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EMIS hearing 16 June 2016

Daniel Lange, software firm Faster IT “Management of car industry knew quite well about shortcomings”

The second part of the afternoon session of the Committee of inquiry into Emission Measurements in the Automotive Sector (EMIS) saw Mr Daniel Lange, a long time veteran of the software side of the car industry who at the moment is working for software firm Faster IT as a consultant. Mr Lange might be known for co-presenting how Mr Felix Domke hacked into his car's software at the 32C3 congress last winter. He felt the need to publicly get involved in the discussions surrounding Dieselgate after VW's management trying to lay the blame for the scandal on a few 'rogue engineers' at the beginning of the unfolding scandal. Stressing that such decisions would need to have been taken relatively high-up in the management chain he called for better protection of whistleblowers and a revamping of the New European Driving Cycle, the last revamping of which dates back to 1997. This resulted in everybody in the industry knowing its shortcomings quite well, according to Mr Lange. He also emphasised that current legislation is often too specific in its approach to regulate technology; one example he gave was that the definition of defeat device being based on hardware allowed car manufacturers to embed code in the software like the one that created vehicle behaviour sparking the current Dieselgate affair.

While applauding the European Parliament's ongoing investigation into the matter, Mr Lange called the German Kraftfahrbundesamt's (KBA) report a 'joke' when asked what he thinks of the national authorities' work. He lamented the KBA's tests having been conducted in secret, their raw data not having been made available for external double checking and a lack of internal double checking of the test results. When finding irregularities the KBA accepted the car manufacturers' word while telling them the test set-up was done incorrectly. Mr Lange concluded that this behaviour was unprofessional. He also recalled an anecdote of French Minister of Ecology, sustainable development, and Energy, Mrs Ségolène Royal, visiting a French factory for an hour and declaring afterwards that she did not find evidence for defeat devices there as another example how politicians and authorities seem to be more interested in publicity stunts instead of solving the issue at hand.

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