European automobile industry: current situation, challenges and strategy for the future and proposals for action

1994/2055(COS) - 19/07/1995

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs adopted the report by Mr Alan DONNELLY on the communication from the Commission concerning the Community automobile industry. The report focused on the objectives set for the year 2000 and beyond, which involved the development of "clean, intelligent, high-quality, high-value" cars. While the rapporteur fully subscribed to these general objectives, the proposal for a resolution focused on certain key points. One of the first actions required in this sector was to draw up a specific strategy for the car industry on a scale comparable to that which is applied in Japan and the USA. To achieve this, greater investment effort was needed in respect of research and technological development. It was also vital to strengthen the level of dialogue with operators in this sector, in order to monitor the impact on the automobile industry of the developments taking place in all the areas in which the Community was taking an active role. Greater efforts should also be made in the field of training, particularly in consultation with the motor companies and trade unions. Fiscal incentives should be put in place in order to encourage the replacement of older vehicles by new ones. Greater deregulation should also be introduced to the vehicle retailing sector and the spare-parts market. The proposal for a resolution also endorses the objective of harmonized levels of purchase tax. At present, taxation levels for vehicles with an average engine capacity of 2000 cc vary from 15 % in Germany to 213% in Denmark. There was also a need to strengthen measures relating to vehicle safety. To achieve this, new collision tests were urgently required which better recreate real conditions. There was also a call for a compulsory standard on child safety seats, for the banning of attachments which posed a danger to pedestrians (such as "bull bars"), and for the promotion of MOT testing, etc. With regard to the environment, the proposal for a resolution encourages the development of cleaner vehicles, including a low-pollution car which uses 3 litres of fuel per 100 km. There was also a need to make greater use of remote detection equipment for badly-maintained vehicles (the so-called "big polluters") and to implement measures promoting the recycling of vehicles which have been taken out of circulation. Moreover, recycling should be one of the main priorities of the RTD programme for the motor industry. Finally, maximum emission limits should be established before the year 2000. As regards foreign markets, the proposal for a resolution focuses on the need to keep a close watch on all customs and non-customs barriers which impede the access of Community-made vehicles to the markets of non-member countries.