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Greenpeace calls on EU Environment Ministers to protect the climate and ignore powerful car lobby

Luxembourg, 5 June 2008 - As European Environment Ministers arrived in Luxembourg for a meeting which will include discussions about limiting greenhouse gas emissions for cars, five Greenpeace activists dropped banners from a crane next to the venue accusing the car industry of "Driving Climate Change" and calling for tough limits.

The powerful car lobby, led by Germany's Volkswagen, BMW and Mercedes, is pushing the EU to delay and weaken proposed legislation to limit car emissions. This includes lobbying to have a long-agreed EU target of an average 120g CO₂/km by 2012 extended by a further three years. They also want large-scale exemptions for makers of luxury cars and lower penalties and crediting measures outside the current test cycle.

Countries such as Germany and Sweden are pushing for the auto industry to be allowed to keep on building heavy cars with high CO₂ emissions.

"On world environment day Ministers must ensure that the EU takes a firm stand against the car lobby, and their stone-age demands," said Melanie Francis, Greenpeace International transport campaigner. "Giving into them as the German government seems to have done, could undermine the EU's ability to meet its 2020 climate targets. Chancellor Merkel has talked tough on climate change, but faced with the need to take decisive action within Germany she and Minister Gabriel are coming up short."

Greenpeace calls on the EU to finally hold the car industry to account and bring in a fleet average target of 120g CO₂/km by 2012 and 80g CO₂/km by 2020. These standards must be backed by meaningful sanctions and not play into the hands of the German car lobby by providing special treatment for makers of heavy cars.

Greenpeace supports Ban Ki Moon's call for the world to "Kick the CO₂ Habit" on World Environment Day and urges the EU to show its commitment to do the same, with meaningful legislation on passenger cars.

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See Greenpeace report: Driving Climate Change. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.greenpeace.org/drivingclimatechange> and is available in English, German, French and Spanish.

Photo

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