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Hearing Vladimir Sucha and Giovanni De Santi

EMIS Committee

The EMIS committee held its second hearing of JRC officials on Thursday, following disappointment from some Members with the first hearing held in April. Vladimir Sucha, JRC's current director-general, had previously been invited to appear, but had to be replaced by his colleague Delilah Al-Khundhairy due to scheduling issues caused by the attacks on 22 March in Brussels. The committee had also wanted to hear Giovanni de Santi, who has worked within the Commission's science body since 1985, and played a key role in developing the RDE test procedure as head of the Institute for Energy and Transport from 2007 to 2016, but was replaced by Alois Krasenbrink for the previous hearing.

The issue of the Commission's knowledge about possible defeat device use prior to the Volkswagen scandal was again brought up, when Members quoted an email exchange from 30 April 2012 mentioning "hard cycle beating" in relation to a diesel vehicle tested by JRC emitting far more NOx outside of the boundary temperatures used in the lab test. In particular, clarification was requested on the distinction that the emails seemed to be making between "cycle beating" and "hard cycle beating". Mr Sucha explained that he was not at JRC at the time the email was sent, and that it should be borne in mind that there were 1.9 million emails every month in JRC. He also stated that the term "cycle beating" was not legally defined, and that the vehicle referred to in the emails had not in fact been type approved, but was a prototype that had been used for CO2 measurements. Mr Sucha also assured the Members that the results of those tests had been presented to the relevant committee only 3 days later.

It should however be pointed out that the email in question defined "hard cycle beating" as "the use of test cycle conditions for activation of emission control", which fits the definition of a defeat device given in the current legislation very closely. Moreover, given that, as explained by Mr Sucha, the expertise for vehicle testing in JRC is limited to 20-25 people, it would be surprising if these results were not known to the entire team.

Reference was also made to slides from a JRC presentation on 23 November 2010, which mentioned the "peculiar behaviour" of a car and "defeat strategies". Co-rapporteur Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy asked why there had been no follow up regarding this indication of illegal activity. Mr Sucha replied that defeat devices are illegal, not defeat strategies.

Several other questions focused on issues related to the committee's requests for access to emails from JRC. Indeed, as pointed out by Greens/EFA MEP **Claude Turmes**, no emails have yet been received for the period between January and November 2010, during which JRC presented a report on PEMS testing

which led to the creation of the RDE working group. As remarked by the committee's Chair Karthleen Vam Brompt, this omission is quite "odd". Worryingly, Giorgio Martini, an employee of JRC's Vehicle Emissions Laboratory (VELA) assisting Mr Sucha during his hearing, informed the committee that any e-mails older than six months not considered important and relevant are automatically deleted under the JRC's archive system.

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