



## Summary report on the BEUC event:

### How to end the fuel testing scam? – 6 May 2015

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On May 6 2015 BEUC – The European Consumer Organisation – organised a public event on the topic of fuel consumption testing at the Thon Hotel EU, Brussels. Over 80 participants were registered for the event, including representatives from the European Commission, EU Member States and the European Parliament, and a range of stakeholders including local government authorities, industry groups, and civil society organisations.

The purpose of the event was to discuss issues surrounding the misleading testing of a car's fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions performance, and to allow participants to better understand how current problems associated with the existing testing regime in Europe can be improved.

The discussions focussed on a range of issues including: the differentiation between real world fuel consumption figures and official figures for the fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions performance of new cars; market surveillance and conformity testing weaknesses across Europe; the importance of a new EU wide testing protocol, the Worldwide Harmonized vehicles Testing Procedure (WLTP) to be implemented by 2017; the challenges associated with adjusting car maker CO<sub>2</sub> targets for 2021 and the phase in period of a new testing protocol; and the importance of providing consumers with reliable and easy-to-understand information when purchasing new cars.

The event was hosted by MEP Michael Cramer, chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, and MEP Giovanni La Via, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. The event was moderated by journalist Dave Keating.

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## MEP Michael Cramer – Co-host – Chairman of the European Parliament’s Transport and Tourism Committee

Mr. Michael Cramer’s opening speech highlighted the frustration that consumers face when provided with fuel consumption figures that do not match real world performance and highlighted the results of research conducted by consumer organisation ‘Which?’. He mentioned the importance of having a new European testing regime to be in place by 2017 at the latest, and that car manufacturer CO<sub>2</sub> targets should not be weakened as a result of the introduction of the new testing protocol, the WLTP. He also said it would be essential to improve EU wide labelling of fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of passenger cars, for the benefit of consumers. He also mentioned that more ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> targets for 2025 are needed for the automobile sector.



## Giovanni La Via – Co-host – Chairman of the European Parliament’s Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

In his closing speech, Mr. Giovanni La Via mentioned the Parliament’s strong interest in tackling climate change and the importance of ensuring that the monitoring of the automobile sector’s carbon emissions is improved. He said that providing consumers with clear information is essential, otherwise they will not be able purchase any product in an informed manner. He also mentioned that on this issue, that individual driving behaviour of motorists will affect fuel consumption performance in the real world and that consumers have a responsibility as well to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when driving.



## Martin Adams – Head of Group – Air pollution, transport and noise, European Environment Agency

Mr. Martin Adams highlighted that in 2014 new cars emitted on average 123.4 g CO<sub>2</sub>/km, significantly below the EU 2015 target of 130 g CO<sub>2</sub>/km and that European car makers had reached the 2015 target already in 2013, two years ahead of schedule. He said that numerous studies in recent years have documented the often significant divergence between ‘test-cycle’ (NEDC) and real-world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, explaining that the essence of the difference is that the NEDC testing does not adequately represent ‘real world’ driving conditions. He also mentioned the under-performance of vehicle emission standards for air pollutants, that nevertheless there have been real life emissions reductions in the automobile sector, and that the new WLTP should better represent real world emissions.

[Link to Presentation](#)



## Peter Mock – Managing Director, International Council on Clean Transportation

Mr. Peter Mock started by saying that although all motorists drive differently there are significant trends that show a growing divergence between real world emissions and official type approval fuel consumption figures. He said

that real-world fuel consumption, on average, is now about 40% higher than test results and that this is a problem for consumers, manufacturers and society as a whole. The main reason for this, he said, is the increasing exploitation of flexibilities in the EU test procedure. Although a new test procedure, the WLTP, will be beneficial, it will also require greater in-service conformity testing and testing of vehicles on the road, and not just in the laboratory, he said.

[Link to presentation](#)



### Luisa Crisigiovanni – Secretary General, Altroconsumo

Ms. Luisa Crisigiovanni reported on an investigation by organisation Altroconsumo, into the compatibility between the advertised fuel economy claims made by car manufacturers and real driving figures. She said that Altroconsumo had chosen two of the most popular cars in Europe, a Volkswagen Golf and Fiat Panda, and explored how test flexibilities could be exploited. She said that Altroconsumo had launched two class actions against the manufacturers on the back of their results, that showed a significant difference between advertised figures and what Altroconsumo could achieve in their investigation. She highlighted the sorts of tricks that can be used to lower fuel consumption during testing, and also stressed BEUC recommendations for changes to EU legislation.

[Link to presentation](#)



### Philippe Jean – Head of Unit, Sustainable Mobility and Automotive Industry, DG GROW, European Commission

Mr. Philippe Jean gave a presentation explaining the work of the European Commission on developing a testing procedure. He said that the new test will be an improvement on the NEDC. He said that it would still not be truly representative of real life conditions but it would be better. He said the application of the new test cycle will possibly be in 2017 or 2018, a year later than expected. He said the Commission still has work to do in order to adapt CO<sub>2</sub> targets on the back of implementing the new test, and in terms of adjusting WLTP values to be equivalent to NEDC values during a phase in period.

