

“Dieselgate” prompts fury at Renault

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Thierry Bolloré, Chief Competitive Officer

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW – Second-in-command at Renault and chief competitive officer Thierry Bolloré says he is “shocked” by the accusations made against the carmaker. He denies that there has ever been any cheating software installed in the group’s cars.

On Wednesday, *Libération* and *AFP* published extracts from the report of the French agency in charge of ensuring fair trade and competition and fraud prevention (DGCCRF), based on which preliminary legal investigations were commenced against X by the Paris public prosecutor. This inquiry was opened in reaction to the scandal involving Volkswagen, which has admitted having fitted its cars with cheating software aimed at falsifying emissions tests.

***Le Figaro* - The DGCCRF report, from which a number of elements were made public on Wednesday, looks damning for Renault. Do you maintain that Renault has not cheated in terms of polluting emissions?**

Thierry Bolloré - Renault in no way whatsoever deserves the treatment it has been subjected to in recent hours. We are shocked, upset and quite frankly furious. There are false allegations being made against our company, based on elements in a report we cannot even access. I have already said this and I repeat it once again: Renault has not cheated or deceived anyone. We cannot be compared to a certain carmaker. Renault totally respects its customers, representatives and regulators, both national and international. And, of course, Renault has always complied with – and continues to comply with – all standards in force. These are unfounded allegations and the figures being bandied around make no sense at all.

According to AFP however, the conclusions of the DGCCRF report are based on the testimony of a former employee that referred to the existence of “cycle detection systems” aimed at falsifying tests.

This is not true. Renault cars have never been fitted with systems of this kind and there has never been any cheating software. Let’s be serious about this. Legal proceedings are underway and we will await the conclusions. But, for the time being, these outrageous accusations are seriously harming the reputation of Renault.

Do you believe these claims are intended to harm Renault or Carlos Ghosn, who is specifically named in the report?

I have no idea. But, I am upset to read reports that there is no delegation of power at Renault. This is clearly false.

Nevertheless, Renault has not been a model pupil in terms of real-driving emissions

Since mid-2015, we have been aware that we could do better, notably in nitrogen oxide emissions. But we were conservative in our approach for a long time due to serious powertrain problems between 2005 and 2010, notably with engine failures.

We have therefore set up a progress plan involving heavy investments and we have been transparent about these with the authorities. This has resulted in a doubling of the temperature range in which our anti-pollution systems can fully function. We have also reviewed the manner in which the NOx Trap parameter works. Consequently, we are frontrunners in terms of pollution control. And this is recognized by the authorities.