

Postal address 2 rue André Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cedex 16
Office address 2/4 rue Louis David, F-75016 Paris
Tel. 33 (0)1 45 24 95 96 Fax 33 (0)1 45 24 13 22

itf.contact@oecd.org
www.internationaltransportforum.org

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Jack Short: Electric Vehicles are no Short-Term Solution Improvements of Combustion Engines Needed and Feasible

“Electric vehicles are not a short-term solution for the challenges of climate change,” said the Secretary General of the International Transport Forum Jack Short at the opening day of the International Motor Show (Internationale Automobil-Ausstellung – IAA) in Frankfurt. They are certainly on the way but even optimists think that they will account for less than 10% of sales by 2020. “So, 90% of new cars that year and a much larger share of the fleet will still use internal combustion engines.”

In the short and medium terms, “policy to improve the performance of combustion technologies is as important as supporting electric vehicles”, explained Mr. Short. According to the Secretary General, 50% reductions in carbon emissions from conventional vehicles can be obtained in a cost-effective way. “This is where transport can deliver over the medium term.”

Electric vehicles are still expensive and still require further improvements and innovations. “For example, we need to look at new business models to separate battery and car ownership”, concluded Mr. Short. “Putting all eggs in the electricity basket is politically tempting, but it is better to combine immediate efforts to improve combustion engines with longer term strategies to switch to electric vehicles on a large scale.”

The International Transport Forum is the leading global platform and meeting place for transport, logistics and mobility. It attracts key figures from government and politics, business and industry, research and civil society, coming together to discuss a transport topic of worldwide strategic importance. The involvement of more than 50 Ministers of Transport offers many direct links to policy-making and business at both national and international levels.

Contact: Michael ZIRPEL

Director of Communications

[International Transport Forum](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org)

Offices: 5th floor, 2-4 rue Louis David, 75016 Paris, France

Postal address: OECD/ITF, 2 rue André Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cedex 16

Tel. + 33 (0)1 45 24 95 96

Assistant: Tel + 33(0)1 45 24 95 88 - Fax. + 33(0)1 45 24 13 22

michael.zirpel@oecd.org

www.internationaltransportforum.org