

Addressed to:

Donald Tusk
President of the European Council

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Martin Schulz
President of the European Parliament

Monday, 09 November 2015

Concerns: Dieselgate - EU action to protect citizens from air pollution and the manipulative and fraudulent behaviour of carmakers

Dear President,

We write in connection with the revelations and wider implications of the dieselgate emissions scandal and to express our objections to recent decisions to more than double the emission limits for cars tested on the road. Volkswagen – and very likely other companies – have intentionally misrepresented and manipulated data for years to undercut standards which were put in place to protect our health and the environment.

NGOs and other experts have repeatedly warned about major flaws in the way national and EU institutions test, monitor and enforce compliance with emission standards. National and European institutions have also been aware of the problem for years.

The scandal is symptomatic of a 'better regulation' agenda in favour of cutting compliance costs and replacing the role of the public regulator with corporate co- and self-regulation. Over the past decade, this approach has favoured a climate in which rules that protect the public interest are considered as burdens rather than investments. Yet, the dieselgate scandal, caused by a will to cut compliance costs, shows that the human and economic consequences of weak rules and lenient enforcement of environmental laws are enormous. Over 400,000 people die prematurely each year in Europe because of polluted air.

This requires a fundamental re-think of the way in which European and national institutions, including the European Commission, legislate and enforce environmental, consumer and health standards, and engage with vested interests. Specifically, the EU must urgently improve its capacity to protect European citizens from air pollution and the fraudulent behaviour of companies, and reorient the better regulation agenda.

The European car industry has been successfully flexing its lobbying muscles for decades: in the mid-90s it lobbied against binding CO₂ emissions targets, instead proposing a voluntary scheme. Unsurprisingly, the scheme failed. Binding emission limits were introduced a decade later, and yet again carmakers lobbied successfully to have the limits watered down. The same failures are now being repeated in relation to emission standards for lorries and in current negotiations on testing regimes and car type approval.

As a major EU lobbyist, Volkswagen has for a long time benefited from privileged access and a significant influence on the policy process, also thanks to its membership of five Commission advisory groups, and industry lobby group ACEA (Association des Constructeurs Européens d'Automobiles).

The impact of corporate lobbying on air quality is not limited to the automobile industry. For instance, in April, NGOs highlighted the systematic infiltration by the energy industry of EU regulatory processes to set emission standards for power plants. The consequence is that EU emission limits for coal plants are likely to fall behind existing standards in China and the United States.

We therefore urge you, your institutions and national governments to take immediate action to respond to the dieselgate scandal. We call on you to:

- 1. Undertake an immediate, independent and transparent EU-level investigation into the dieselgate scandal**, including a full review of the rules and regulatory mechanisms that failed to prevent Volkswagen's manipulations, excessive emissions, and misuse of public funds. The investigation should also compile and interpret the findings of all national authorities and prosecutors on the fraudulent behaviour of Volkswagen and, if relevant, other car-makers.
- 2. Establish EU oversight in the process of type approval for motor vehicles.** The existing procedure whereby national agencies oversee and undertake EU-wide type approval has failed.
- 3. Strengthen the enforcement of environmental legislation at EU and Member State level**, including by equipping public environmental inspectorates with the mandate and powers to protect public health and the environment and improving market surveillance under the recently-unveiled internal market strategy.
- 4. Ensure that fraudulent companies are suspended from the EU lobby register until it has been demonstrated that they comply with EU law**, and consequently decline meetings between the companies and the EU institutions unless the meeting directly concerns an investigation. Volkswagen's membership in Commission expert groups and advisory bodies should also be suspended.

We will closely monitor progress in all four areas and look forward to hearing from you about the actions you and your institution will take.

