

New barriers to innovation in the EU aftermarket intensify the need for an open data ecosystem

- **Annual check-up of the EU aftermarket highlights peak interest in data and software innovation**
- **10 start-up pitches showcased the promising advancements in aftermarket technology**
- **Clear legislation under the Commission’s Data Act will be essential to guarantee fair access to in-vehicle data for all market players**

Brussels, 4 April 2025 – The European automotive aftermarket is undergoing a swift transformation driven by sustainability initiatives and technological innovation, while adapting to evolving regulatory frameworks. Picking up the fast-moving developments of 2025 and the plans of the new EU administration, the 16th edition of the CLEPA Aftermarket Conference and annual check-up of the state of the European aftermarket ecosystem, highlighted the sector's strong focus on data and software innovation. The event, held on 2 & 3 April in Brussels brought together over 200 participants, including key industry experts, top-level speakers and policymakers from the European Commission, including **Kerstin Jorna**, Director-General at DG GROW.

In his welcome speech, CLEPA Secretary General, **Benjamin Krieger**, stated: “The automotive aftermarket in the European Union continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of evolving industry trends. However, to safeguard its innovation capacity and economic contribution, we must do more. Companies in this sector need realistic regulation and investment-friendly conditions to thrive.

The full potential of digital mobility services in the EU can only be realised with a clear and enabling framework that guarantees access to critical vehicle data and ensures connectivity to on-board diagnostics. Any delay in implementation risks severe losses for businesses of all sizes, from SMEs to multinationals, and could hinder Europe’s competitiveness in this rapidly evolving landscape.”

Exploring emerging players, **Sara Brandstätter**, Data privacy and security reporter at MLex, moderated a session featuring **10 innovative startups**, each presenting groundbreaking technologies in electrification, sustainability, big data, and AI. The session provided a glimpse into the future of aftermarket services, highlighting new trends and advancements. Paula Schwertler, from volytica diagnostics won ‘best pitch’ award, presenting about the work of the start-up advancing battery monitoring.

Discussing the upcoming Data Act, **Antonio Biason** (DG CNECT) offered the keynote ‘Driving innovation: The Data Act and the automotive aftermarket’, in which he confirmed the upcoming guidelines for implementation of the Commission's Data Act, which will be introduced in September.

The conference brought clarity that the Data Act excludes data for relevant use cases for the

automotive sector, including preventive maintenance and behavioural data. A complementing regulation will be needed to make full use of in-vehicle generated data.

The panel discussion focused on cybersecurity and featured independent fleet expert, **Franck Leveque**, **Dorothee Dayraut-Jullian** (Mobilians), **Felix-Matthias Walter** (MAHLE Aftermarket GmbH), **Lukasz Rosanzky** (European Commission's DG GROW) and **Daniel Knoedler** (IBM). The conversation highlighted the importance of collaboration across supply chain ecosystems and that clear legislation will be crucial going forward.

Frank Schlehuber, Senior Consultant Market Affairs at CLEPA highlighted:

"Cybersecurity must not come at the expense of competition. While protecting vehicles from cyber threats is essential, it should not limit access to On-Board Diagnostics (OBD) or the ability to install spare parts. Doing so risks reducing consumer choice and driving up the cost of repairs and maintenance. CLEPA calls for a thorough revision of Annex X - not a quick fix - and urges lawmakers to address technological developments, ensure meaningful access for independent workshops, and to adopt a swift complementing legislation on in-vehicle data access. Cybersecurity measures must be balanced with the rights outlined in EU Regulation 858/2018."

The next edition of the CLEPA Aftermarket Conference is planned for Spring 2026.