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6th ACEM Conference: EU2020, making it happen.

Which industrial policy for the motorcycle sector?

Introductory address by Stefan Pierer, ACEM President and KTM CEO

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the ACEM Conference. I am glad to see that this year's ACEM conference is well attended and that there is so much interest in the motorcycle sector. I would like to thank Mr Lange for accepting to take us through the event. I am positive that we will be able to count on his experience with motorcycling legislation in the European Parliament, as well as on his personal riding experience. My thanks also go to Mr Pellegrini, for agreeing to deliver the keynote speech at a time when the new European Commission is about to take up office, with a challenging agenda when it comes to supporting businesses in Europe.

The financial and economic crisis has indeed taken a heavy toll on public finances, businesses, employment and households.

The Motorcycle Industry in Europe has not been immune to the crisis, far from it. Registrations of Powered Two-Wheelers plunged in the final quarter of 2008, and we are looking at a negative balance for 2008 and 2009, in the range of -25%. Fall in demand of Powered Two-Wheelers gave way to a decline in production, putting high pressure on manufacturers and on employment in the sector. Needless to say, the outlook for 2010 remains highly uncertain- but as we look to this new decade, we have to remain positive.

Little over one year ago, ACEM announced a series of proactive initiatives as a means to "shaping the future" for the sector. In spite of current challenges, ACEM members are determined and committed to staying behind those initiatives, in particular as the European institutions and Member States begin discussing the future EU 2020 strategy. However, in order to jointly deliver solutions to tomorrow's mobility challenges, while safeguarding investments and employment in the sector, similar commitment to a sound industrial policy is necessary from policy makers in the short and medium term.

A thriving industry is at the core of Europe's prosperity. It is important that the image of Europe as a destination for profitable investments is retained and strengthened, especially in these times of uncertainty. Yet to restore confidence, we have to solve several substantial issues: European regulations must be occasioned by a long-term vision and with regulatory stability and simplification in mind, providing sufficient lead-time for industry to develop products. Consideration of market acceptance should always be at the source of new technical requirements, providing industry with the necessary flexibility. Furthermore, a level playing field must be ensured, both in Europe and on extra-European markets, with all actors in the sector on an equal footing.

In order to bounce back from the crisis through new opportunities, Europe will have to address these fundamental issues through enhanced cooperation between policy makers and industry. A broad perspective is necessary to ensure that industry is in the best position when activity recovers. ACEM members have always distinguished themselves through the innovation and the quality of their products, a selection of which you have been able to see in the exhibition area. We have a long term commitment to corporate and social responsibility, which we have sought to capture in the ACEM report you will receive at the end of the event. We are willing to do our part.

I am looking forward to an interesting exchange, and wish you all an enjoyable conference.

Stefan Pierer
PRESIDENT of ACEM and
CEO of KTM