

Fiat Group Automobiles

Star of the “ECOMONDO” International Fair

Turin 6 Nov 2008 - The 12th ECOMONDO, an international fair on material recycling, energy recovery and sustainable development, is to be held in Rimini on 5-8 November. Hosted by Rimini Fiera, the show will be presenting the widest range of technological opportunities, systems and equipment, and services for resolving complex and specific environmental problems. In addition to the exhibition area, ECOMONDO will be offering a full calendar of conventions, meetings and discussion tables dedicated to these subjects.

These engagements include the convention on “End-of-Life Vehicles – The turning point for the outcome” programmed for the morning of 6 November in Sala Neri 2, which will be followed by a round table at which all the actors involved in this area will be speaking. The event will be attended by Salvatore Di Carlo (head of Engineering & Design - End of Life Vehicles & Car Recycling, Fiat Group Automobiles) as coordinator recognised by other car manufacturers, the car recycling sector and the public authorities.

The central theme of the convention is to go further into the “Agreement for a Framework Programme on the management of end-of-life vehicles” signed on 8 May last in Rome by the Ministry for the Environment and Territorial Protection, the Ministry for Economic Development and the Associations representing the end-of-life vehicle processing industry (ANFIA and UNRAE for vehicle manufacturers - FEDERAICPA for vehicle dealers - FISE-UNIRE, CAR-CNA and ADA for demolition companies - ASSOFERMET for demolition, breaking and recycling/trading of scrap - AIRA for metal scrap breakers). Aim: to give an industry-specific response, in line with the most demanding targets for recycling vehicles established by the European Commission, to the problem of 1.4 million vehicles demolished every year in Italy.

The Agreement represents the first and most advanced example in Europe in which all the actors involved in an industrial sector, from the biggest national motor vehicle industry to the smallest family demolition company, work with the persons in charge at the appropriate Ministries with a view to transforming this enormous quantity of waste into a “minefield” of raw materials, in an all-embracing project which is at the forefront of the environment sector.

Note that the “Agreement for a Framework Programme on the management of end-of-life vehicles” represents the evolution of a course started by the Fiat Group in 1997 with the F.A.RE. (Fiat Auto Recycling) Project, a system for re-using not only the metal, but all the materials (glass, plastic and padding) with which vehicles are built. This successful initiative already envisaged a profitable collaboration between industry, demolition agents and companies specialising in recycling.

The context and the European Directive (2000/53/CE)

Each year, about 15 million vehicles are scrapped in Europe (in Italy alone the figure was over 1.5 million in 2007). There has always been an entire industry comprising operators in the sector (demolition agents, scrap dealers, breakers) who process all these vehicles, creating a business out of the valuable materials (steel, light alloys, etc.) and used parts.

In 2000 a European Directive (2000/53/CE) was issued which governs and increases the environmental efficiency of end-of-life vehicle management, imposing a number of obligations both at the vehicle design stage (no more heavy metals, marking, etc.) and at the end-of-life management stage: recycling and energy recovery targets, achievement deadlines, definition of responsibilities, commitments towards citizens who own the vehicle assets which have reached the end of their useful life. The directive has been assimilated in all EU countries, and in Italy with the Decree Law 209/2003 and SMI.

With the recent Agreement, Italy is heading for leadership in the sector in Europe

Italy has always boasted a historic capacity for recycling materials, as well as a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises, artisans and extensive coverage over the country for the demolition/recycling of end-of-life vehicles. In contrast with these areas of excellence, the country has inadequate links between companies or between the sectors of the industry as a whole. In addition, the context in Italy demonstrates the difficulty many operators have in dealing with the procedures and paperwork typically required by environmental legislation. Moreover, foreign competition benefits from less sophisticated procedures and legislation. All this has led to high tensions and severe difficulties in the sector which, faced with a high operative capacity in Europe, sees an entirely undeserved image of itself being projected.

In following the spirit of the EU Directive absorbed into Italian law, the large industrial groups of vehicle manufacturers and the dealer associations have formed a collaboration with the rest of the vehicle end-of-life industry. So each member, with its own specific skills, forms an integral part of an industry that can process a waste product that has reached the end of its useful life into a “minefield” of new raw material. Thus a process which on the one hand is of high environmental value, on the other hand offers a business opportunity so it is a positive element for the entire national economy. The “Agreement on a Framework Programme for the management of end-of-life vehicles”, is therefore a comprehensive, complex and well-thought out proposal to the institutions with responsibilities in this sector, demonstrating a strong commitment to change the way of working in the sector while aiming for the role of leader in Europe.