

Automobile industry leaders use UK visit to stress need for fair play in global drive for competitiveness

London, 9/06/2011 – The heads of the European automobile industry met with UK government officials yesterday and today in London to stress the importance of a strong manufacturing base underpinning innovation and economic growth in the UK and in Europe, and to underline the need for fair play in the global strive for competitiveness.

The Board of Directors of ACEA, the industry's European trade association, had meetings with Prime Minister David Cameron and Secretary of State for Business Vince Cable, among others, in connection with the association's Annual General Assembly taking place in London this year.

“We acknowledge the positive approach taken by the UK government towards automotive innovation”, said Dieter Zetsche, President on ACEA and Head of Daimler AG. “It is first and foremost the responsibility of the automobile manufacturers to ensure competitiveness, and we pursue that goal head-on. But some issue are beyond our reach, whereas governments do play an important role.”

The main issues on the agenda of the talks included the need for:

- fair free trade with major economies such as India and Japan;
- government support for the swift introduction of breakthrough technologies;
- less bureaucracy through lean regulations.

All three issues are key in obtaining a level playing field world wide.

The automobile industry is booking record sales on a global scale, mainly driven by growth in the BRIC countries. In Europe, however, the situation remains tight, not in the least in the segment of heavy-duty vehicles where sales are still significantly below pre-crisis levels. Despite the continuing economic uncertainties, technological progress remains the stronghold of the European automobile industry, with investments of over EUR 30 billion in R&D each year.

Said Zetsche: “Our industry must and will further ensure that our products are world class. What we ask from governments is to ensure that the game is fair. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that Europe prospers for a long time to come.”

About ACEA

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