



DUH claims immediate ban of the dangerous refrigerant R1234yf in MAC systems

Suspicion of strong influence on the EU Commission by Honeywell and DuPont –
DUH requests access to the files

Berlin, 30th of January 2014: The German NGO „Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.“ (DUH) accuses the EU-Commissioner for industry Antonio Tajani to ignore the proven safety risks of the refrigerant R1234yf in cars. DUH claims an immediate and Europe-wide ban of the substance, which releases high amounts of poisonous gas in case of fire. In a new fire test of DUH, harmful concentrations of hydrofluoric acid were measured. The environmental and consumer protection organisation made the test results immediately available to the scientific service of the European Commission, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and presented them on Friday the 24th of January at an expert consultation in Ispra, Italy.

„The EU-Commissioner for industry argues perfectly in favour of the interests of the chemical refrigerant companies DuPont and Honeywell. Contrary to the recommendation of the Federal Motor Transport Authority (KBA) Antonio Tajani refuses to conduct own safety tests with R1234yf. So the arguments and statements of the two patentees for R1234yf and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) can again be found in the publications of the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. That's why we made a formal request for access to the files, to check how close the ties of R1234yf manufacturers Honeywell and DuPont in Brussels with the responsible DG of the Commission really are,“ declares DUH-Executive Director Jürgen Resch.

Both the KBA report as well as the recent DUH test, have shown that under realistic scenarios, R1234yf may pose a significant risk. *A lethal concentration of 50ppm hydrofluoric acid is already achieved when a single car with R1234yf burns down in an approximately 1700 m² underground car park. If there is a fire with a 5kg container of R1234yf, such as it is commonly used in workshops, more than 17,000 m² are contaminated. The new German Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt must therefore take urgent action. This includes prohibiting the entry of R1234yf vehicles in underground car parks and a drastic tightening of safety regulations for workshops,“* comments the international transport advisor Axel Friedrich.

DUH also sees the car manufacturers being responsible for the recently initiated infringement procedure by the Commission and the escalation in the debate on refrigerant alternatives.

“Since 2008 we conducted three fire tests or accident simulations, which showed the extreme safety risks of the new chemical refrigerant. But only after Daimler carried out almost identical tests in autumn 2012, the car manufacturer turned away from the killer refrigerant R1234yf and returned to the extremely cheap, environmentally harmful and already banned R134a”, says Resch.

DUH supports the fastest possible implementation of the natural refrigerant CO₂. The NGO demands compensation payments for each newly licensed vehicle, which has been unlawfully filled with the climate damaging R134a since 2011. All car manufacturers who evade the EU MAC directive using a variety of tricks have to be called to account as well.

The compensation payment must not only compensate the climate damage and the competitive advantage through the use of relatively cheap R134a, but also provide a clear incentive for a rapid introduction of environmentally friendly and safe air conditioning systems using CO₂.

More information about the recent DUH fire test with R1234yf:
http://www.duh.de/uploads/media/DUH_fire_test_short_report_01.pdf

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