022, June 9) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2022-06-german-minister-opposes-eu-combustion.html>

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