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Four years after Dieselgate: still no compensation for most consumers

Four years after the US Environmental Protection Agency reported that Volkswagen had used 'defeat device' software to meet air pollutant emissions standards, European consumers are still left empty-handed.

On this fourth 'anniversary', The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) has published a [report](#) about activities that consumer organisations across the EU have taken to get justice for consumers who were misled by Volkswagen's fraudulent practices. The report also covers the actions and omissions of national and EU institutions. Finally, it looks at what needs to happen to correct the current huge flaws in public and private enforcement in Europe.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, comments:

"It is incomprehensible that consumers are still facing an uphill battle to get compensated for having been sold a car which should not have been put on the market in the first place. Wherever possible, consumer groups have launched court actions to get compensation for consumers. But because of inadequate legal systems and Volkswagen's stalling tactics, consumers are still left empty-handed after four years.

"At least EU policy-makers did wake up to the challenge. New EU-wide car licencing rules foresee a check on national authorities which, in many cases, turned a blind eye to the car industry's scheming. And a draft law proposed last year could lead to all Member States establishing collective redress in their country. This would greatly improve the possibility for consumers to join forces and get compensation for having been lied to.

"Those who had hoped Dieselgate would be also a wake-up call for the car industry have been proven wrong. Scandals are continuing to pile up. The failure of the industry to compensate consumers and help affected car drivers is evidence that they have not assumed responsibility for the health, economic and environmental consequences of their actions."

The report highlights among other things:

- That the VW emission affair is a failure of our public and private enforcement systems.
- The different group and other court actions that consumer organisations, in countries where the legal system permits it, undertook in court to claim compensation for European consumers.
- That with the noticeable exception of Italy and The Netherlands, national consumer authorities have not held Volkswagen to account.
- That the VW scandal was a trigger for a proposal by the Commission to introduce collective redress in all EU Member States. (The proposal is however stalled because many Member States are reluctant to change their current systems.)

ENDS

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