

# VW emissions rigging decisions made before Winterkorn was CEO, German minister says

Automaker will start naming people responsible, report says



Winterkorn says he was not aware of any wrongdoing.

## Staff report Automotive News

September 24, 2015 - 5:50 am ET

MUNICH -- The decisions that led to the Volkswagen's emissions scandal were made before Martin Winterkorn became CEO, a top German minister said.

Winterkorn, who resigned as VW Group CEO on Wednesday, was taking responsibility for decisions made before he was appointed CEO in 2007, German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said.

"I have great respect for his decision. He is taking responsibility for something that happened when he was not chief executive of Volkswagen but rather at Audi,"

<http://www.autonews.com/article/20150924/COPY01/309249943/vw-emissions-rigging-decisions-made-before-winterkorn-was-ceo-german>

Gabriel said on the sidelines of the Frankfurt auto show on Wednesday.

Members of the steering committee of VW Group's supervisory board also said Winterkorn did not know about the software manipulation to cheat U.S. diesel emissions tests.

Lower Saxony President Stephan Weil, a committee member, told a German television station that he believed Winterkorn's statement that he knew nothing of the diesel tests manipulation. "Other members also believed him," Weil told ARD.

Winterkorn resigned on Wednesday, saying in a **statement** that he was taking responsibility for the automaker's rigging of U.S. emissions tests "even though I am not aware of any wrong doing on my part." In a **separate statement**, the steering committee's statement said it "notes" Winterkorn had no knowledge of the manipulation of emissions data.

Reuters today reported that VW will start naming people responsible for the manipulations of emissions tests on Friday when Winterkorn's successor will also be announced.

Winterkorn, 68, led a turnaround at VW Group and its 12 brands that include Audi, Porsche, Bentley, Skoda and Seat. In the first half the group passed Toyota Motor as the world's largest automaker by unit sales.

But he was unable to resist pressure to quit after it emerged that 11 million cars globally have diesel engines with what VW called software "irregularities." The scandal has wiped 25 billion euros off the automaker's market capitalization and forced the company to set aside 6.5 billion euros in the third quarter to cover the costs of addressing the issue. VW is also facing penalties of up to \$18 billion in the U.S.

Analysts questioned how Winterkorn, whose focus on details is legendary in the industry, could have let something go so awry. "Winterkorn either knew of proceedings in the U.S. or it was not reported to him," Evercore ISI analyst Arndt Ellinghorst wrote in a note to investors.