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European Parliament demands car testing overhaul

On the back of the recent revelations that Volkswagen gamed US emission tests and installed so-called defeat devices in millions of cars globally, Members of the European Parliament have voted in favour of a raft of measures that would better protect consumers from misleading performance claims of car makers.

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) welcomes in particular the Parliament's calls:

- To introduce on-the-road tests in order to supplement laboratory testing for not only air pollutants but also CO₂ (and in turn fuel consumption);
- To introduce conformity testing of production and in-use vehicles;
- For the information delivered to consumers on a car's fuel consumption performance to be based on real world driving performance and not laboratory based findings;
- For further EU oversight of the type approval process and to consider the establishment of an EU wide surveillance authority;
- On the Commission to ensure a robust EU-wide coordinated investigation into vehicle test manipulation;
- For consumers to be compensated when they have been misled and wrong-doing is confirmed.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation, commented:

"Recent revelations concerning the testing of vehicles in the EU are alarming. The European Parliament is rightly calling for a thorough investigation to finally expose what value official emission figures actually have. Consumers deserve to know if legal limits are more than just a smokescreen to appease environmental and public health concerns.

"It is very encouraging that CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption remain in the spotlight. The discrepancy between laboratory fuel consumption values and real-driving results has become absurd. Consumers have been fooled to believe their cars were fuel-thrifty while car makers' promises have gone up in smoke. This requires swift EU action to finally introduce a new test procedure to restrict test loopholes and to ensure that consumers are provided with more reliable information.

"Millions of Europeans bought VW-cars equipped with illegal defeat software. Volkswagen needs to make sure the affected cars are brought in conformity with EU and national laws and that consumers get what was contractually promised to them. If this will result in re-sale value loss or performance problems, car-owners must be compensated."

END

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