

Contact: Laurens Rutten: lru@beuc.eu

Date: 27/02/2018

German court allows local bans on diesel cars: Car makers must take responsibility

Today, the German federal administrative court has ruled in favour of allowing local authorities to ban heavily polluting vehicles. Such bans are intended to improve urban air quality and are part of a wider reaction to the Dieselgate emissions scandal.

The Dieselgate scandal exposed a huge malpractice: cars emitted much more air pollution (NOx) than advertised or allowed, which adds to an already existing public health crisis. This has rightfully intensified the scrutiny of diesel cars' role in air pollution.

While the court's ruling is a German one, it is indicative of wider European debates on polluting cars and urban public health. And European drivers are not bound by their national borders. This means any local diesel ban automatically stretches across borders, and languages.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"Today's ruling has implications *well* beyond Germany's borders. For example, how will a visitor from the Czech Republic be informed about a flurry of different bans across his or her way through Germany? National and EU policy-makers must step in to guide this development and prevent a proliferation of disparate, local schemes.

"Consumers cannot be penalised for car-makers' misbehaviour. A wave of uncoordinated bans could leave thousands of motorists with little time to adapt. Car makers ought to bear the responsibility, and cost, of reequipping old diesels with the latest anti-pollution technology.

"To improve air quality and public health in the long-run, consumers must have a real alternative to these polluting vehicles. This requires the EU to spur the roll-out of low emission technologies, for example by setting ambitious CO2 targets for the next decade."

ENDS