For any further correspondence, please contact:

Jorgo.Riss@greenpeace.org; +32 (0)2 274 19 07; Greenpeace, Rue Belliard 199, 1040 Brussels

Yours sincerely,

Angelo Caserta
Regional Director
BirdLife Europe

Petr Hlobil
Campaigns Director
CEE Bankwatch Network

Wendel Trio
Director
Climate Action Network Europe

Patti Lynn
Executive Director
Corporate Accountability International

Olivier Hoedeman
Coordinator
Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)

Jerome Chaplier
Coordinator
European Coalition for Corporate Justice

Jeremy Wates
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau

Nina Renshaw
Secretary-General
European Public Health Alliance

Geert Decock
Director EU Affairs
Food & Water Europe

Magda Stoczkiewicz
Director
Friends of the Earth Europe

Pietro Emili
Director
Maison du Peuple d'Europe

Will Dinan
Director
Spinwatch

Chantal Van den Bossche
Communications Manager
**WECF International
(Women in Europe for a
Common Future)**

Dr. Andreas Missbach
Head of Commodities, Trade and
Finance Department
Joint Managing Director
Berne Declaration

András Lukács
President
**Clean Air Action Group
Hungary**

Reinhard Uhrig
Head of Campaigns
**GLOBAL 2000 / Friends of the
Earth Austria**

Nelke Manders
Acting Director
**Milieudefensie/Friends of the
Earth Netherlands**

Senka Vrbica
Head of environmental dep.
**Pravno-informacijski center
nevladnih organizacij – PIC
(Legal-info centre for NGOs
Slovenia)**

Klaus Heidel
Werkstatt Ökonomie e.V.

Jorgo Riss
Director
Greenpeace European Unit

Andrea Lichtenecker
Executive Director
Naturefriends International

Sol Trumbo Vila
Project Co-ordinator EU Economic
Governance Project
Transnational Institute

Geneviève Pons-Deladrière
Director
WWF European Policy Office

Natasa Crnkovic,
President
**Center for Environment/FoE
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Francisco Segura Castro
Coordinador
**Confederación de Ecologistas en
Acción**

Jelena Berkovic
Executive Director
GONG (Croatia)

Paul Polfer
Board member
**Mouvement Ecologique
(Luxembourg)**

Bertrand Sansonnens
International coordinator
**Pro Natura / Friends of the Earth
Switzerland**

Conan Connolly
Environment & Climate Justice
Activist
**Young Friends of the Earth
Ireland**

Genon K. Jensen
Executive Director
Health & Environment Alliance

Jonathan Gray
Director of Policy and Research
Open Knowledge

Jos Dings
Director
European Federation for
Transport and Environment

Doz. Dr. Hanns Moshhammer
Co-Chair AeGU & Head of Inst.
**Austrian Doctors for the
Environment (AeGU, ISDE) &
Institute for Environmental
Health, Medical Uni. of Vienna**

Alain Braillon M.D.,Ph.D.
Chief of Alcohol Treatment Unit
University Hospital

Kjeld A. Larsen
chairman
**Council for Sustainable
Transportation**

M.R. Rutgers MSc
Managing Director
Longfonds
(Lung Foundation, Netherlands)

Raluca Mănăilă
President
**EAPN Romania / Rețeaua
Națională Antisăracie - Includere
Socială (Renasis)**
Executive Manager
**Romanian Association of Human
Resources Specialists (AUR)**

Bernard Ivčić
President
**Zelena akcija
Friends of the Earth Croatia**

New signatories since 9 November:

Jeannot Mersch
President

**European Federation of Road
Traffic Victims (FEVR)**

Dan Smyth
Chair

European Lung Foundation

Prof. Bert Brunekreef
Chair of the Environment and
Health Committee

European Respiratory Society

Marie-Bernard Lefebvre-Dumont
Présidente

**Fédération Française Union
Touristique les Amis de la Nature
(FFUTAN)**

Konstantine Foteinakis
President

Naturefriends Greece

Ron Manuel
Directeur

Nivon Natuurvrienden





Fédération Européenne des Victimes de la Route
European Federation of Road Traffic Victims



ELF EUROPEAN
LUNG
FOUNDATION



ERS EUROPEAN
RESPIRATORY
SOCIETY

every breath counts



Fédération Française
Union Touristique
Les Amis de la Nature



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΔΙΚΤΥΟ
NATUREFRIENDS GREECE
ΦΙΛΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΦΥΣΗΣ

