

» COP21, sustainable mobility and reputation

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The UN Conference on Climate Change starts today in Paris. It will bring together representatives of 195 countries, in addition to the European Union, seeking to reach a global agreement in the fight against climate change. Throughout the two weeks of meetings, all members shall work to meet the challenge of limiting global warming to two degrees by the end of the century compared to the average temperature recorded before the Industrial Revolution. The expectations are high, partly due to the lack of an agreement at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit.

This agreement is more necessary than ever, since the temperature has risen by 1.02 degrees since pre-industrial times, reaching maximum atmospheric CO₂ concentration levels (400 parts per million). In addition, 2014 registered the highest temperatures in over 135 years, when climate records began.

The summit has set its sights beyond Horizon 2020, replacing the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol, with the goal of establishing an agreement which shall last until 2050. One of the most significant changes was the inclusion of all countries, therefore covering 100 % of greenhouse gas emissions, unlike the

current protocol, which only encompasses a cluster of countries accounting for 11 % of the global emissions. In Paris, political representatives wish to mark the beginning of the end of fossil fuels.

POLLUTION AND TRANSPORT

“Cars are responsible for 12 % of CO₂ emissions in Europe”

In order to meet all the aforementioned objectives, the role to be played by transport will be critical, since vehicles are expected to amount to 2.5 billion units all around the world by 2050, widely surpassing the current figure –1 billion–.

In Europe, cars are responsible for 12 % of the CO₂ emissions, the main greenhouse gas, according to the European Commission (EC). The impact of these emissions is twofold, as it affects both the health and economic spheres. On one hand and according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 482,000 premature deaths in the European Union are caused by lung cancer and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. On the other, urban congestion accounts for near 1 % of the EU's annual GDP, according to a survey carried out by the CE. Moreover, another point to consider is the price of oil, which directly influences the country's energy bill in relation to fuel consumption.

Therefore, electric cars do not merely promote an environmentally-friendly lifestyle, but are also an alternative to face the current economic context.

This development pathway shall gradually replace conventional and hybrid vehicles in a gradual manner, since electric cars are the only transport option that does not generate any emissions of polluting gases.

In Spain, the number of registrations of electric cars did not even account for 0.3 % of the total sales, lower figures than those recorded in other European countries: 4 % in Germany, 11 % in France or 25 % in Norway, the benchmark of sustainable mobility.

The reasons behind these differences may be explained from various perspectives. First, purchase incentives play an essential role. While Spain is carrying out a notable effort in this regard –financial support totaling EUR 5,500– there is still a long way to go to reach the EUR 7,000 of direct help offered by the UK, EUR 7,600 in Norway or EUR 6,300 in France. The truth is that this type of support has a directly proportionate impact on sales and, for it to be sustainable over time plans need to be stable and consistent in order to stimulate the market.



Beyond financial support there is its stability, which provides greater certainty to the market and clearly contributes to its development. In contrast to the current situation of discontinuity in the plans of government support for the introduction of sustainable mobility 0 emissions.

Incentives to use this type of cars which currently include free parking zones, road tax exemptions, free use of bus lanes and toll waivers need to be further promoted and become a standard in all regions, while adding, for example, the total gratuity in motorway tolls or other measures decided to offer the user a clear incentive to change its current model of sustainable mobility on the other.

Another critical element for sustainable mobility is charge stations. Enhancing this type of infrastructure will enable the intensive use of electric cars and cross-country routes, thus meeting many of the transportation needs of our society. It is important for users to be certain that, regardless of their destination, they will have access to vehicle charging stations. In this sense, the network will need to include multiple fast charge points which enable load-ups of up to 80 % in just 30 minutes. However, Spain is still lagging far behind, with only 77 quick charge stations by the end of 2014, compared to over 900 in the UK, almost 800 in France and near 1,500 in Norway.

Similarly, 80% of the citizens of our country drive a daily average of 100km, mostly in urban and metropolitan areas. Thus, the option of electric vehicles is the proposal that offers better mobility for these people because their cruising range is more than enough. Hence, with a highly developed and electrified country like Spain, plus rapid charging what is most urgent to undertake is installing conventional charging points in public and private parkings, offices and workplaces and, of course, shopping centers. Allowing the load to that 80 % of citizens in those places where they expend more time during their workday, clearly will facilitate the introduction of electric vehicles in the mix of mobility in our country.

“In Europe, cars are responsible for 12 % of the CO2 emissions, the main greenhouse gas”

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND CORPORATE REPUTATION

“The commitment by enterprises to incorporate electric vehicle fleets boosts their reputation and sustainability strategy”

The firm commitment by enterprises to incorporate electric vehicle fleets into their organizations, as recently illustrated by Urbaser, Endesa, Ara Vinc, Ricoh o Pascual, goes beyond a mere transport option to fulfill their daily obligations.

With zero-emission models, companies continue developing their CSR plans, which seek to reduce CO2 emissions and promote sustainability. These elements are increasingly important for their corporate

objectives and contribute to society and all their stakeholders.

In addition to the clear environmental benefits entailed by emission-free driving, electric cars also help companies reduce vehicle maintenance costs by 40 % on average compared to conventional vehicles. Fuel costs also decrease between 3 and 4 times, oscillating between 1 and 2 euro per 100 km depending on the electricity tariff.

Beyond enhancing the efficiency of their businesses, these organizations also actively contribute to the promotion of sustainable mobility among citizens and at the same time directly improve the quality of life in urban locations.

Administrations should also prioritize and encourage the introduction of zero-emission alternatives in public fleets, as they account for a significant part of the active vehicles and this behavior would also serve as an example to society.

The outcome of the Paris Conference will not only outline the policies of all countries as regards reducing emissions, but shall also show the way for enterprises to promote sustainability in their corporate strategies, an element of undoubted value for their reputation in a context in which the fight against climate change is a major ethical imperative.



Francesc Corberó has been the Communications Director at Nissan Iberia since 2011. Corberó earned a MBA in Public Relations. Some of the most notorious milestones in his professional career are his development in the communication consultancy space as well as his path at the Office of Public Relations and Protocol of the Autonomous Government of Cataluña and Schneider Electric Spain, where he worked as Director of Communication and Institutional Relations. Corberó has collaborated as professor and lecturer at the Communication Department of the Ramon Llull University, the Public Relations Business School, the Pompeu Fabra University and the Business Administration School of Barcelona (EAE).



María Cura is Partner and managing Director of LLORENTE & CUENCA Barcelona. She attained a Law degree after graduating from the University of Barcelona and worked for four years as trade attorney. Ms. Cura started her professional career in the field of communication in Gené & Asociados, a leading communication consultancy firm in Barcelona. She subsequently joined USP Hospitales where she worked as Partner and member of the Executive Committee for nine years, holding the post of Corporate Director of Marketing and Communication. In 2009 she joined LLORENTE & CUENCA, assisting customers such as Panasonic, Nissan, Schneider Electric, DKV Seguros, Coca-Cola, L'Oreal, Singapore Airlines, CIRSA, Renta Corporación, Vida Caixa, Fundación MACBA, Fundación Dexeus, Roca & Junyent, among others. In 2014, she collaborated with the Government of Andorra in the banking crisis entailed by the actions carried out by the BPA as well as the launch of UBER in Spain.



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