[Link to presentation](#)



### Jeff Alson – Senior Engineer at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Jeff Alson's recorded presentation focused on the US's approach to their fuel consumption and vehicle label compliance scheme. He highlighted that the testing methodology and the label design had been changed several times since the 1970's. He mentioned that the U.S. EPA performs conformity tests on approximately 200 vehicles, or 15-20% each year. He said that test results are adjusted to account for variables impacting on fuel consumption that cannot be adequately captured in the laboratory. He also said that in the US, the majority of motorists either match or achieve better fuel economy performance than advertised figures.

[Link to presentation](#)

## Panelists



### **Greg Archer – Vehicles Programme Manager, Transport and Environment**

Mr. Greg Archer said that the evidence presented by the earlier speakers made it clear that car makers are exploiting test flexibilities. He said that in the process of adapting the 2021 CO<sub>2</sub> targets for passenger vehicles that the use of a new testing protocol should not mean for unreasonable flexibilities being accounted for. He also said that automakers are not supportive of the WLTP being implemented for 2017 and that existing problems associated with fuel consumption testing is to the detriment of consumers, industry and future generations.



### **Anja Ewert – Policy Officer, International Cooperation at ADAC e.V.**

Ms. Anja Ewert spoke about the problems motorists encounter with the inadequate indication of fuel consumption and expressed the importance that consumer groups have in highlighting the differences between official advertised fuel consumption figures and what can be achieved under more realistic conditions. ADAC does provide consumers with more realistic data via the ADAC EcoTest, performed at ADAC's own lab. As ADAC has been demanding fuel consumption data that more closely reflects real-world, they also support the scheduled WLTP/WLTC introduction by 2017. Besides, ADAC advocates the access to road load curves for independent test labs since this would make the important measurements in the framework of consumer testing initiatives easier to perform.



### **Stefano Casiraghi – Technical Expert, Altroconsumo**

Mr. Stefano Casiraghi highlighted the results of Altroconsumo's investigation into fuel consumption testing and said how important it is for consumers to be provided with reliable information. He said that implementing the WLTP by 2017 is vital in order to build trust amongst consumers. He also said that the entire process of testing a car's fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions performance should become more transparent. Specifically, he highlighted the problems with accessing data about a car's 'coastdown' test results. Having a more transparent process would allow for NGOs and consumer organisations to better monitor the performance of car makers and access the effectiveness of decisions taken by EU Member States.



### **Paul Greening – Emissions and Fuels Director, European Automobile Manufacturer's Association**

Dr. Paul Greening said that European car makers were aware that the existing rules surrounding fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions testing were out of date and that the automobile sector is working to implement the WLTP as soon as possible. He said that for the automobile sector, it must be recognised that the change of testing protocol will lead to substantial

changes in regulation that car makers would have to prepare for. He said that for the correlation exercise to be effective, it is essential that the principle of 'comparable stringency' for all car makers must be respected. He said that it was unfair to say that car makers were exploiting loopholes, but argued that car makers were simply abiding by existing regulatory requirements.



### Philip Owen – Head of Unit, Transport and Ozone, DG CLIMA, European Commission

Mr. Philip Owen said that the Commission was very aware that European consumers expected changes to regulatory requirements concerning fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions testing. He said the Commission was working actively to ensure that the legislative changes would be made as soon as possible and that in terms of adapting car maker targets the Commission would be liaising with all stakeholders, including Member State representatives, industry and civil society organisations so to ensure the final outcome would be a fair one.



### Monique Goyens – Director General, BEUC

In her [concluding remarks](#), Ms. Monique Goyens spoke about the frustration that consumers face when discovering that their vehicles cannot achieve the fuel consumption performance advertised by car makers. She talked about BEUC's Flagship Campaign on fuel consumption testing and the number of BEUC members from across Europe who have worked to raise awareness of the issue of misleading commercial practices. She said it was essential that the WLTP is implemented by 2017 and that further changes are needed to the EU's car labelling Directive to ensure consumers benefit from the new data. She also said that the EU needs to act in advance of the Paris COP21 climate change conference to give the assurance to other countries that the EU takes its carbon targets seriously.

## Outlook

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The event highlighted a range of existing weaknesses with the testing of a car's fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions performance. On the back of the event's discussions, it is clear that further efforts are needed to ensure that the new test protocol, the WLTP, is adopted under EU regulation by the end of 2015 in order to allow for it to become operational by 2017. It is also important for the European Commission to consider developing an adjustment factor for test results (as is the case in the US), as stakeholders recognised that WLTP results will still differ on average with fuel consumption figures achieved by motorists. Further action will also be needed to ensure that market surveillance aspects related to the testing are shored up, including the need for Europe wide in-service conformity testing. Stakeholders agreed that achieving comparable stringency with existing NEDC based CO<sub>2</sub> targets for passenger vehicles must be assured and that unreasonable flexibilities in the existing testing protocol should not be exploited when adjusting car maker targets. It was also highlighted that when the WLTP is made operational that consumers also deserve more relevant information and for it to be provided in a more easy-to-understand manner. This would in turn require reforming the EU's Car Labelling Directive.

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