

Press Release

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Working Lunch Summary: Automotive Industry at a Crossroads - Europe Needs Support, Technological Neutrality and Data Access

On March 26, 2025, the European Parliament in Brussels hosted the event “Securing the Competitiveness of the EU Automotive Industry - Technological Neutrality and Data Access in the Driver’s Seat,” co-organised by the Association of Automotive Parts Distributors and Producers (SDCM), the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (ZPP), SME Europe, and SME Connect. The event was held under the patronage of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The event was hosted by Members of the European Parliament Elżbieta Łukacijewska and Kosma Złotowski.

Elżbieta Łukacijewska, European People’s Party, opened the discussion with her welcome speech, emphasising: “The European Commission’s Automotive Industrial Action Plan is a step in the right direction, but we must ensure that no part of the ecosystem is left behind. Fair access to vehicle data, future-proof type-approval rules, and strong support for remanufacturing are essential for Europe’s automotive industry. Independent service providers need legal certainty, and repairers must have access to the technical information they require. Remanufacturing should be incentivised to strengthen local industry and create skilled jobs. By working together, we can find solutions that benefit everyone.”

As indicated in the speech of **Kosma Złotowski**, European Conservatives and Reformists Group, European Parliament (video recording):

„The future of the automotive industry in Europe is at risk, and the European Commission’s plan lacks the radical action needed to reverse the damage caused by previous decisions. We must acknowledge that the push for electrification, without regard for the costs, is a major factor in this crisis. The European automotive industry cannot be constrained by ideological goals; all technologies that reduce emissions must be taken seriously to remain competitive. The transformation of this sector must not ignore the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises, whose survival is critical for the entire ecosystem.”

In his keynote speech, **Tomasz Bęben**, President of SDCM, emphasized: “Without appropriate legislation ensuring data access and respect for technological neutrality, we risk stalling investment, losing jobs, and weakening the competitiveness of the European automotive industry. The European automotive sector has a lot to offer in order to sustain the mobility of millions of European citizens, but also to place Europe highly in the ranking of competitive markets worldwide. However, it needs smart regulatory environment that will foster the innovativeness and development of wide range of services, the reduction of unnecessary regulatory burden, but also the prioritise Europe as a location for investment and development of cutting-edge technologies”.

On the topic of technological neutrality, Benjamin Krieger, Secretary General of CLEPA, stated:

“The EU must build a broad bridge to sustainable mobility, not a narrow path. True technology neutrality—embracing plug-in hybrids, hydrogen, and renewable fuels—is essential to preserving jobs and competitiveness today and beyond 2035. With Europe’s automotive supplier sector facing alarming challenges, including 54,000 announced job losses in 2024 alone, urgency is paramount. While CLEPA welcomes the Commission’s recently published Action Plan, key questions remain unanswered, and swift, concrete action is needed to secure a sustainable and competitive future.”

Mark Nicklas, Head of Unit, DG GROW, European Commission, emphasised the need for innovation in the automotive industry: “The European Commission’s Action Plan includes measures for advancing key technologies such as software-defined vehicles, next-generation batteries, and autonomous driving. However, regulatory barriers still hinder progress towards a single market for autonomous vehicles, and the Commission will take action to enable real-world testing and deployment across Europe. The action plan is necessary to avoid European manufacturers falling behind in global competition and to secure the industry’s future.”

Sylvia Gotzen, CEO of FIGIEFA, highlighted the importance of vehicle data access: “FIGIEFA welcomes the European Commission’s Action Plan recognition of the need to enable the full automotive ecosystem to benefit from data from connected vehicles. However, the approach outlined in the Plan falls short of delivering a concrete solution: while the Data Act is a positive step, it is not sufficient on its own. We urge the Commission to move forward with a legislative proposal on the already existing draft legislative proposal for access to in-vehicle data, functions and resources. Postponing action until the assessment of the Data Act is completed will severely hinder independent service providers’ ability to innovate and develop digital mobility services. Global competitors will not wait.”

Marcin Barankiewicz, Secretary General at EGEA also stressed the importance of the ability to use in-vehicle data by independent operators, as it allows them personalize solutions, improve customer experience, and drive economic growth.

The message from the event was clear - the European automotive industry is at a critical turning point. To remain competitive, the sector urgently needs real support: financial, regulatory, and technological. It is crucial to ensure technological neutrality and fair access to in-vehicle data, both of which are essential for maintaining innovation, sustainability, and long-term competitiveness in the EU market.