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ACEA President Dieter Zetsche calls for smart industrial policy to cement a sustainable Europe

Brussels, 23 February 2010 – Dieter Zetsche, President of ACEA and Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler, has made the case for a new spirit of cooperation among politics, economy and society to make real progress towards a sustainable Europe.

‘The imperative for a sustainable Europe is an innovative, competitive industrial base and it is positive to see this recognised so prominently in the European Commission’s Vision 2020. Competitiveness is the cornerstone of sustainability’, said Zetsche in his welcoming speech at the ACEA annual reception today in Brussels.

“Now is the time to turn a page”, continued Zetsche. “Our industry stands at the threshold of a new era of sustainable mobility. We have a new European Commission and Parliament in place; we have a new consensus above party-lines that a sustainable industry needs a strong Europe and vice versa. And we have more common ground with our stakeholders than ever. I am optimistic that we can make real progress.”

Smart industrial policy aims to maintain Europe as an attractive area for innovation and manufacturing. Important elements of such policy are to promote research & development as well as the market introduction of breakthrough technologies; to reduce the cost of regulation and to maintain a level playing field in the EU. It also strives to enhance Europe’s competitiveness globally and to further liberalise trade relations in a fair and balanced way.

Outlook 2010

Reflecting on the difficult economic circumstances in 2009, Zetsche said that the recession had underlined once more how closely the fate of Europe and its automotive industry are intertwined, with the sector representing 35% of manufacturing employment in the EU. He acknowledged that governments have played a major role in counterbalancing the negative effects of the market crunch.

“When we look at 2010 there is no doubt that we have reached a turning point. Still we cannot count on a quick recovery”, said Zetsche. As the various fleet renewal schemes are phasing out, the industry expects a significant decrease in passenger car sales this year. Commercial vehicle registrations will at best be flat, after a 32% drop in 2009.

NB – The full speech made by Dieter Zetsche will be available on ACEA’s website.

About ACEA

The European automotive industry is key to the strength and competitiveness of the European economy. The ACEA members are BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler, FIAT Group, Ford of Europe, General Motors Europe, Jaguar Land Rover, MAN Nutzfahrzeuge, Porsche, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Renault, Scania, Toyota Motor Europe, Volkswagen and Volvo. They provide direct employment to more than 2.3 million people and indirectly support another 10 million jobs. Annually, ACEA members invest €26 billion in R&D, or 5% of turnover.

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