

The Spanish Traffic Authority evaluates changing the “environmental stickers” of hybrid vehicles thanks to the LIFE GySTRA project

- The OPUS remote sensing technology used in the LIFE GySTRA project, in its pilot in Madrid, Spain, has revealed very serious discrepancies with the current labelling system used in Spain.
- Vehicles in Spain are associated with “environmental labels” that establish the theoretical level of pollution of each vehicle. Measurements of real-world emissions have shown that there are vehicles that enjoy the zero emissions sticker when they can be highly polluting.

Madrid, July 3, 2020. Within the framework of the LIFE GySTRA project, a study has been carried out that shows significant discrepancies between the theoretical emissions that a vehicle should have according to its environmental label and the emissions it actually has, which could make the Spanish Directorate General of Traffic (DGT) consider the possibility of modifying the definition of these labels.

Environmental labels for vehicles in Spain are established by the DGT through a vehicle classification system, based on their theoretical polluting potential. This classification is accompanied by a visual badge, a sticker that must be placed in a visible place on the vehicle. Labels are defined based on three factors: the age of the vehicle, the category of the vehicle, and the type of fuel.



These labels or stickers have important consequences for vehicle owners, as local and regional bodies rely on them to regulate traffic and vehicle access on public roads. In this way, vehicles can enter Low Emission Zones only if they have a label that represents that the vehicle is sufficiently clean. Considering that 150 Spanish cities have to implement these low emission zones, the consistency of the labels is a crucial issue for Spanish citizens.

Thanks to the LIFE GySTRA project, OPUS RSE, a project partner, has been able to verify that when hybrid vehicles run in combustion mode (not electric), their emissions can be as high or higher than those of traditional combustion vehicles. This is a problem, as hybrids enjoy very favorable labels that allow them to freely access city centers, free parking and other benefits for circulation or taxes.

This finding is very relevant, because there is no control over when, on what routes or for how long hybrid vehicles circulate in electric mode. The measurements carried out indicate that, on average, plug-in hybrid vehicles in Madrid with an electric range of more than 40km, actually circulate 50% in combustion mode.

Due to the above, there is a commitment that next year the badges will be reviewed in Spain, with the aim of better reflecting the real polluting potential of each vehicle. Currently, the labels do not take into account the weight or consumption of the vehicles; and certainly not their actual emissions. For this reason, for example, a very small petrol utility vehicle, with low consumption, may have a more penalising label than an off-road vehicle with a ZERO label of high consumption and that is really more polluting.

The LIFE GySTRA project, which has carried out this study, in its commitment to sustainable mobility in cities, is working on a global system to accurately quantify vehicle emissions in real driving situations, not only to control them, but to support the creation of a policy to achieve their reduction.

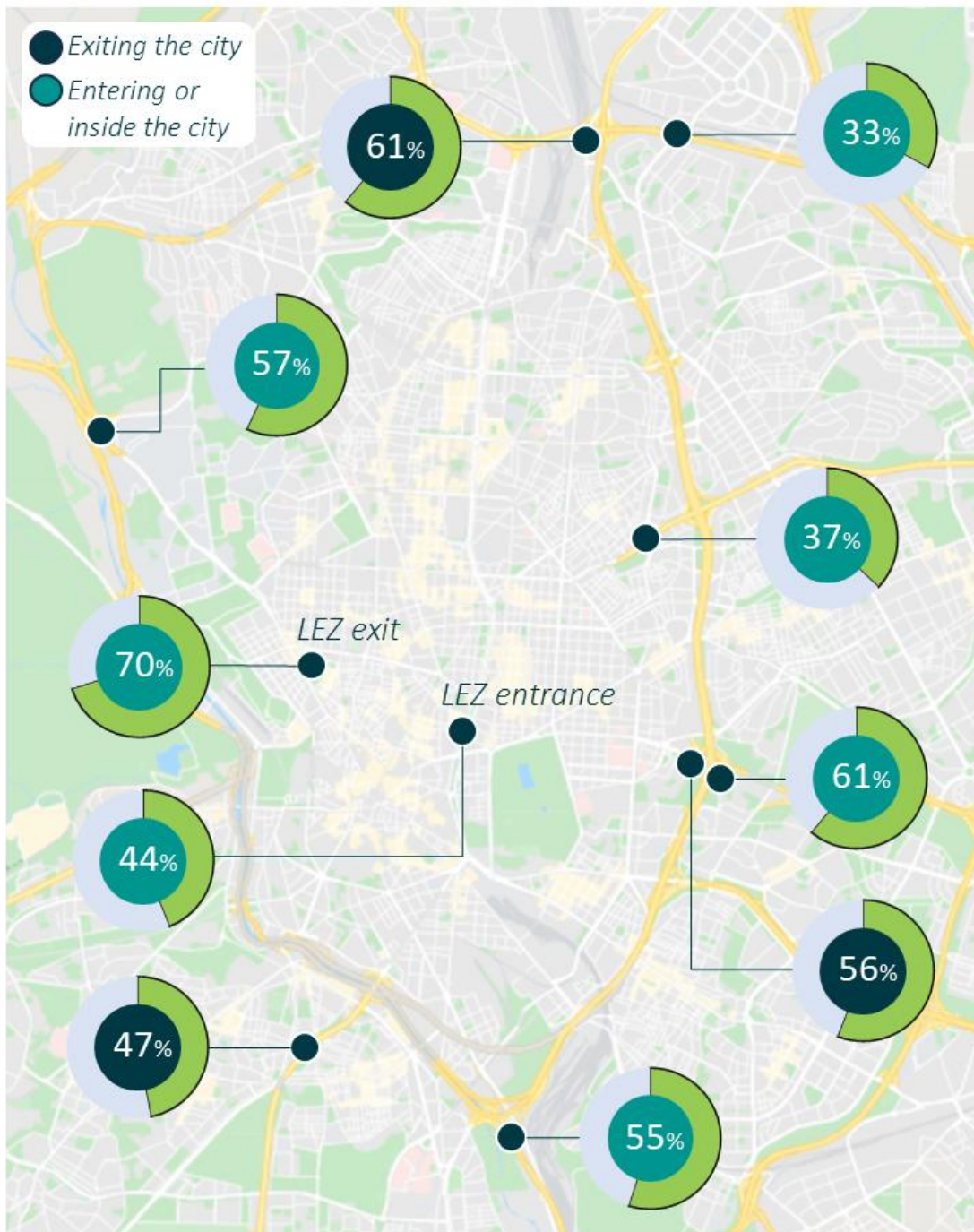
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Do people charge their PHEVs?

Monitoring how much of the time plug-in hybrids run in **electric** mode all over the city



Euro 6 passenger cars

Average NOx (g/km) of several vehicle models

