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For Europe's heavy trucks, a lack of regulation means lower efficiency and higher CO₂ emissions relative to other markets: study

The U.S. truck fleet will become significantly more efficient and technologically advanced in coming years, altering a trend that has persisted for more than a decade, largely because new efficiency regulations in the U.S. will drive vehicle technology improvements. In the absence of comparable EU regulatory standards, the new tractor-trailer fleet in Europe is likely to stagnate, with respect to efficiency technologies, and fall behind.

That is one of the central conclusions of a new study released today in Berlin by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT).

The study analyzes data from the European commercial trucking market, looking at key member states, manufacturers, and fuel consumption trends. It compares the European market with the U.S. and recommends strategies to reduce fuel consumption and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the heavy-duty vehicle sector in the EU.

“The EU is taking a similar approach to consumer information and labelling as it did for passenger cars over a decade ago. In the end the EU opted for mandatory standards for cars and we believe a similar pathway for trucks would make sense as well” said Peter Mock, *Managing Director of ICCT Europe*, referring to the EU's former strategy to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new passenger cars through CO₂ labelling and a voluntary agreement with vehicle manufacturers. In the meantime, the U.S. and other key automotive regions worldwide, such as Japan, China and Canada, are opting to set mandatory target values that will drive efficiency improvements in new heavy-duty vehicles through the adoption of improved technologies.

“The real-world fuel consumption data we analyzed suggests that the average fuel consumption of new tractor trucks in Europe has not changed substantially in well over a decade. With other global automotive markets progressing, the EU will need to move to mandatory CO₂ standards to maintain its technological leadership in heavy-duty fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions,” said Rachel Muncrief, *Lead Researcher of the ICCT’s heavy-duty vehicle program.*

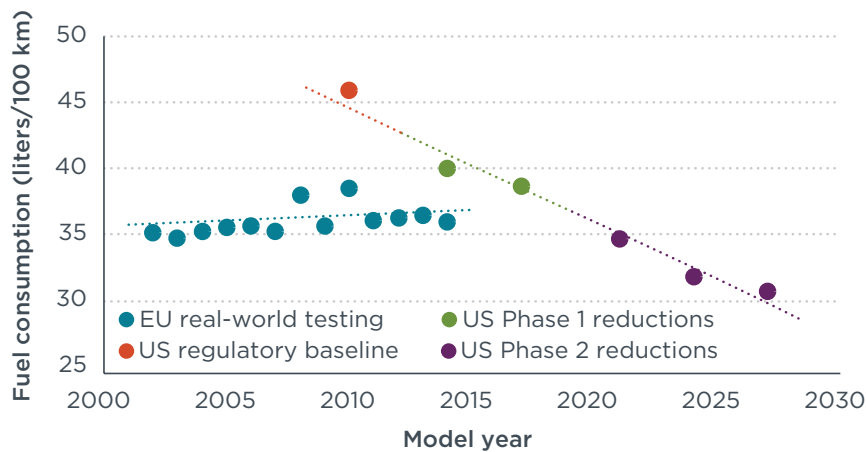


Figure 1. Comparison of tractor-trailer fuel consumption trends for the EU and US.

Heavy-duty vehicles are responsible for one-third of transport CO₂ emissions in the EU, and their contribution is growing. Seven member states (Germany, Poland, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Italy, and The Netherlands) are responsible for approximately three-quarters of the EU’s heavy-duty CO₂ emissions. Sales figures over the past ten years show that the trend in the EU is towards heavier vehicles and larger engines, more similar to those currently being sold in the US. Five truck manufacturers—Volkswagen, Volvo, Daimler, PACCAR, and Iveco—dominate the EU market. Three of these manufacturers (Volvo, Daimler, and PACCAR) are also dominant in the U.S. market.

Noting the many similarities between the EU and U.S. heavy-duty vehicle markets, the ICCT study suggests that many of the same technologies entering the U.S. market—such as improved aerodynamics for trailers, automatic tire inflation, and improved engine efficiency—could also be applied to the new truck fleet in the EU.

Publication details

Overview of the heavy-duty vehicle market and CO₂ emissions in the European Union

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<http://www.theicct.org/hdv-eu-market-overview>

The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) is an independent nonprofit organization founded to provide first-rate, unbiased research and technical and scientific analysis to environmental regulators. The ICCT participants' council comprises high-level civil servants, academic researchers, and independent transportation and environmental policy experts, who come together at regular intervals to collaborate as individuals on setting a global agenda for clean transportation. ICCT was founded in 2005, and has offices in Berlin and Brussels, as well as in the US and China. It is funded principally by private foundations, such as the ClimateWorks Foundation in the US and Stiftung Mercator in Europe.

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