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Car industry regulation

Revamping European type approval system overdue but EU governments must play ball

The European Commission today presented legislative proposals aimed at strengthening the system for approving road vehicles for use in Europe. The Greens welcomed the proposals, which would address some of problems with the current national-based 'type approval framework', but cautioned that the proposal will need the support of EU governments. Commenting on the draft law, Green environment spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** said:

"The Volkswagen scandal has shone the spotlight on the flawed system for testing and approving road vehicles in the EU. It is certainly welcome that the Commission is now moving to address this even if it is a pity that it took this scandal to prompt action, when the flaws of the current system were already widely known. The problems linked to the national-based type approval systems and the inherent conflicts of interest in the testing processes have been known for years. Moving to a more European approach to testing and approvals is absolutely necessary and it is encouraging that the Commission is proposing this.

"In addition to surveillance, the proposals would also give the Commission or other member state authorities the competence to challenge approval decisions. This will help to address the problems with the current national system, whereby one national authority is solely responsible for the approval of vehicles throughout the EU. The creative fee-based system proposed by the commission, will help address the inherent conflict of interest in the current system, which is funded directly by car manufacturers.

"Today's proposals are certainly welcome but they are proposals and it remains to be seen if EU governments, which have continually blocked stricter regulation of the car industry, will play ball. They should certainly not be viewed as some kind of trade-off to the European Parliament in exchange for parliament approving the fundamentally flawed decision on the conformity or compliance of real driving condition tests for pollutant emissions (RDE). MEPs who welcome today's proposals as a means of addressing the major problems in the regulation of the car industry must also be consistent and reject the scandalous decision on 'conformity factors' for emissions tests when they vote on 3 February. We simply cannot accept that a technical decision can overwrite EU laws on car pollution and allow car manufacturers to sell new cars that exceed EU pollutant emissions limits by significant factors."

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Bas Eickhout

Vice-President

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