

Access to Vehicle Repair Information

On the road to a healthy environment, affordable mobility and strong SMEs in a competitive automotive aftermarket

'EURO 5'



AFCAR MEMBERS :

AIRC

Association Internationale
des Réparateurs en Carrosserie

CECRA

European Association of
Motor Trade and Repairs

EGEA

European Garage Equipment
Association

FIA

Fédération Internationale de
l'Automobile

FIGIEFA

European Federation of
Independent Automotive
Aftermarket Distributors

AFCAR

Alliance for the Freedom of Car Repair

The technical advances in emission control undeniably contribute to global environmental protection, but they also make vehicles more complex to repair. If the automotive aftermarket is denied standardised access to the vehicle on-board-diagnostic systems and to technical information, the repair market will be monopolised, and the cost of car ownership will soar.

With Euro 5, the time has come to enshrine access to repair information (**Open Reparability**) as a key feature of the requirements.

Eight Compelling Reasons to Support the 'Access to Repair Information' Clauses in 'Euro 5'

AFCAR calls upon the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers to maintain the current provisions on access to vehicle repair information and to support AFCAR's proposed amendments, with a particular focus on the introduction of the OASIS standard to aid repair document retrieval, because, together they:

Are good for consumers

Euro 5 and its Reparability Clauses provide 250 million motorists in the EU with the freedom of choice when it comes to the aftermarket care of their vehicles. They maintain effective competition in the after-sales market, without which Europe's vehicle owners would become 'captive consumers', forced to rely on the vehicle manufacturer as the exclusive supply source for parts and repair services.



Improve the proper functioning of the Internal Market

The Reparability Clauses facilitate the free circulation of vehicles in the Internal Market by ensuring that

they can be serviced at any time, at any place in Europe and at a workshop of the consumer's choice.

- **The Reparability Clauses help to complete the Internal Market of goods and services!**

Make the EU more competitive

The 'CARS 21' report of December 2005 formulated recommendations on how to increase the competitiveness of the automotive industry in the next 10 years. Effective access to technical information was stressed as *the* key-measure for improving the

competitiveness of the automotive *aftermarket*. A sound regulatory framework for the *entire automotive industry* must also take account of the companies operating in the market of vehicle replacement parts, servicing and repair.

- **The Reparability Clauses improve the competitiveness of the automotive aftermarket industry!**

Sustain jobs in the EU and support the development of SMEs

The automotive aftermarket is predominantly composed of small and medium-sized businesses. They provide the EU's 250 million motorists with real choice and they provide more than three million people with employment that is well distributed across

urban and rural environments throughout Europe. SME entrepreneurs form the backbone of Europe's independent and multibrand repair market and help to keep jobs in the EU, in contrast to the recent trend of outsourcing in global vehicle manufacturing.

- **The Reparability Clauses maintain jobs and a sound SME landscape in Europe!**



Promote entrepreneurship

The EU's current emission-related type-approval legislation (Directive 98/69/EC and Directive 2002/80/EC) presently includes important provisions on the availability of repair information and the 'compatibility' of replacement parts. For many years, both Directives have been the reference-legislation for the entrepreneurial activity of a variety of market players such as repair workshops, testing institutes, inspection centres, breakdown

assistances and diagnostic tool and parts producers.

As both Directives will be repealed by the new Euro 5 Regulation, it is consistent European law-making to maintain these provisions on effective aftermarket care. It would be most unfair to take away longstanding rights and to leave aftermarket entrepreneurs empty handed!



- **The Reparability Clauses offer a predictable and reliable regulatory framework for Europe's entrepreneurs!**

Apply the principles of 'Better Regulation'

A wide range of European legislation affects the market for vehicle replacement parts, servicing and repair. Coherence in aftermarket-related European law-making is therefore crucial.

The 'Euro 5' provisions on aftermarket care are complementary to the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation (EC) No. 1400/2002 ("BER"). The BER, by

its very nature, provides the general principles, whereas the 'Euro 5' Regulation adapts it to vehicle-specific technical requirements by providing specific standards, e.g. for the diagnostic connector, for fault codes, and for the test tool. The BER and the Euro 5 provisions are thus two sides of the same coin.

- **The Reparability Clauses complement the general competition rules of the Block Exemption Regulation!**

Produce tangible benefits for the environment

In order to ensure that vehicles conform to EU emission standards throughout their entire life-cycle, they require regular inspection and repair. Open 'reparability' is essential to maintain the functionality, safety and environmental compliance of vehicles. It is crucial that independent market operators have

unrestricted access to the on-board-diagnostic (OBD) systems and all technical information, replacement parts, tools, and equipment necessary to accurately diagnose, service and repair the vehicle. This is particularly important for carrying out remedial work associated with periodic inspection and testing.

- **The Reparability Clauses contribute to achieving the environmental goals of the European Union!**

Facilitate mobility

The mission of the automotive industry as a whole is not just to provide Europeans with new vehicles. It is to ensure mobility. From 'Day One' on the road, vehicles require maintenance, servicing and repair. Each year, 250 million motorists in the EU spend approximately 88 billion on parts and repair. Obtaining a good deal on replacement parts, maintenance and repair services can make all the difference between affordable and unaffordable mobility.

A competitive after-sales market, including services offered by independent operators, including road patrols who annually help millions of motorists, ensures that motorists can quickly and affordably recover their mobility in the event of a breakdown. Particularly in rural areas, where daily human activity is mostly dependent on road-based mobility, proximity and accessibility takes on a considerable importance.

- **The Reparability Clauses ensure affordable mobility and repair services in close proximity to consumers!**





And yet, a law, which is replete with good intentions, cannot be effective unless it works in practice!

Therefore, to solve the real problems in the repair business, the implementation of the OASIS standard is needed!

A study carried out in 2003 by the Institut für Kraftfahrwesen Aachen/Germany (ika) for the European Commission revealed considerable problems for multi-brand operators, because vehicle manufacturers tend to spread the repair information through different media and documentation structures:

- via Internet-based systems, where poor document search facilities result in repairers (and ultimately consumers) paying for information they do not need;
- on CDs and DVDs, where the information must be bought in a bundled package and is not always tailored to the repair job;
- through vehicle-manufacturer-specific diagnostic tools, which are prohibitively expensive;
- on paper, which does not always arrive in time for the job in hand;
- or via a combination of these media structures.

This causes considerable problems for multi-brand aftermarket operators when trying to obtain the relevant information. As a consequence, the repairer must frequently allow for considerable additional time and costs, and often the repair itself cannot be finalised on the premises of the multi-brand operator, or even not be carried out at all! Moreover the OBD-related information needed to produce generic diagnostic tools is in most cases, still not made available. This situation has not improved since 2003.

The 'ika Aachen' recommends the implementation of the 'OASIS standard', which was already developed in 2003 through an industry-wide expert group under the auspices of the European Commission. Standardising the search for the information through implementing the 'OASIS' specification (a sort of "Google" search engine) would make the availability of repair information a practical reality.

Since 2003, vehicle manufacturers have failed to voluntarily implement the OASIS standard.

This is why, the European Commission, after consultation of all stakeholders, decided that it is time to pass to a regulatory approach!

The European Parliament and the Council have a major role to play in designing a robust Regulation that protects the environment, upholds competition and gives consumers affordable choices in the aftermarket care of their vehicles!

AFCAR therefore calls upon the European Parliament and the Council:

To stand up for SMEs, the real backbone of the automotive sector, for a sustained improvement of the environment and for giving 250 million motorists affordable choices to help them to meet their environmental obligations!

Make a robust commitment to the OASIS standard within 'Euro 5'!

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