

Landmark judgment in favour of the independent automotive aftermarket

Press Release

Brussels, 11 July 2025 - ADPA, the association of publishers of technical information used for the repair and maintenance of vehicles, and GVA, the German association of distributors of automotive aftermarket parts, won an important lawsuit against BMW, who was trying to impose unfair contractual clauses.

Over the last years, BMW has tried to impose drastic contractual restrictions to the ability of independent operators to acquire and use technical information. Considering the increasing complexity of vehicles, such information is crucial to ensure the continuous roadworthiness of vehicles over their lifetime, and its availability and affordability is therefore key to the safety and sustainability of road mobility.

Once more, ADPA and GVA have joined forces to contest such practices, in particular a severe increase of the cost of technical information, difficulties in accessing VIN-related information, and restrictions on the publishers' use of their own information products.

On Friday, the 27th of June, the Regional Court of Munich (Germany) largely sided with ADPA and GVA. It validated their approach on the three most important motions, out of four, ruling that BMW must stop charging per query for VIN-related information; that BMW cannot uniformly claim rights to publishers' information products (a motion which BMW had acknowledged shortly before); and that the fees charged by BMW for technical information violate type approval law.

The judgment, which may still be subject to appeal, marks a major success for the independent aftermarket. It opens in particular the door for ADPA Members to claim the reimbursement of unduly paid fees.

Pierre Thibaudat, ADPA Director General, said: "Once more, we were left with no choice but to go to Court, and once more, a Court clarified that vehicle manufacturers shouldn't impair the independent automotive aftermarket in accessing technical information. Now, let's work all together on finding acceptable and workable solutions and on developing a sustainable business relationship".

Thomas Vollmar, GVA President, added: "The clear victory we got is not just good for ADPA and GVA. It directly benefits the entire independent aftermarket and, beyond, consumers, who will be enabled to have the choice between competing, affordable and innovative solutions when it comes to the servicing of their vehicle – a crucial topic considering the cost of road mobility".

Marcus Sacré, Partner at Osborne Clarke, who represented ADPA and GVA in the proceedings, concluded: "European legislation, and the intentions of European legislators, have always been clear. The landmark judgment obtained by ADPA and GVA unequivocally confirms, once again, that vehicle manufacturers cannot and should not unilaterally restrict competition".

For more information

Pierre THIBAUDAT, ADPA Director General pierre.thibaudat@adpa.eu

Dirk SCHARMER, GVA CEO d.scharmer@gva.de

ADPA, the European Automotive Data Publishers Association, aims to ensure fair access to automotive data and information needed for the repair and maintenance of the 280 millions vehicles on European roads, contributing to their continuous roadworthiness over their lifetime. Its members design and provide competitive, innovative and multibrand solutions to operators of the automotive aftermarket. Founded in 2016 and based in Brussels, ADPA is a Member of AFCAR, the Alliance for the Freedom of Car Repair in the European Union, and FAAS, the Forum for Automotive Aftermarket Sustainability.