

Press Release

G20 Countries Must Act Quickly to Decarbonise The Transport Sector

According to a new report, CO2 emissions from transport are still rising. If immediate action is not taken, more radical measures will be unavoidable in the future.

Berlin, 30 November 2018. To keep global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius, the world's leading economies must act immediately to reduce transport emissions. This is the main conclusion of a joint report released by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21) and the Berlin-based think tank Agora Verkehrswende.

The transport sector is responsible for roughly one quarter of emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, with road traffic being the largest culprit. Transport emissions in the G20 make up more than two-thirds of the global total, and G20 emission levels continue to grow (though not as quickly as the rest of the world). For this reason, the report says, the G20 nations must take the lead when it comes to breaking old habits.

The heads of the G20 nations will meet today in Buenos Aires to discuss the transport and energy infrastructure of tomorrow, among other urgent topics. The G20 already reaffirmed the climate targets of Paris Agreement in 2017. "It is not enough to replace internal combustion engine cars with electric ones," Christian Hochfeld, the executive director of Agora Verkehrswende, stresses. "To reach the climate targets, we need to transform the entire transport system and couple it to the electricity sector."

The study provides a summary for each G20 nation, including data on CO2 emission trends in the national transport sector, climate policy targets and measures for lowering emissions. The data make clear that only three countries from the G20 have set targets for reducing emissions in the transport sector: Germany, France and Japan. The number of countries that are advancing the electrification of personal vehicles is significantly larger, however. In China, around 579,000 electric cars were sold last year alone. Of course, the rapid development of the electric vehicle market will contribute to the decarbonisation of the transport sector only if the electricity comes from wind and solar power. "To achieve this, additional renewable power must be produced for the transport sector," Rana Adib, the Executive Secretary of REN21, says. "The clean-energy transition must be synchronised across the electricity and transport sectors. One of the report's areas of emphasis is, therefore, the necessity of coupling these sectors by defining appropriate targets and establishing supportive policies."

But as electrification increases, we must not forget that there is no single solution to making the transport sector carbon neutral. We need a multitude of measures – including some measures that are currently controversial. One thing is certain: if we postpone necessary measures, future efforts to keep global warming below the 2-degree mark will have to be all the more radical.

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The report's authors hope that it will provide "a basis for discussions in G20 countries and beyond about how to work collectively towards decarbonising the transport system," Tanja Gönner, the chair of the GIZ management board, says. "It clearly shows that, if climate action is to be successful – especially in the transport sector – all nations must work together."

The report, titled "Towards Decarbonising Transport – A 2018 Stocktake on Sectoral Ambition in the G20", can be [downloaded](#) free of charge.

Agora Verkehrswende is a joint initiative of the Mercator Foundation and the European Climate Foundation.

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