

Dutch foundation launches 'Dieselgate' action against VW in France

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Fresh clouds gathering for VW

A Dutch foundation said Thursday it had launched a "joint action" in France against carmaker Volkswagen as part of a European bid for damages for millions of car owners duped in an emissions cheating

scheme.

The Diesel Emissions Justice Foundation (DEJF) had already initiated similar actions in the Netherlands and Belgium, and is now turning its attention to France where it says nearly 950,000 cars were impacted by the "dieselgate" scandal, out of 8.5 million in Europe.

Volkswagen admitted in 2015 it had intentionally programmed software in more than 11 million cars to cheat emissions tests between 2009 and 2015 by activating emissions controls only during testing. During regular driving, the cars emitted 10 to 40 times as much pollution.

The scandal has cost Volkswagen more than \$33 billion in [legal fees](#), fines and compensation, mainly in the United States.

On Wednesday, a court in Canada ordered the German carmaker to pay a fine of \$150 million after it pled guilty to violating environmental laws.

It had already forked over \$87 million in Australia, and has started negotiations to settle a massive lawsuit launched by hundreds of thousands of German drivers.

"Volkswagen has admitted its mistake. This should lead it to compensate consumers," Maria Jose Azar-Baud of the DEJF told journalists in Paris.

The foundation will proceed in two steps: first with a letter seeking negotiations with Volkswagen, followed by [legal action](#) in France and other countries if this does not yield any result.

About a dozen actions launched so far in different European countries against Volkswagen could later merge into a single, joint campaign, said Azar-Baud.

Volkswagen told AFP on Thursday that no clients had been prejudiced as "all the cars can be used safely on the road".

"These cars continue to be driven every day by thousands of customers. All the necessary approvals are valid and well-established. For these reasons there is not, according to us, any legal basis for customer claims," a spokesman said.

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