

“We Drive EU” campaign launched in Brussels to put Automotive Aftermarket at the heart of Europe’s industrial strategy

Brussels, 10 June 2026. The new Automotive Coalition for Europe officially launched its pan-European awareness campaign, “We Drive EU”, last night in Brussels, calling on EU policymakers to recognise the Automotive Aftermarket as a strategic pillar of Europe’s industrial future.

Gathering policymakers, industry leaders and stakeholders, the high-level event highlighted the essential role of the sector in strengthening Europe’s competitiveness, resilience, sustainability, and social cohesion at a pivotal moment for the EU’s automotive and industrial policy agenda.

Sylvia Gotzen, Chief Executive of FIGIEFA opened the event reminding the audience that, “representing a €236 billion market in parts and labour, the Automotive Aftermarket is a key economic force that ensures the continued operation of over 285 million vehicles across Europe, supporting 3.2 million jobs and 900,000 businesses throughout the continent.”

Speakers emphasised that a strong, innovative Aftermarket is indispensable to Europe’s industrial strength. By enabling the maintenance, repair and upgrade of vehicles throughout their lifecycle, the sector sustains innovation, supports a competitive market environment, and underpins the broader automotive ecosystem.

“However, there is no competitiveness without competition,” highlighted Stéphane Antiglio, President of Parts Holding Europe. “The MVBBER is absolutely essential for us. This regulation has to be maintained and reviewed to reflect technological change.”

Sustainability was also a central theme. By extending the lifespan of vehicles through repair, reuse and remanufacturing, the Automotive Aftermarket actively contributes to circular economy objectives, reducing waste and emissions while supporting Europe’s climate goals.

“We should not prematurely declare ‘end-of-life’ vehicles that can be repaired and extend their lifetime and therefore make a great sustainability contribution,” stressed Paulius Saudargas, Member of the European Parliament – EPP Group. “Also, with software-defined vehicles, we need interoperability and standardisation. The European Commission should continue working on that with the new platform.”

The discussion also underlined the sector’s critical contribution to resilience. During recent crises, the Automotive Aftermarket ensured the continuity of essential services and logistics, maintaining supply chains and keeping Europe moving. With the capacity to

provide components for more than 47,000 vehicle makes and models, the sector guarantees mobility across Europe, anywhere and anytime.

In that sense, Dr Mark Nicklas, Head of Unit Automotive, Mobility Industries, DG GROW, European Commission, explained how “our automotive policies will aim to support the competitiveness and resilience of the whole automotive ecosystem and the Automotive Aftermarket has an important role in that, as well as in delivering to consumers safe, sustainable and affordable vehicles.”

Alex Erdmann, Manager External Affairs at MAHLE, referred to the critical role of the sector for keeping Europe moving during external shocks: “for us, the Aftermarket is more than just a service channel. It is a profit motor during crisis.”

The event further highlighted the vital role of the Automotive Aftermarket in supporting local economies. Through a dense network of SMEs, distributors and workshops, the sector provides employment, drives regional development, and ensures access to mobility across urban, rural and remote areas.

Léa Dégardin, Director of European Affairs at Mobivia expressed that “without the Independent Automotive Aftermarket, Europe-based mobility would not work. And to ensure it does, we need to secure the ‘Right to Repair’ for vehicles.”

Thomas Aukamm, Managing Director of AIRC, added that “modern vehicle repairs increasingly depend on access to OEM repair information, vehicle data, parts coding and battery systems from day one. Independent repair shops have the expertise to repair these vehicles, but only if fair access to data and repair information is guaranteed.”

With 82% of inland passenger journeys made by car, speakers stressed the importance of maintaining affordable mobility for European citizens and businesses. The Aftermarket preserves consumer choice and ensures competitive repair markets, helping to keep repair and maintenance costs fair. This directly benefits consumers and supports other mobility stakeholders, including insurers, in keeping mobility accessible across the Union.

In this regard, Dr Daniel John, Head of the Actuarial Department for Non-Life Insurance, HUK-COBURG, pointed out that “keeping mobility affordable in Europe requires a holistic approach. It means ensuring vehicles are repairable, safeguarding a competitive Aftermarket, and guaranteeing access to in-vehicle data to support innovation in services such as repair and insurance.”

The “We Drive EU” campaign aims to ensure that the Automotive Aftermarket is fully integrated into EU policymaking, including the implementation of the Automotive Industrial Action Plan and ongoing legislative initiatives.

The Automotive Coalition for Europe called on EU institutions to adopt a full vehicle lifecycle approach, recognising that Europe’s competitiveness and sustainability goals cannot be achieved without empowering the ecosystem that keeps vehicles on the road.

Pierre Thibaudat, Director General of ADPA concluded that “Europe’s automotive future will not be secured by manufacturing alone. It will be sustained by the entire value chain — and the Automotive Aftermarket is the driving force within it.”

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