

Unfair and Undemocratic

Dear Reader,

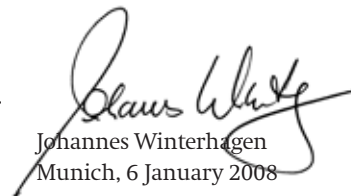
Shortly before Christmas, the European Commission announced that it is planning drastic sanctions against car makers who fail to meet the target limits for CO₂. If these proposals were to become reality, they would not only be a bitter blow for German premium manufacturers but also an ominous and undemocratic curtailment of personal freedom. If motoring is made so expensive that the majority of the population can only afford to drive a small car, then paternalistic EU legislation has reached unacceptable proportions.

Let me illustrate the threat posed by these sanctions by a simple calculation, based on a petrol engine using premium-grade fuel, a perfectly realistic price of € 1.50 per litre and a limit value for manufacturers of precisely 130 g CO₂/km. With a fuel consumption of 5 l/100 km (130 g CO₂/km), no penalty tax would be imposed, and the car buyer would pay € 7,500 in fuel costs for the first 100,000 kilometres. For a larger, better equipped car from the same manufacturer with a fuel consumption of 10 l/100 km, fuel costs would, of course, also double to € 15,000 – and everyone would consider that to be fair.

According to the EU Commission's proposals, however, from 2015 onwards the vehicle manufacturer would have to pay a penalty tax for the sale of that particular model of € 95 for every gram of CO₂ above the limit value – amounting in our case to € 12,350. That would make driving a bigger car exactly € 20,000 more expensive.

I am sure that sports cars and luxury saloons will continue to be developed, produced and sold even in 2015. But by then they may have become the exclusive privilege of a small economic and cultural elite. What worries me most of all is the degree of legislative regulation. Let us not fool ourselves: those who introduce such legislation will soon start considering how much space we need to live in – after all, living space needs to be heated.

Are we on the way towards a total prohibition society?


Johannes Winterhagen
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Editor-in-Chief

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