

‘How to end the fuel testing scam?’

BEUC conference on May 6, 2015

Concluding remarks by Monique Goyens - Director General, BEUC

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

It is clear that consumers are paying a heavy price as a result of misleading commercial practices and the failings of existing rules in the area of fuel consumption testing. It is also clear that consumers are becoming increasingly frustrated – this is apparent not only from what our members have been doing, but also it is reflected in the amount of coverage given to this topic across the media landscape.

Our members have worked tirelessly on this issue across Europe, through conducting vehicle tests to using social media to raise the profile of misleading fuel consumption advertisements. This has been a truly united campaign run across Europe, from Lithuania in the east, to Spain in the west, and from the UK in the north to Italy in the South.

We have heard today about the problems associated with measuring the performance of automakers and we have heard about the weaknesses of the existing test and the failures in terms of market surveillance – and the backlash from European consumers.

We now need the WLTP for 2017, not for 2018 or even later as alluded to in an earlier presentation – that would be unacceptable – and when implemented we must ensure that consumers can easily understand the new information provided to them, which must also mean for a reform to the EU’s car labelling Directive.

Being that this issue directly relates to climate change, it is also essential that Europe acts on this issue ahead of this year’s Paris COP 21 climate talks. We expect Europe to remain ambitious on this issue in order to remain credible at the global stage, but it must be also recognised: If we in Europe are aware that our monitoring of car CO₂ emissions is weak and is undermining the very targets we have set ourselves, how credible can Europe remain at the global level on climate change if action is not taken before the end of this year?

Europe needs to put more focus on measures that work in the consumer’s interest. If the European Commission truly wants to achieve its ‘better regulation’ agenda, then I would say having a better fuel consumption testing regime in place would represent exactly that.

END