

## France slams EU delay in tougher auto pollution tests

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A measuring hose for emissions inspections in the exhaust tube of a Volkswagen Golf 2.0 TDI diesel car at a garage in Frankfurt an der Oder, eastern Germany, on October 1, 2015

France sharply criticised on Monday the years it has taken the EU to implement auto pollution tests that are to replace the easily riggable lab tests exposed by the Volkswagen diesel car scandal.

Speaking after EU talks in Luxembourg, French Environment Minister Segolene Royal urged her counterparts to swiftly approve tests carried out during real driving conditions that are considered far more effective in measuring pollution.

"I had the chance to deplore the fact that for so many years there have been so many obstacles to match the conformity tests done in laboratories to those done in real driving conditions," France's Royal said at a news briefing.

Royal said the delay "had dragged on too long" especially just weeks ahead of December's UN climate conference in Paris, where "Europe must set an example".

One of the biggest scandals in automotive history came to light in September after German carmaker Volkswagen admitted to US authorities it had fitted 11 million of its vehicles with software designed to cheat the laboratory checks.

The EU's member states in 2013 formally approved the use of real-driving tests that would have blocked such cheating, but have become bogged down over how quickly the new system should be implemented.

At issue is how long [car](#) companies have to fully comply with EU limits on nitrogen oxide pollution by diesel cars as measured by the real driving tests.

A proposal by the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, gives car companies until 2019 to fully comply and implement the tests.



French Ecology Minister Segolene Royal addresses lawmakers during a session of questions to the government at the National Assembly on October 20, 2015 in Paris

During the intervening four years, approval would be granted to cars even if the real driving emissions are up to 60 per cent higher than the emission standards currently in place.

The commission calls their proposal "realistic", but nonetheless, sources told AFP that powerful member state Germany, as well as Spain and Italy, were opposing it, drawing activist anger.

"Governments like Germany's must rise from under the wheels of the car lobby to put air quality before big business," Greenpeace energy

expert Jiri Jerabek said.

But the auto industry warns that adopting tighter tests too quickly would hurt manufacturers and cost jobs.

Not having "realistic timeframes and conditions... could have repercussions upon consumer choice as well as employment in the wider automotive sector," the ACEA car lobby said in statement earlier this month.

According to ACEA, the auto sector is responsible for about 12 million jobs across the EU.

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