

Thanks to the amendments to the regulation on subsidized purchase of new electric and hybrid vehicles, which was published at the end of May, electric and hybrid vehicles can be bought again with a state subsidy. The emission limit value for vehicles with hybrid engines has been increased from 100 to 140 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer traveled, so that the application of a new, stricter standard is no longer an obstacle to approving subsidies. Therefore, in the first five months of this year, it became an absurd situation that cars with exactly the same engines that previously met the required criteria, could no longer be bought with a relief of 2,500 euros, which is why interest in hybrid vehicles is drastically reduced.

The director of "Toyota Serbia", Robert Lukic, explained for RTS that there was a standard on exhaust gases that had been in use for more than ten years and ceased to be valid in the EU on January 1st this year. It was introduced, he says, new, much stricter, so the change of that decree had to be done in such a way as to harmonize the value of the old and the new standard.

"It's like the difference between centimeters and inches. The old one measured in inches, and the new one in centimeters. And in that sense, the exhaust gases are the same as they were and only the standard is different," Lukic explained.

He also stated that, if this stricter way, a different measurement would be applied to all vehicles, then by using subsidies, a large number of vehicle models would fall out and that shortcoming has been corrected, Lukic emphasizes.

Subsidy for both natural and legal persons

Aleksandra Graovac from the Serbian Association of Vehicle and Parts Importers pointed out that the subsidy for an electric vehicle is 5,000 euros, for a plug-in hybrid vehicle 3,500 and for a hybrid 2,500.

She stated that about 800 vehicles were sold last year, which are electric, plug-in and hybrid, although there are some subcategories among them that the subsidy did not recognize, and those are light hybrids.

Benefits of electric vehicles

Lukic points out that the use of electric vehicles goes in the direction of sustainable technologies and environmentally friendly solutions.

"We have a lot of pollution in cities, but when we look at technology we have to look not only at the exploitation of vehicles, but also its production, then exploitation, then recycling. The production of batteries requires that famous lithium and electric vehicles consume a lot of lithium, if we compare it with a hybrid, it needs about ten times more lithium," pointed out Lukic.

He stated that electric vehicles use electricity in exploitation and that there is a big question where that electricity comes from.

"If you look at Norway, which gets 90 percent of that electricity from water, it absolutely

makes sense. However, in the world and Europe, in most countries, that electricity is obtained from thermal power plants. This is certainly something that will be sought in the next 10, 30 and 50 years," believes Lukic.

He pointed out that battery recycling requires a serious process, technological readiness, capacity, because batteries are toxic. He believes that the production of energy from wind and sun will continue to develop at some pace.

About 60 fast chargers in Serbia

Aleksandra Graovac said that there are about 60 publicly available fast chargers in Serbia. "The network, the infrastructure as such is not easy to implement. So these vehicles require infrastructure that requires big changes and investments, so we are still in a period when hybrid vehicles are just complementary or plug-in that can go either on one or the other plant is more acceptable," Graovac assessed.

Lukic explains that when you drive a car and brake, that energy is lost, while in hybrid vehicles it is not lost, but it charges the battery.

"When you stand at a traffic light and it is unnecessary for the engine to run, then the battery is used. In hybrid cars, as much as 60 percent of the time you spend in the city is on electricity and in that sense you do not need infrastructure or any charging," said Lukic.

Graovac points out that the automotive industry is in great change and that some manufacturers have recognized the moment when technology and ecology are evolving.

"All agreements imposed by these environmental regulations are active, all manufacturers have signed them, and we are working quickly to reach that level of set exhaust emissions in order to achieve the standards," Graovac pointed out.

Hydrogen fuels the future

Lukic states that "Toyota" believes that hydrogen is the fuel of the future.

"Hydrogen is absolutely clean in operation, as well as electricity, completely clean, only water comes out of the exhaust. It is easier to produce because it is a by-product of many industries, unused for now, ie used only for heating, and it is certainly very usable in trucks, city buses and that is slowly becoming a trend," Lukic stressed.

He adds that fuel cells are completely simple to produce, and completely safe to recycle.

He expects hydrogen to take over in 20, 30 years.

As for the prices and the purchasing power of citizens for the purchase of these cars, Graovac points out that they are harmonized with the competitors from the diesel segment, but the price continues to fall.

She expects that with some greater exploitation of those vehicles, the price will be more affordable, RTS reports.