

Ispra, 10th June 2016

NOTE TO THE ATTENTION OF
MR A. ITALIANER
SECRETARY GENERAL EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Subject: **What can we learn from the "Dieselgate" scandal?**

Dear Mr Italianer,

We welcomed the interest you have shown in the JRC with your address to staff this week. The reorganisation that prompted your invitation by Mr Šucha is the first step in the implementation of the JRC Strategy 2030 that has the laudable aim of cementing the role of the JRC as an essential part of the Commission's policy-making processes.

We noted that you made reference to the ongoing so-called "Dieselgate" scandal that has made headlines world-wide. We are pleased you did so, as we imagine that this issue concerns you as much as it concerns us: the health of EU citizen's [is being put at risk](#), the European regulatory system on emissions risks [losing credibility with the public](#) and it is currently being [investigated within the EP](#). Meanwhile - somewhat ironically perhaps - the good news is that Volkswagen is apparently well placed to become the [global number-one](#) car manufacturer by volume this year.

As a Trade Union representing all EC staff, and JRC personnel in Ispra and Seville in particular, we want to communicate to you our - and your - colleagues' concerns about the downside risks of this issue to the reputation of both the Commission and its essential in-house science service. Despite the [unfortunate backdrop](#), we are convinced that JRC scientific and support staff have performed their jobs impeccably on this highly complex issue – as indeed they do in all the fields of work they are tasked with. The JRC's scientific work on this topic has been widely [reported positively](#), and it is unfortunate that despite this, [the Commission's overall performance is being viewed in a less than positive light](#).

As the most senior civil servant of the Commission, at the nexus of the political and the executive, you must understand more than us the political compromises that form part of the crafting of all legislation: the often competing needs of creating jobs and maintaining livelihoods balanced against the health and welfare of the community as a whole. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the mission of the JRC to support EU policies with independent evidence throughout the whole policy cycle, we expect that your colleagues' expertise and commitment is taken into due consideration at all stages of the policy-making cycle, while we recognise that the ultimate responsibility for political decisions lies with the Member States and the EP.

Now and in the future, the JRC's staff - from humble scientist to most senior management - must be free to fully express their factual findings and be truly independent from undue political lobbying pressures from both within and outside the Commission. With the approval of the JRC Strategy 2030 the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to evidence-based policy design, and we request that the Secretariat-General, *primus inter pares*, fully fulfils its key role to break down silos and ensure the JRC mission is entirely fulfilled and its staff is duly defended.

We look forward to hearing from you soon,

Robert Kenny
R&D Ispra

Paola Di Pietrogiacomio
R&D Seville

Cristiano Sebastiani
R&D Brussels

Cc: Mr V. Šucha
Ms M. Rute