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

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In adopting the report by Mr Alan DONNELLY (PSE), Parliament called on the Commission to draw up a specific strategy for the European automobile industry which would be on a similar scale to that deployed in Japan and in the USA. This was to include the following measures: to extend the scope of the joint task force on the car of the future; to re-assess the Commission's policy in respect of R&D appropriations for the car industry; to strengthen dialogue with operators in this sector (setting-up a high-level group) in order to examine the impact of EC policies on the motor industry; to coordinate European R&D programmes with national research; to take account of the socio-economic aspects associated with the development of the car of the future. Parliament underlined the importance of a revival in demand for stimulating the expansion of the European motor industry. It called on the Commission: - to encourage Member States to offer fiscal incentives for the replacement of older vehicles by new ones and to examine the benefits of a European subsidy scheme; - to implement the single market by putting forward proposals within the framework of the European type-approval process, together with proposals for the harmonization of taxes on vehicle purchase, registration and use; Parliament considered that greater deregulation should be introduced to the car retailing sector and the spare-parts market; - to take account of the specific constraints affecting SMEs, by promoting this group's use of Community programmes, and to support investment aimed at promoting education and training; - to draw up, as a matter of urgency, high standards for the safety and environmental design of motor vehicles: new collision tests, compulsory standard for child safety seats, banning of attachments which pose a danger to pedestrians (bull bars); wearing of safety belts to be made compulsory in buses and MOT testing for vehicles of this type; - to encourage the development of environment-friendly vehicles, including a car which uses 3 litres of fuel per 100 km and is suitable for daily use, together with the implementation of measures to limit pollution levels: the use of remote detection equipment for the "big polluters", the development of new fuels and new propulsion technologies, and measures to promote the recycling of vehicles which have been taken out of circulation (the latter should be one of the priorities of the R&D programme for the car industry); - to present a proposal which sets emission limits and is aimed at reducing fuel consumption by the year 2000; - to monitor all customs and non-customs barriers which impede the access of Community-made vehicles to the markets of non-member countries (South Korea and Japan); - to develop a system for monitoring the relocation of car production factories; - to promote dialogue on working-shift patterns which are likely to maintain employment levels and to seek international cooperation on minimum standards for working hours, workplace conditions and the working environment.