

Contact: Laurens Rutten: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
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EU Member States risk turning Dieselgate reforms into paper tiger

EU Member States today agreed on their approach to reform the system for approving cars before they can go on sale and checking them when in use. Their position includes some encouraging proposals but falls short when it comes to preventing a future Dieselgate – something both the Parliament and Commission had pushed for.

Member States have agreed, if reluctantly, to grant further oversight at the EU level. This includes allowing the European Commission to perform tests on cars. They have also proposed a minimum target to test cars once they have entered production, which will be binding across the EU.

However, EU Member States have also agreed on positions that jeopardise a true reform:

- They have watered down a proposal that would allow the European Commission to issue financial penalties, of up to €30,000 per car, when a car maker has been caught cheating the tests. Under the Council's proposal, the Commission will be prevented from issuing a penalty when a Member State has already acted – even if the Member State issues a completely insignificant penalty.
- They turn a blind eye to conflicts of interest in car testing, by allowing the continuation of direct payments between car makers and test laboratories¹;
- They have ignored calls for the use of independent auditors to check Member State activities.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), comments:

"Member States had the choice: drive head-first into another Dieselgate or craft a cleaner future by truly reforming today's broken system of car testing. Clearly under pressure from Germany, they have agreed on a package of half-baked measures that risk turning the entire reform into a paper tiger.

"We now expect the Parliament and the Commission to stick to their guns and push Member States to agree on a more ambitious final package. Having car makers face heavy fines, eliminating conflicts of interest in testing and ensuring a fully transparent system is the only way to prevent another Dieselgate scandal."

ENDS

¹ Currently, car makers will often choose a private test laboratory to oversee the tests in their own lab. Both the national authority and the laboratory are paid by the car maker. This [must be changed](#), so that the car maker pays the national authority who, in turn, selects the test laboratory.

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs AISBL | Der Europäische Verbraucherverband

Rue d'Arlon 80, B-1040 Brussels • Tel. +32 (0)2 789 24 01 •

press@beuc.eu • www.beuc.eu • www.twitter.com/beuc

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