Adjustment Factor

Dear Reader,

Even engineers are sometimes caused to ponder when it comes to the contentious issue of CO₂ and NO_x emissions, which is being kept on the boil by the diesel scandal. At the Open House customer event organised by IPG Automotive, I had the opportunity during the break to follow an interesting discussion on adjustment factors. The technicians are vehemently warning that they need some kind of adjustment factor in the step from NEDC test stand measurements to real driving emissions to allow them to exceed the exhaust emissions limits at the tail pipe by a certain percentage in exceptional driving situations, such as steep hills, extreme heat or very cold conditions.

But are adjustment factors in Real Driving Emissions (RDE) a suitable solution at all? One of the participants in the discussion, a family man, asked – quite justifiably – why a child growing up near a mountain road in the Alps should endure a higher risk of dying from lung cancer than one living in the flat land of Northern Germany. Engineers thought too much in technical terms, he said. For him, the clearest and simplest rule would be that a car has to strictly comply with the same limit value in all conditions and at all times. That is revolutionary, but it is grass-roots thinking. The aim is to minimise damage to the environment caused by human beings in order to ensure that planet Earth remains habitable for future generations.

But it is not only road traffic that needs to be put to the test. Emissions also need to be significantly cut in sectors such as industry and households in all countries of the world. And it is often the small steps today that take us further – perhaps more than a future-oriented UN climate conference involving many nations. One example is given by the meteorologist and oceanographer Mojib Latif. According to IDW, Latif has

donated almost all of his prize money from the 2015 German Environmental Award to climate protection projects in Rwanda and Nepal. Via the climate protection organisation “Atmosfair”, almost 240,000 euros is being donated to provide efficient stoves in Rwanda and to support reconstruction work in Nepal after the devastating earthquake there. “It is important for me that the prize money is used to help people,” the Kiel-based scientist said. “And as the projects also help to reduce the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, the money has a double benefit – for the people and for the climate.” That is a positive adjustment factor and a strong signal for the protection of our planet.

Best wishes,

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