

Case study for the EEB 2025 – Semi-final A

THE GREEN MIRAGE

In 2025, EcoMotiv, a European electric vehicle company, is celebrated as a sustainability pioneer. Its CEO often claims that “every kilometre driven is a step toward a greener planet.” The firm’s stock price soars after its latest “zero-emission” model receives EU environmental certification.

Months later, an anonymous whistleblower—an engineer in EcoMotiv’s R&D department—leaks internal emails and lab data suggesting that the company’s battery production emits far more greenhouse gases than reported. The data also show evidence of improper disposal of toxic byproducts in a subcontracted plant outside the EU.

EcoMotiv’s management insists the discrepancies result from “different measurement standards” and argues that releasing full details could harm competitiveness and investor confidence. The company launches an internal review but keeps the findings confidential, citing pending legal evaluations.

The whistle-blower, fearing retaliation, contacts an investigative journalist, who begins publishing excerpts from the leaked data. Public outrage grows. Governments and investors demand explanations, while employees—many of whom joined EcoMotiv for its environmental mission—are torn between loyalty and disillusionment.

Meanwhile, some European policymakers privately admit that exposing EcoMotiv’s misconduct could damage public trust in the EU’s green transition goals. They debate whether to suppress the report temporarily until corrective measures are in place.

The situation now hangs between corporate transparency, governmental discretion, and public right to know.

Please touch upon the following ethical dilemmas:

- Should EcoMotiv disclose the full environmental impact of its production process, even if this leads to financial collapse, job losses, and loss of public confidence in green technologies?
- Should investors divest immediately upon learning of the potential misconduct, or wait for verified results of the internal investigation?
- Should the EU authorities conceal or delay publication of EcoMotiv’s violations for the sake of broader sustainability goals, or support the whistleblower’s disclosure as a moral duty to inform citizens?