European Automobile Manufacturers Association

ACEA

P r e s s R e l e a s e

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New EU member states promote integrated policy-making as the way forward to improving environmental protection and road safety

Six Central and Eastern European Countries pledged their support, today, for integrated policy-making with respect to automotive issues as the best way forward to further improve environmental protection and road safety and, at the same time, ensure the competitiveness of the sector in the EU. Government representatives of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania discussed the situation of the automotive industry today with the European Commissioners Günter Verheugen (Industry and Enterprise), Leonard Orban (Multilingualism) and automotive experts during a high-level seminar hosted by the Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU.

"The automotive industry is a major 'engine' of innovation and growth and, consequently a strategic priority for our economies. The EU has to work towards a supportive framework to increase the strength of one of its key industries', said Mihnea Ioan Motoc, Ambassador of Romania to the EU. "The current economical crisis only enhances the need to take holistic measures to secure automotive manufacturing in the EU, as well as making further progress in the fields of environment and safety", added Ivan Hodac, Secretary General of the automobile industry's trade association ACEA.

The New EU Member States host 17% of EU car production and this share is growing. The sector has a growing potential based on the global trend towards highly innovative and complex automotive products, in combination with the continuing market and geo-economical opportunities in the Eastern European region. However, the deteriorating economic circumstances in combination with the already high legislative pressure on the automotive industry have caused concern about the future prospects of the sector in the new EU member states. "We see an industry that is committed to produce clean, safe and affordable vehicles and wants to ensure further progress while maintaining manufacturing in Europe', said Motoc. "The EU must ensure that the upcoming CO2 legislation, in particular, is realistic and feasible."

A supportive framework should, therefore, consist of four important pillars: so-called 'better regulation', reciprocal trade relations, a € 40 billion low-interest loans package and market incentives, such as a scrapping scheme for older vehicles. "The EU can help sustain Research & Development and innovative product programmes, and take action to boost consumer confidence, stimulate the market and renew the EU car fleet", elaborated Hodac.

The six countries fully back an integrated approach towards environmental and safety policy, implying the involvement of vehicle manufacturers as well as the fuel industry, policy makers and drivers. "Romania will, for example, encourage the development of infrastructure for local production and availability of biofuels", explained Ambassador Motoc. "We will also improve our vehicle taxation system based on the experience acquired, with CO2 emissions as a key parameter. And our government will continue the Romanian Programme for car fleet renewal. In 2008, the 4th year of application, we allocated € 34 million from our State budget, and managed to take 40,000 older vehicles off the roads, to the benefit of both road safety and the environment."

The European automotive industry is key to the strength and competitiveness of Europe. The ACEA members are BMW Group, DAF Trucks, Daimler, FIAT, 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 support another 10 million jobs in related sectors. Annually, ACEA members invest €20 billion in R&D, or 4% of turnover.

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