

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 31 May

EU ministers state that auto industry must not be overlooked in CO₂ review

During the Competitiveness Council meeting on 29 May, EU industry ministers stated that legislation on CO₂ emissions from cars and vans must not threaten the competitiveness of the European automobile industry. ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association has welcomed that the issue of the competitiveness of the industry has been put to the fore of this debate and has called on the Council, European Parliament and Commission to take this strong message on board in their forthcoming negotiations. A note circulated by a Council delegation in advance of the meeting stated that "the EU's strategy to improve the fuel economy of new cars and vans is positive and helping vehicle technology to become more efficient, but future objectives for European car makers should be realistic and achievable to maintain industry competitiveness." The automobile sector accounts directly and indirectly for a major share of GDP in many European countries but today, however, the sector finds itself at a critical juncture, with sales of cars having plummeted 22% in Europe since 2007. Commenting on the statement, ACEA Secretary General Ivan Hodac stated: Any discussions on new regulatory requirements for the industry must reflect the current economic situation. Considering that most automobile manufacturers are losing money in Europe, the industry needs as supportive and competitive a regulatory framework as possible in order to retain its technological and environmental edge, and to keep production in Europe." Mr Hodac went on to note that the fact that Europe's legislation is more stringent than in other regions like US, Japan and South Korea creates a competitive disadvantage stating "The European automobile industry does not exist in a vacuum - it is a global player. Smarter regulation - accompanied by sound impact assessments - is needed to reinforce the automotive industry's competitiveness, and benefit the European economy as a whole." (Source: ACEA) http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/press_release_competitiveness_of_auto_industry_must_not_be_overlooked_in_co

European commercial vehicle registrations fall 3.6% in April

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, have shown that in April registrations of new commercial vehicles increased by 3.6%. This is the first increase in registrations since December 2011, and has mainly been sustained by demand for new vans, up 5.8%. Looking at the major markets, the UK significantly expanded (+29.5%), while Spain (+7.0%) and Germany (+3.7%) recorded more moderate growths. The French (-3.8%) and Italian (-20.2%) markets shrank. Four months into the year, only the UK posted growth (+11.3%), as downturn prevailed in France (-9.0%), Germany (-11.2%), Spain (-12.9%) and Italy (-23.9%). Overall, the EU registered 545,049 new vehicles, or 7.6% less than in the first four months of 2012.

(Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/commercial_vehicle_registrations_7.6_over_four_months_3.6_in_april



Transport Committee adopts roadworthiness report

The European Parliament Transport Committee has adopted rapporteur Werner Kuhn MEP's report on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers. The report seeks to improve and harmonise standards of roadworthiness testing throughout Europe. Changes from the original Commission proposal include the exemption of light

trailers with a maximum permissible mass of 2,000kg from the remit of the report, although light caravan trailers will still be included. Though seeking to promote harmonisation, the report's proposals will be based on minimum standards with member states allowed flexibility to have more stringent testing inspections. The plenary vote on the proposal is scheduled for July. The Transport Committee also adopted reports on the two other elements of the Roadworthiness package (roadside test inspections, and registration of vehicles) and also adopted an opinion on the fluorinated greenhouse gases proposal, due to be voted on by the Environment Committee in due course.

(Source: European Parliament)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/tran/home.html>



Commission welcomes agreement on new trans-European transport network

Siim Kallas, Commission Vice-President responsible for Transport, has welcomed the agreement between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament on proposals to transform the existing patchwork of European roads, railways, airports and canals into a unified transport network (TEN-T). The agreement establishes a core transport network to be created by 2030 to act as the backbone for transportation within the Single Market. Transport financing under the Connecting Europe Facility (for the period 2014–2020) will also focus on this core transport network, filling in cross-border missing links, removing bottlenecks and making the network smarter. The new core TEN-T network will be supported by a comprehensive network of routes, feeding into the core network at regional and national level. This will largely be financed by member states, with some EU transport and regional funding possibilities, including with new

innovative financing instruments. The aim is to ensure that progressively, and by 2050, the majority of Europe's citizens and businesses will be no more than 30 minutes' travel time from this comprehensive network. Taken as a whole, the new transport network aims to deliver safer and less congested travel as well as smoother and quicker journeys. This agreement, reached in trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, Council and European Commission, must be formally approved by the European Parliament Plenary and Council. Commenting on the announcement, Vice-President Kallas said: "This is a historic agreement to create a powerful European transport network across 28 Member States. This agreement will connect East with West and replace today's transport patchwork with a network that is genuinely European. This is a major step towards building a new transport network that will be the backbone to boost growth and competitiveness in Europe's Single Market."

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-478_en.htm?locale=en

Week ahead

European Commission

4 – 7 June

Green Week 2013

This year's theme for Green Week is air quality.

Green Week is the biggest annual conference on European environmental policy.

Council of Ministers

6-7 June

Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council

29/30 May: Competitiveness Council

European Parliament (Group week)

No relevant meetings