

INTERVIEW

Tough, but fair

Over the past months, it has seemed that the fate of the company would be decided in the United States. Dr. Francisco J. Garcia Sanz is leading the negotiations.

Dr. Garcia, how would you describe the atmosphere during your negotiations with the US authorities?

Our first meetings with the EPA and CARB were tough, but constructive. I can't and don't want to go into the details. This much I can say, though: it became evident to us that the Americans viewed our misconduct as especially serious. We apologized on behalf of the Volkswagen Group and signaled our desire to make up for what happened. But it will surely take some time before we're seen as an altogether trustworthy partner again in the United States.

Did you ever doubt that the intended settlement would be reached?

To be honest, I wasn't always certain a settlement with so many parties would be possible. In the final phase, negotiations lasted into the early morning hours. We had two months of hard work behind us, with an excellent team that included external consultants and lawyers. It was important to me to be available to everyone at all times. You can't resolve this kind of problem alone.

Did the Management Board weigh the possibility of a complete withdrawal from the US market?

We discussed many different scenarios, but this one was quickly shelved. The Americans have made clear to us that they don't want to chase us off. On the contrary, they want us to play a major future role as an engine of electromobility in the US. Besides, they really admire our factory in Chattanooga, which

serves as a model of resource efficiency and the dual training system.

Consumer advocacy organizations in the EU are pointing to the US deal and demanding equal treatment for European customers ...

We've been in dialogue with consumer advocates for months now. I went to Brussels myself to inform Consumer Commissioner Jourová about our technical measures, the vehicle-servicing process and the benefits to our customers. The cars are being modified so that they meet exhaust emissions and all other legal requirements without compromising standards in fuel consumption, CO₂ emissions, acoustics, or driving quality. Our customers rightfully expect these technical improvements. But there is no basis for further claims.

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The diesel affair is going to be expensive enough as it is. Will the company be able to handle the costs?

The financial burden is indeed high, and we've made provisions for it. Of course, it's painful to have to use money for this that we'd much rather invest in future technologies and new business models. But Volkswagen is a strong and resilient company. With strict spending discipline,

we will meet the challenge.

When will you and the diesel task force be able to conclude your work?

The end isn't yet in sight, but we're fighting on. The company, our employees, their families and everyone who's counting on us are worth it.



Dr. Francisco J. Garcia Sanz, 59, Member of the Board of Management with responsibility for Procurement since 2001. The Spanish-born executive has headed the diesel task force since December 2015 and is leading negotiations for Volkswagen in the United States.