Press release | 03.02.2016

EU car pollution rules

European Parliament abdicates responsibility and waves through license to pollute for carmakers

A decision introducing new loopholes to EU law aimed at limiting car pollution was today waved through the European Parliament. The decision introducing 'conformity factors' as part of the testing procedure for car pollutant emissions will allow car manufacturers to produce and market cars that exceed the EU limits on pollutants indefinitely (1). The Greens led calls to reject this decision but the rejection today failed to secure the required absolute majority (2). Commenting after the vote, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The European Parliament has today abdicated its responsibility to protect the health of EU citizens. This decision on 'conformity factors' amounts to a reward for car makers who have made no effort to respect the legal limits on pollutants set out in EU law since 2007. Today's vote represents yet another in a long list of victories for the car industry lobby in Brussels but it is another blot on the record of the European Parliament."

Greens/EFA vice/president and environment spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** said:

"Today's vote confirms this license to pollute for European car makers. The 'conformity factors' decision essentially overwrites EU limits on pollutants from cars by introducing major loopholes that would allow cars to pollute at far above the legal limits (1). As a direct response to the 'diesel-gate' scandal, this is a serious blow to the credibility of the EU to regulate the car industry. It is also a slap in the face to the European Parliament's powers as a co-legislator, as it de facto rewriting EU rules that were agreed with and voted on by the parliament. However, the real losers from today's vote are cities and urban areas which are struggling with the health consequences of air pollution, and the hundreds of thousands of European citizens who face severe health problems resulting from this. Those MEPs who failed to support the objection must now also share responsibility for the failure to act on the silent killer that is air pollution."

(1) A decision to introduce a testing procedure for car pollutant emissions based on real driving conditions is already in place, having been taken in May. This 'conformity factor' decision (from October) would allow car makers to continue to produce cars that significantly overshoot the limits, based on the results of these tests. The controversial decision by EU governments on 'conformity factors' would enable car manufacturers to produce and market cars that exceed EU legal limits on pollutants permanently and by a significant factor (by more than double the limit until 2021 and by 50% thereafter).

(2) The European Parliament's environment committee voted in favour of rejecting the draft decision in December. The committee called on the European Commission to present a new proposal for real driving emissions tests by April 2016, with no loopholes for cars polluting above the legal limits. This objection required an absolute majority of members voting in the European Parliament in order for the decision to be rejected.

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Responsible MEPs



Rebecca Harms

Member

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