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## Five Measures Instead of 5000 Euros

The UN Climate Change Conference in Paris is being hailed as a breakthrough in international climate protection. “Decarbonisation” was the message. For an economy like Germany’s, which distinguishes itself through innovative and efficient products, this is a great opportunity; but at the same time, the magnitude of the challenge must not be ignored. That also applies to the topic of electromobility, where a buyer’s premium of 5000 euros is currently under discussion. The mechanical engineering, automotive and electrical engineering industries are ideally positioned to make Germany the leading market and supplier for electric mobility. At the same time, when we talk about the subject of mobility, we are referring to a cornerstone of our economic success. Therefore, every idea should stand the test of being either part of a concept or merely political actionism.

Current figures raise doubts about the promised effectiveness of an incentive. The government’s target of one million electric vehicles in Germany by 2020 is in contrast to the figure of only around 100,000 battery-electric cars and plug-in hybrids now on the roads. This gap cannot be filled by subsidies alone. At the moment, there are “electromobility pioneers” – nothing more. In 2020, around 50 % of primary energy resources will be used for transport. Without the systematic interlinking of alternative energy and our transport systems, climate protection will remain merely a well-meant approach. For that reason, we must ensure, for example, that the electricity at the charging stations for electric vehicles really is “green”. A buyer’s premium for electric cars would, however, be an individual meas-

ure and not an intelligent component of an integrated overall solution. What is more, a buyer’s premium is likely to fail due to the actual challenge itself. Of course, everyone would be happy to pocket a 5000-euro incentive. But it would still not make most electric cars affordable. And the motto “anyone who can afford to buy one now will get a little incentive in return” is not particularly constructive. Questions concerning the achievable driving range or the charging infrastructure point to more fundamental problems. So what needs to be done?

VDMA proposes five measures. One: we should not disparage the huge progress that has been made in improving the efficiency of the internal combustion engine. It is a matter of a transition to an age of electric mobility, and by no means a radical step. Two: we must finally merge the concepts of the energy turnaround and mobility. This offers enormous technical potentials that we can unlock and market for ourselves. Three: there will be completely different options for conurbations and rural areas. Public transport and individual mobility are already merging in cities such as Berlin, and further electromobility concepts can be implemented more quickly in such places. Four: we must avoid windfall gains. Two thirds of all newly registered vehicles are for commercial use. A special depreciation scheme (instead of a buyer’s premium) would have a more targeted incentive function. And five: the aim is to improve competitiveness by a real reduction in costs. The key to this can be found in research, above all in the fields of production, battery and powertrain technology.