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Car pollution scandal

EU Commission must stop being passive and deliver a coherent EU response

The Greens/EFA group has written to the European Commission setting out necessary action to be taken in response to the scandal regarding the compliance of Volkswagen and other manufacturers with EU law on pollutant emissions from cars (1). The group took the initiative following a European Parliament debate with the Commission on the scandal on Tuesday evening, and ahead of a vote on a resolution later this month. Commenting on the initiative, Greens/EFA co-presidents **Rebecca Harms** and **Philipp Lamberts** said:

"After years of lobbying to weaken EU laws on car pollution, it has been widely suspected that car manufacturers have gone to lengths to avoid complying with the rules in place. It is the duty of the European Commission to oversee EU law and ensure it is complied with but it has been far too passive in its response to this scandal and to other evidence of a widespread lack of compliance with EU laws from vehicles cleared for use on European roads. We are calling on the Commission to act both to ensure EU public health and environment laws are upheld and to prevent further degradation of the credibility of the car industry.

"It is in the clear interest of the car industry and all its employees that all the issues raised by the VW-scandal are addressed. It is not those who push for legislation to protect public health, the environment and the climate who are endangering sustainable employment in the sector but those who are undermining such laws.

"As an immediate response, the Commission must investigate the role of the responsible national authorities. The information on massive discrepancy between test cycle and real world emissions of two Volkswagen vehicle types that led to action by US authorities was available to the competent member states and the Commission 18 months ago, but led to no enforcement action. In the meanwhile Volkswagen has admitted to having installed defeat devices in vehicles sold on the EU market - in clear infringement of the EU law. In this and other cases where member states authorities failed to enforce EU law, the Commission must launch an infringement action.

"The Commission must also oversee a thorough investigation of the evidence on the gap between test results and the actual pollutant emissions in normal use for a wide selection of vehicles. If cars have passed test procedures but are in reality far in excess of EU limit values for pollutants, member states authorities and the Commission must take immediate steps to redress this, including through recalls and withdrawal from the EU market. We also finally need a robust testing procedure for measuring vehicle pollutant emissions under Euro 5/6. Parliament's environment committee voted to ensure that a new test procedure for vehicle emissions,

based on real driving conditions, would be implemented from 2017 on without undue margin for exceeding the pollutant limits set by EU law.

"If it is established that the car industry and/or its suppliers obtained fiscal incentives related to environmentally-friendly cars that were not actually eligible, we believe that these incentives need to be recovered and the Commission must pressure member states to do so.

"This scandal has also underlined serious problems with the monitoring and enforcement of what is European internal market legislation and standards. We need an EU-level agency market surveillance, for monitoring compliance with EU law and ensuring proper enforcement, with penalties for non-compliance. The Commission must come forward with a proposal to this end."

(1) A copy of the letter can be found at:

/legacy/fileadmin/dam/Documents/Letters/20151007_Letter_Com_VW.pdf

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Responsible MEPs



Rebecca Harms

Member



Philippe Lamberts

Member

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