Facts Are Needed

Dear Reader,

the hot media topics of the year are without doubt “dieselgate” and predictions of the death of the combustion engine. The key features of the vast majority of the articles on these subjects are technical ignorance, a complete disregard for the facts and a smattering of superficial knowledge. The views that are being published are beginning to take on the appearance of a witch hunt. In Germany, it was recently reported on radio news, on online news sites and on the TV programme Plusminus that the next scandal had arrived, because cars and motorbikes get louder the faster they travel, but the noise measurements are made at a speed of 50 km/h. It is fairly obvious that an engine becomes noisier as its load increases. Taking time to think and carrying out a quick test with their vacuum cleaner at home would have saved the originators of this “top news story” from the embarrassment of broadcasting trivia. In addition, vehicle noise comes mainly from tyres and air resistance and this is the same for electric cars, buses and trains. You don’t need to be a physicist to understand this. You just need to do some basic journalistic research.

In public discussions about the combustion engine, the suggestion has been made that it will be obsolete within 10 or a maximum of 20 years. This conveniently ignores the fact that neither the energy transition nor the transport transition have made nearly enough progress to allow everyone to use electric transport at a reasonable environmental cost. For example, McKinsey estimates that emissions from electricity generation will increase as Germany moves away from nuclear power and even the German green automobile club VCD believes that electric cars will mainly be used in company fleets in the next few years and recommends that private customers opt

for hybrid models. The German Berlin-Brandenburg electric mobility interest group has calculated that an average electric car with an annual electricity consumption of 12 to 16 kWh/100 km emits 60 to 80 g CO₂/km, and a Tesla Model S as much as 100 g/km. This is within the same range as the latest hybrid cars.

For these reasons, we need synthetic fuels to be introduced onto the market as quickly as possible to ensure that our economy continues to flourish. ATZ provides comprehensive, factual, expert information on the subject of mobility. After focusing on the future of the combustion engine in our last issue, we are now taking a realistic approach to the relative positioning of electric and hybrid cars, for example in our interview with Professor Peter Gutzmer, Schaeffler. You can look forward to future issues where we will continue to provide a knowledgeable counterbalance to the discussions taking place in other public arenas.

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