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World's largest mobility trade fair closes recording huge rise in visitors - 354 world premieres is a new record / Wissmann: The 64th IAA Commercial Vehicles is a resounding success!

Hanover/Berlin (ots) -

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you most cordially to our final press conference at the 64th IAA Commercial Vehicles. Please allow me to start with my conclusion: never before has an IAA been as exciting as this one! Never before have we had so many new commercial vehicles - vans, heavy trucks, buses - on show as at this exhibition. "Commercial Vehicles - Driving the Future" is the slogan of this IAA. And it has lived up to this aim in full - to showcase the drive for innovation in the entire industry - as the world's largest trade show for mobility, transport and logistics.

The 354 world premieres - more than two thirds of them from suppliers - set a new record. The number of exhibitors - 1,904 exhibitors from 46 countries - is 9 per cent higher than in 2010, and the exhibition space is up by 11 per cent to 260,000 square metres. This IAA Commercial Vehicles has the second largest number of participants and the second largest exhibition area since the IAA was divided into the IAA Cars and the IAA Commercial Vehicles, that is, for 20 years.

We are especially delighted that the number of visitors to the IAA showed a sharp increase. When the IAA closes its doors this evening, over 260,000 people will have visited this key trade fair. That is growth of around 9 per cent compared with 2010. This is a very good result, which is to be regarded as all the more positive when we consider the economic difficulties in Western and Southern Europe. This exhibition has far exceeded our expectations.

To put it in a nutshell: this IAA Commercial Vehicles, with more world premieres, more exhibitors, more space and more visitors, is a resounding success!

Of course there are many aspects that make the IAA attractive. Yet one outshines all the others: the overwhelming number of world premieres that made this IAA so exciting. In addition only here, at the IAA, can one experience and see the whole commercial vehicle industry - the manufacturers of light and heavy trucks, of vans, of buses, of trailers and bodies, and the entire value-added chain of the suppliers. All together, this gives the exhibitors the economic certainty that this is the place where they meet all the major competitors, and can and should display their innovations in a concentrated fashion at one place - the IAA. This makes the IAA so interesting - also for the increasing numbers of visitors.

We had briefly presented the most important trends in the run up to the IAA. And we got it just right. Please allow me to say a few words about the individual focuses:

Euro VI: the commercial vehicle industry is ready to satisfy the demanding Euro VI standard today. The technology exists, and all the manufacturers have heavy Euro VI commercial vehicles in their portfolio. So the classical pollutant emissions are coming down by a huge margin. The reduction in nitrogen oxide is 80 per cent compared to the current Euro V standard, and for particulates the reduction is over two thirds. The drive for innovation in the industry is underlined by the fact that by applying many and varied measures it has been simultaneously possible either to maintain fuel consumption and thus CO2 emissions at a constant level, or even to reduce them.

All possible measures were undertaken to achieve that - which could be seen here at the IAA. This applies above all to aerodynamics, but also to engines and the entire exhaust treatment, in particular the SCR technology. In addition, optimisation of the transmission and ancillary units has in sum resulted in clear reductions in CO2 and increases in efficiency.

We are pleased to see the first forwarders are already deciding on principle to purchase only new trucks fulfilling the modern Euro VI. This trend is also supported by more and more customers in the transport business - retailers of toiletries, department stores, etc. - attaching great importance to green logistics and the carbon footprint, i.e. wanting the entire logistics chain to be CO2- friendly or even CO2-neutral.

And with buses, too, Euro VI is already "the standard" here in Hannover. The trend in buses is continuing towards efficiency, comfort and safety. Deregulation of long-distance scheduled coach services will lead to the "most socially beneficial mode of transport" being used so that many people will finally be able to realise their desire for mobility - at a very reasonable price. When it comes to the drive trains, the focus is on fully electric power and hybrid drives.

Aerodynamics was one of the very large topics here at the IAA. Progress has obviously been made in the design of the front of a truck, the connection between the cab and the semi-trailer, the side covers and the rear of the trailer. The manufacturers of trailers and bodies are well on the way here with their clever developments. The manufacturers of commercial vehicle tyres are also making important contributions to bring down the rolling resistance. Driving and rolling resistance account for 30 to 40 per cent of fuel consumption. This is shown in particular by the huge potential for improvements in aerodynamics.

We have shown politicians from Berlin, the German states and Brussels that they should also seize this opportunity and allow more flexibility in the as yet rigid regulations on the length and weight of commercial vehicles. On the open-air site one could see

what a semi-trailer combination of the future might look like - with CO2 savings of up to 15 per cent. At present a potential of this magnitude is not to be by any other means, at comparably low cost.

