

# EU lawmakers back diesel test loopholes despite VW scandal

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EU lawmakers wave through plans to allow diesel car makers to exceed pollution limits, in a big victory for the auto industry after the Volkswagen scandal

EU lawmakers on Wednesday waved through plans to allow diesel car makers to exceed pollution limits, in a big victory for the auto industry after the Volkswagen scandal.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the EU's 28 member

states, announced the new limits in October as the VW scandal raged, part of plans to adopt more realistic pollution monitoring based on real road conditions instead of laboratory tests.

But the proposals contained major loopholes for car-makers that were negotiated secretly by experts from member states, angering environmentalists who reacted with a major push to block the new limits at the European Parliament.

MEPs voted 323 in favour of leaving the loopholes—known as "conformity factors"—with 317 MEPS voting against them. There were 60 abstentions.

The commission has been accused of ignoring evidence that Germany's Volkswagen was massively cheating to pass pollution tests, a revelation made by US regulators.

It said in an email that it welcomed parliament's green light, hailing it as a much needed transition to tougher "real-driving" pollution tests.

"By better reflecting the actual level of emissions in real driving conditions, these tests will reduce the net amount of air pollution emitted by diesel cars," commission spokeswoman Lucia Caudet said in an email.

The commission said Wednesday that a raft of reforms announced last week would tighten the screws on pollution.

Europe's auto industry, which employs 12 million people, insisted the new limits were unprecedented.

"This regulation will be a major challenge for the industry, with new and more stringent testing standards that will be extremely difficult to reach

in a short space of time," said Erik Jonnaert, head of the Brussels-based car lobby ACEA .

"However automobile manufacturers welcome the much-needed clarity, and are eager to move forward by implementing the new testing conditions as soon the regulation is adopted," he said.

Under the commission's plan, from September 2017 new diesel models would be allowed to exceed the EU's official nitrogen oxide limit by more than double.

From 2020, the discrepancy would fall to 50 percent more than the limit, indefinitely.

Legal experts at the European Parliament had argued ahead of the vote that the allowances were illegal.

"It is intolerable to learn that after the Volkswagen scandal, the member states and the commission conceded to the sirens of the [auto industry](#) in allowing it to exceed European anti-[pollution](#) limits," said MEP Karima Delli of the Greens group.

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