

Too much of a good thing

Global head of e-mobility at TÜV SÜD AG, Volker Blandow discusses one billion vehicles on the planet – a success story with repercussions for the environment

Since December 2012 we have entered a new era in transportation. For the first time ever, the number of vehicles on the roads has reached over one billion globally and there seems to be no signs of slowdown in the growth of vehicle fleets. It is also forecasted that 80 million new vehicles will be produced in 2013, increasing the growth of the global fleet size by 30 million vehicles. If this trend continues, we will see an additional 100 million vehicles on the road every three years, equivalent to a 10% increase in total.

While these figures represent a tremendous success story in transportation history and is one of the remaining drivers of global economic growth; there is also a downside in that 98% of all vehicles still run on oil. This puts additional pressure on the global oil supply every year and nobody knows with certainty how long supply can keep up with the demand. We also face new political dependencies as oil production in western regions like Europe, the USA and in big Asian economies like Japan, Korea and China decrease quickly; and other suppliers are needed to fill the growing gap.

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On the other hand, global efforts are necessary in order to rapidly reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions required to meet the 2°C temperature increase limit set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In order to respect this, the limit the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere must not exceed the 450ppm threshold. At this moment, the levels are close to 400ppm and we can expect increases of 2-3ppm every year.

Based on these developments it is clear that we need a change in technology very soon. The EU emission targets for vehicles mark just the beginning of the journey. Continuous efforts are required to work towards even lower targets after 2020. In principle, a 10% increase in global vehicle fleet efficiency every three years is required just to stabilise the emissions levels.



Volker Blandow

At TÜV SÜD AG, we are convinced that the electric drive train will enter our vehicles on a much broader scale than generally anticipated due to two reasons – increased efficiency and a phased-in approach to using renewable energies in the transportation sector. Plug-in electric vehicles are the first step to enable the use of photovoltaic

and wind power for transportation. Other alternative options include battery electric and fuel cell vehicles.

For these reasons, TÜV SÜD AG, on a global scale, has been preparing for several years to help our customers manage this transition successfully with safe and reliable products. Our business is safety – safety for products like cars and e-bikes, components, infrastructure and for the people working with these new technologies. Labour safety, safe products and infrastructures are important enablers for the general acceptance of e-mobility and the transition of our transport system into a more sustainable one.



Choose certainty.
Add value.

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