Alternative drive trains/electric mobility: a walking tour of this IAA clearly revealed that today the right drive train already exists for every purpose! The range is more extensive than ever before. There is the natural gas drive train for distribution traffic. It can be found in vehicles up to the size of heavy trucks. The advantage of this type of powertrain is that it has virtually no particulate emissions any more - gaseous fuel ensures clean combustion.

Almost all the manufacturers had hybrid vehicles on offer - ranging from small trucks for local distribution all the way to long-distance trucks. So this applies not only to the 7.5-tonners. Hybrid technology can pay off even in 40-tonne trucks. In a truck covering a distance of 150,000 kilometres annually, small savings of just a few per cent add up to a large reduction in CO2.

Many manufacturers also come with fully electric delivery vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, some of them even heavier. These vans operate with zero local emissions and are so quiet they only "whisper." The products of the financial service providers in the commercial vehicle trade, for example attractive leasing packages, were the subject of a dedicated specialist event at the IAA.

Another example of rising efficiency is intelligent, anticipatory transmission control: an electronic GPS control unit enables the vehicle to "recognise" the topography of the motorway, and the truck keeps the throttle open before starting a climb - and on gentle downward slopes it uses freewheeling. The strategy for changing gears or for operation of hybrid drives has been optimised to do just this. This is associated with a CO2 saving of up to 4 per cent, as demonstrated by professional truck testers.

That the great majority of truck drivers enjoy their job has also been found in a recent study presented here at the IAA by ZF and Heilbronn University. For drivers to be even more relaxed and concentrated when carrying out their highly responsible transportation tasks, the cab now has further improvements in comfort and quality. Visitors to the IAA had a chance to experience this at first hand by climbing into the driver's seats of the new models.

Safety: alongside efficiency and comfort, of course safety is one of the main focuses of this IAA. The number of "assistants" supporting the "boss," that is the truck driver, is increasing all the time: the emergency braking assistant, ESP, lane departure warning, and autonomous intelligent cruise control are just a few of them. The commercial vehicle manufacturers are also making faster progress and have already equipped their latest models with these intelligent aids - long before the EU requirements on ESP and driver assistance systems come into force in 2014. Naturally, it will take time before they penetrate the entire market. But here in Hannover one can feel that the demand for driver-assistance systems in commercial vehicles is continuing to rise.

Innovations by the suppliers: the large number of innovations presented by over 1,000 exhibiting supply firms here can be illustrated with a few examples. I would like to emphasise the considerable efficiency gains resulting from "intelligent auxiliary consumers" such as air compressors, cooling fluid pumps and oil pumps. In future these units will be variably and electronically controlled to meet needs as they occur, and ensure a CO2 saving of up to 3 per cent. Almost all today's diesel trucks have common-rail systems. The pressure in the common rail - currently up to 2,500 bar - will continue to increase, and the next target is 3,000 bar! Higher pressure means better combustion, less pollution and lower consumption! This opens up prospects for smaller engine capacities with the same output - and even lower consumption!

Lightweight construction as a strategic task can be followed like a thread running through the exhibition halls, especially those of many suppliers. One example would be the chassis components made of lightweight synthetic composite materials. Another example is recovering energy from the exhaust, which can markedly improve engine efficiency. Prototypes are already in operation, and series production is expected just a few years from now.

Networking/telematics: a genuine "growth topic" at this IAA is the entire networking, telematics, which we covered comprehensively in a very well attended carIT congress. The strategic task is to optimise the networking of dispatchers, forwarders and customers in such a way that the complete logistics chain is always accessible online via a Smartphone. The trailer manufacturers in particular are very active in the field of telematics. More transparency leads to greater profitability and increased efficiency.

The long truck is already a natural fixture at this IAA. The field trial is under way, and more and more companies are taking part. The initial interim results are very good: the vehicles demonstrate safe and accident-free operation, and consumption per tonne-kilometre is much lower. Practical experience confirms the advantages that we have always pointed out, also at this IAA.

This 64th IAA has shown more than ever before that commercial vehicles set technological trends. This industry is a pioneer in environmental technology and in efficiency, in alternative drive trains and in optimising the diesel engine. There is enormous potential in aerodynamics which we should exploit.

Moreover, at the IAA it became clear that CO2 reduction is a very key topic in the commercial vehicle industry - even without regulation! A system of regulation based on climate-change mitigation appears to be the wrong approach, in view of this clear development.

It would be more expedient if the politicians pushed forward other approaches to optimisation. These include new, innovative approaches to vehicle dimensions - for instance the long truck - under the principle of "deregulation instead of regulation." A comprehensive approach to efficiency should include the following points: driver behaviour, optimum fleet management, alternative fuels, improvements to the infrastructure, and intelligent traffic control.

If we in the commercial vehicle sector utilise the market dynamics, then the competition between manufacturers by itself will ensure progress in CO2 innovations.

