



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Exposed: Pan-European measurements by Deutsche Umwelthilfe show that authorities conceal true extent of air pollution across Europe**

- Air quality measurements show significantly higher nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution levels at 64 locations in Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Kosovo, Slovakia, and Romania than official data suggests
- Official measurement practices consistently violate EU law and hide the real extent of air pollution
- EU Commission must instruct an independent review of all official monitoring stations in Europe
- DUH demands immediate retrofitting of manipulated, dirty diesel vehicles instead of exporting them as used cars to Central and Eastern Europe

Berlin, 18.9.2024: The extent of air pollution caused by diesel exhaust gas nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Kosovo, and Romania is being systematically concealed by government authorities. This is demonstrated by 64 findings from over 300 air quality measurements taken by the non-governmental environmental and consumer protection organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) between 2022 and 2024, the results of which were published today. European law mandates that measurements must be carried out where the air pollution is expected to be highest. However, at 64 locations DUH and local partners found significantly higher NO<sub>2</sub> levels compared to data reported by authorities. Additionally, at 55 sites, NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were above the EU annual average limit of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which has been in force for over 14 years. DUH criticises that official monitoring stations are evidently positioned in breach of legal requirements away from pollution hotspots. Moreover, in certain cases, unsuitable measuring devices are being used.

DUH's Managing Director Jürgen Resch says: *“German Federal Transport Minister Volker Wissing is aiming to improve the air quality in Germany by promoting new cars while exporting fraudulent diesel cars affected by Dieselgate to Eastern and Central Europe. Instead of solving the problem of dirty diesel emissions, the minister is simply dumping it on our neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, local authorities are concealing the problem, while people in Eastern and Central Europe who are exposed to air pollution suffer the consequences. Every year, more than 142,000 people in the EU die prematurely due to exposure to the diesel exhaust gas NO<sub>2</sub>. We demand an independent review of all official monitoring stations in Europe to ensure the true extent of air pollution is finally brought to light for the general public. Dirty, manipulated diesel vehicles must be retrofitted at the manufacturers' expense, not dumped onto other countries as a cheap escape from responsibility.”*

#### **Background:**

The report presented today, titled “European Monitoring Station Check – Results of NO<sub>2</sub> Measurements Across Europe” with results from NO<sub>2</sub> measurements from 2022 to 2024, is part of

an ongoing measurement campaign that has been running since 2018. In this campaign, DUH supports local NGOs and initiatives across Europe in conducting NO<sub>2</sub> measurements. To date, over 5,000 NO<sub>2</sub> measurements have been conducted in 19 countries. The overarching aim is to gather evidence of the severe deficiencies in the official monitoring network of government authorities and to draw attention to issues prevalent across Europe.

The measurement method employing so-called “passive samplers” has been scientifically validated numerous times and is also used by government authorities, for example, in North Rhine-Westphalia. An overview of all measurement results can be viewed on a “NO<sub>2</sub> Air Pollution Map” at the following link: [www.duh.de/no2airpollution](http://www.duh.de/no2airpollution)

**Links:**

- Full Report 2022-2024: <https://l.duh.de/p240918>
- Full Report 2019-2022: <https://www.duh.de/abgasalarm/>

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