

Opening speech by Maria da Graça Carvalho
Electric Vehicles and the European Industry

Good morning
Ladies and gentlemen,
Thank you for inviting me here today.

In the fight against climate change, there is, currently, an international consensus on the need to reduce CO2 emissions by 50% before 2050. This means a reduction of 75% - 90% in the industrialized countries. This reduction is possible only with a different organisation of our society, one in which transport systems are based on clean technologies.

One such technology is precisely electrical transport. This technology is important in building a low carbon society but we must ensure that the electricity used is from renewable sources and low in CO2 emissions.

What can E.U. do to help?

The European Parliament has an influential role in this sphere, as elsewhere. It is the EP that decides on about 60% of legislation within the European Union.

In the case of electric vehicles, I co-authored a resolution which was unanimously adopted at the plenary session on 5 May in Brussels.

In this resolution, a group of MEPs, including myself, required the European Commission and Member States to develop the necessary conditions for the emergence of a single market in electric vehicles. These vehicles must also have adequate regulation.

What are the other main concerns? There are three.

The same group of MEP's has also called for investment in network development Standardized refuelling to prevent the proliferation of systems restricted to a particular country or brand.

Secondly, it is also important to create incentives in electricity tariffs, tariffs that should be attractive for the consumer.

A third key aspect is the upgrading of electrical distribution networks, as well as increased investment in R & D and more efficient use of raw materials in batteries.

It is important for Europe to invest in electric vehicles given that such technology will give a European industry a competitive advantage.

So, why are we here today?
There remains much research that still must be undertaken.

This includes work in:

Advanced Materials

Manufacturing, testing and life cycle assessment of batteries,

Advanced in cell technology and integration

These are the things that we shall be discussing today and I hope that our discussion will be fruitful and thought-provoking.