Following this qualitative tour of the IAA, I would now like to give you some key data:

The number of foreign exhibitors rose by 8 per cent to 1,047, a proportion of 55 per cent. First place among the foreign exhibitors goes to China for the first time (152 exhibitors), followed by Turkey (135) and Italy (134). Our China Day, Turkey Day and India Day also had the right emphases from the viewpoint of the market.

The IAA Commercial Vehicles is a decision-makers' trade fair. The share of professional visitors is 85 per cent, and on weekdays we recorded top values of 92 per cent. Never before has the IAA Commercial Vehicles been so international: more than one quarter (27 per cent) of the professional visitors came from abroad, and on the second exhibition day this proportion actually reached 46 per cent. The professional visitors came from all continents of the world: not only Europe (62 per cent), but one trade visitor in five came from Asia (21 per cent). The proportion of those attending the IAA from Asia is thus more than twice that in 2010 (10 per cent)! One foreign trade visitor in eleven (9 per cent) came from China alone. Second place goes to the Netherlands (7 per cent), and third place to Sweden (also 7 per cent).

Nearly one third of trade visitors are employed in the automotive industry, and among the foreign trade visitors the figure is one half. Four out of five IAA trade visitors are involved in purchasing and procurement decisions.

One particular statement by more than half the trade visitors (55 per cent) is remarkable: they are planning investments in the commercial vehicle sector in the next six to twelve months. One quarter of these visitors came to the IAA for precisely this reason. One third of IAA visitors (35 per cent) are here for the first time.

Furthermore: two thirds of visitors arrive at the IAA by car, while 15 per cent come by rail. Incidentally, the average IAA visitor has once again become younger. He is almost 40 years old, whereas the average age at the IAA in 2010 was just over 42. The proportion of female visitors rose slightly to 12 per cent, so one IAA visitor in eight is a woman. Numerous international delegations visited the IAA, including groups from the USA, China, Japan, India, Korea, Turkey, Russia and Argentina.

We had 45 VIP walking tours, which is an increase of 15 per cent compared to the IAA in 2010. Our high-ranking guests included Federal Transport Minister Dr Peter Ramsauer, Federal Minister of Economics Dr Philipp Rösler, the State Premier of Lower Saxony David McAllister, and numerous ministers from the German states, state secretaries, and members of the German Bundestag and of the individual state parliaments. The US ambassador, Philipp D. Murphy, was a guest, as was Shi Mingde, the Chinese ambassador to Germany. Senior staff members of the European Commission and numerous MEPs also obtained information at the IAA.

During my walking tours of the trade fair I have spoken with many commercial vehicle manufacturers, makers of trailers and bodies, and suppliers. They are upbeat! We are delighted that the suppliers in particular have benefited from the positive trend in visitor numbers. The IAA, with its international nature and its many visitors who are experts in the commercial vehicle business - and in many cases also potential customers - obviously creates a constructive atmosphere characterised by confident realism.

In co-operation with various partners, the VDA has held over 30 specialist events and symposia at the IAA. I would like to point out especially the Electric Mobility Congress. And the carIT congress was also a great success. A total of 4,300 experts attended the specialist events, which ranged from load securing and numerous awards to financial services, telematics, the Hazardous Goods Day, long-distance coach services, and of course reducing CO₂.

Apart from the symposia, above all the special shows on the open-air site were an additional attraction. There were over 1,100 test drives of light and heavy commercial vehicles. And 1,500 visitors took test drives in electric vehicles - which is also a premiere at this IAA. The Innovation Stage with its demonstrations (hosted live) of sustainable road transport also got a keen response.

The IAA Commercial Vehicles was also an occasion for us to arouse the interest of schoolchildren in the topic of freight transport embedded in their lessons, as part of the campaign to attract young people. In our IAA schools campaign we invited teachers to explain to their classes the topics of transport and logistics in a very practical way with an excursion to the IAA. Around 4,750 teachers and schoolchildren accepted the invitation, which was nearly 200 children more than came two years ago. We also had classes from Austria and the Netherlands, who came a long way to the IAA. The programmes for future engineers - Golng and WorkING - attracted 500 participants. And of course the historic vehicles, the American Trucks and the collectors' fair "Automania" were again hugely popular with the public at this exhibition.

So, today we can say the results from IAA are extremely positive. And at this point we would like to thank the Deutsche Messe AG for its support, its professional work and its exceptional orientation on service.

After the IAA is before the IAA: one year from now the 65th IAA Cars will begin in Frankfurt am Main (12 to 22 September 2013), and in 2014 we will be back here in Hannover at the 65th IAA Commercial Vehicles (25 September to 2 October 2014). We are looking forward to those events!

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