

Addressed to:

Donald Tusk  
President of the European Council

Jean-Claud 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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**

