

AIRC – CECRA – EGEA – FIA – FIGIEFA to launch Right to Repair Campaign at Equip'Auto 2007

Paris, 16.10.2007. Automotive aftermarket and motorist representatives have launched today the Right to Repair Campaign at Equip'Auto to safeguard consumer choice and effective competition in the market for vehicle replacement parts, tools and equipment, servicing and repair.

“Vehicles are more and more becoming “computers on wheels”, stated Campaign spokesperson Sylvia Gotzen. “While technological innovations provide better emissions control as well as more safety and comfort, they have made it increasingly challenging to service or repair a vehicle. Fair and full access for independent market operators to technical information, multi-brand diagnostic tools as well as test equipment, replacement parts and training is therefore more than ever crucial to be able to provide European motorists with the quality service and parts they deserve in the aftermarket care of their vehicles”, she explained.

This is a very real challenge, as the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation (EC) N° 1400/2002, which protects competition and consumer choice in the parts and repair sector, will expire in 2010 and its renewal is uncertain. “Unless we act now, the future of the independent automotive aftermarket and the freedom of consumers to choose is in jeopardy”, emphasised both FIGIEFA Board Member Michel Vilatte and Bert Mons, Secretary General of EGEA.

In response, aftermarket and motorists representatives have come together to defend not only their very ‘right to repair’, but also consumers’ right to have their vehicles serviced and repaired at a workshop of their choice. “European motorists should be able to choose what is done to their car and who executes the work on what is, after all, *their* property”, underlined Caroline Ofoegbu, Deputy Director at the FIA.

The Campaign aims at enhancing the visibility of the independent, multi-brand automotive aftermarket of which too many local and European policymakers have very limited knowledge. It aims at raising awareness on the contribution that this vitally important sector with its 3.5 million people and its 665.000 businesses make to the EU’s economy and society.

“SMEs form the backbone of Europe’s independent multi-brand repair market. They provide repair services at close proximity of consumers, help to keep jobs and skills local and provide employment not only in major cities but also in rural communities”, said Jacopo Moccia, General Director of CECRA. “There is a need for a fair and competitive regulatory environment that gives freedom of choice to consumers and that enables these aftermarket SMEs to stay in business”, concluded Jan Koolen, Secretary General of AIRC.

The Right to Repair Campaign urges vehicle manufacturers to fully comply with the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation [BER] (EC) N° 1400/2002, particularly in the light of the recent Commitments by Toyota, Fiat, DaimlerChrysler and Opel on non-discriminatory access to technical information for independent operators, which were declared binding by the European Commission in September 2007.

The Right to Repair Campaign calls for vehicle manufacturers to make available the information needed by manufacturers of diagnostic tools, in order to enhance competition in the market for generic tools and equipment.

In particular, the Right to Repair Campaign calls for the renewal – and improvement - of the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation in order to ensure fair and effective competition in the automotive aftermarket beyond 2010. Not renewing the Regulation could easily result in a legal gap for the vehicle park not covered by the new 'Euro 5' Regulation (EC) N° 715/2007. Naturally, a number of improvements in a new BER, such as including specific provisions – based on the current Explanatory Brochure - on consumers' warranty rights, would be sought.

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For more information on the Right to Repair Campaign please visit www.r2rc.eu

The Right to Repair Campaign embraces different categories of stakeholders and is open to any who care about the future of the multi-brand automotive aftermarket, and its rightful claim for consumer choice and a competitive after-sales market. The Right to Repair Campaign initial supporters are:

AIRC	Association Internationale des Réparateurs en Carrosserie
CECRA	European Council for Motor Traders and Repairs
EGEA	European Garage Equipment Association
FIA	Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile
FIGIEFA	International Federation of Automotive Aftermarket Distributors

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