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News | 16.06.2016

EMIS hearing 16 June 2016

Ms Dorothee Saar, Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) German authorities still reluctant to confront car manufacturers

On Thursday 16th June the Committee of inquiry into Emission Measurements in the Automotive Sector (EMIS) heard Dorothee Saar as a witness. She is the head of the division for transport and air quality at the German environmental non-governmental organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH). Ms Saar stated that her organisation had since 2007 repeatedly informed the German authorities of the growing gap between car emissions of in the test cycle and under normal driving conditions - regarding both CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and NO_x (nitrogen oxides). They had also warned that illegal defeat devices might be the cause of this problem and asked the authorities to conduct their own tests in order to find the cause of the discrepancies. Despite stating that they were well aware of the problem described by the DUH, the German authorities did not start testing the cars in question until after the diesel scandal broke in September 2015. But even now since the ministry has found indications for the use of defeat devices in many models from different manufacturers tested, Ms Saar still sees a reluctance of German authorities to confront car manufacturers and ensure full compliance with EU legislation. The DUH had suspected the use of defeat devices for several years, which makes it hard to believe, in the view of Ms Saar, that none of the experts at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) suspected this practice when they found emissions discrepancies in the cars they tested in 2010. During the hearing it became clear that both the European Commission as well as at least the German authorities should have further investigated the issue as there were clear indications of emissions fraud.

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