

Key regulations shaping the future of the European aftermarket – Interview with CLEPA

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As the European automotive aftermarket faces mounting legislative requirements, we discussed their importance, challenges and potential improvements with Franck Leveque, Senior Consultant, Market Affairs at CLEPA, who assumed the role in May 2026 and is charged with advancing its aftermarket and trade-related initiatives.



Europe's automotive aftermarket is undergoing rapid change with companies adjusting to slower-than-expected battery-electric vehicle (BEV) adoption, increasing global competition and margin challenges. Technological advancements, new emission requirements, and digitalization are reshaping the sector. For aftermarket stakeholders and workshops, this means dealing with rising technical complexity.

CLEPA, the European Association of Automotive Suppliers, believes that data access and fair competition are critical for the aftermarket as it navigates this change. In an exclusive interview with Mobility Global, Franck Leveque, Senior Consultant Market Affairs at CLEPA, emphasized the need for a regulatory environment that supports innovation and fair competition for aftermarket players to remain competitive.

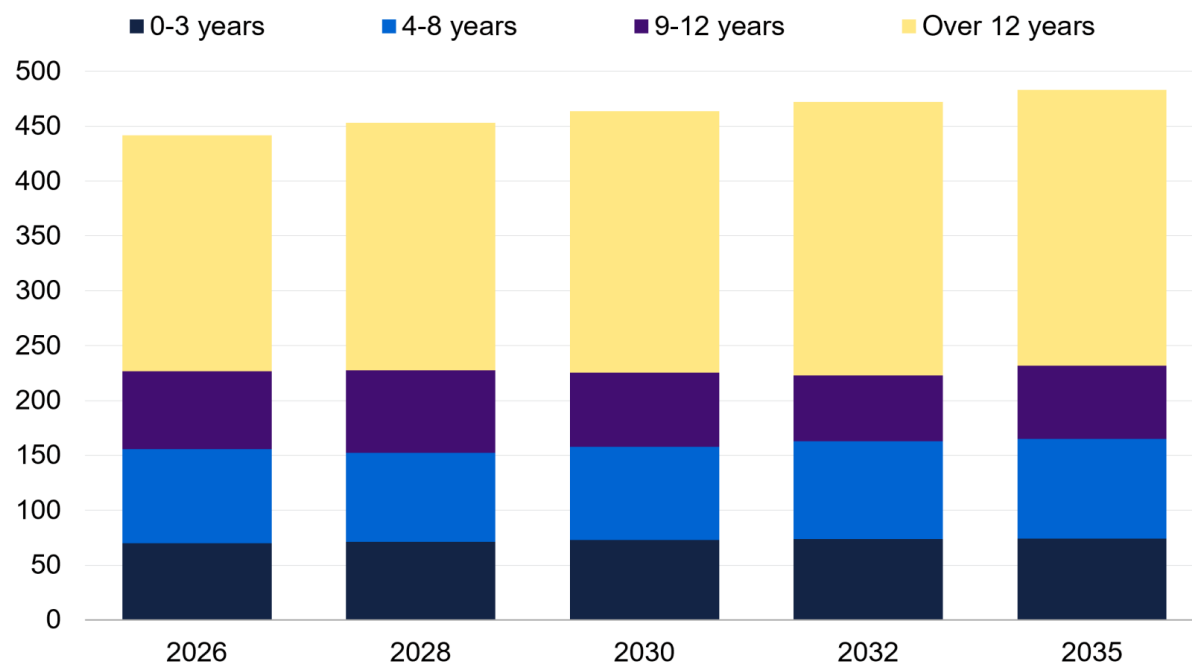
The association's key legislative priorities for the next year include Euro 7 brake emissions, the future of the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation (MVBBER), and implementation of the Data Act, among others.

CLEPA says while the MVBBER has been effective historically, it faces growing constraints on suppliers' access to the independent market. Enforcement challenges point to the need for an updated framework after 2028 to reflect technical developments.

The Data Act, which has been enforced in the European Union since September 2025, is said to require supplementary legislation for investment in new data-based services. CLEPA says that while the Act is a strong first step, it underscores the need for regulations specific to the automotive sector to make data use economically viable.

A growing and aging vehicle parc that requires regular maintenance and repairs remains a key characteristic of the European aftermarket. We expect it to provide stability amid broader economic challenges. Mobility Global expects Europe's light vehicles in operation (VIO) to grow by over 9% from 441 million in 2026 to 483 million units by 2035. VIO aged 4-8 years will expand by 5.8% from 85 million units to 91 million in the same time frame. The highest growth, over 14%, should come from VIOs aged 12 and above, with the segment forecast to expand from 214 million units in 2026 to 251 million in 2035.

Europe vehicles in operation by vehicle age, 2026–2035, millions



Data compiled July 17, 2026.

Source: Mobility Global.

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We talk to Leveque about CLEPA's near-term legislative priorities, improvements to the Data Act, the new End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) Regulation, how Europe's independent aftermarket can prepare for the increasing presence of Mainland Chinese brands in the fleet, and more.



Edited excerpts below.

Mobility Global: How was the legislative progress in 2025 from CLEPA's perspective, and can you describe some key topics in CLEPA's legislative agenda for 2026–27?

Franck Leveque: The automotive aftermarket has never faced such a high volume of legislative initiatives and requirements. While regulation is necessary, new rules must remain workable in practice and support competitiveness, innovation, and consumer choice.

A key milestone was the enforcement of the Delegated Act amending Annex X to Regulation (EU)

2018/858 on June 23, 2026. This was a positive outcome for suppliers, as it improved access to relevant vehicle information. The focus now shifts to implementation: monitoring how the rules work in practice, addressing challenges and ensuring effective access. CLEPA is therefore supporting the deployment of an onboard diagnostics (OBD) forum to follow developments, report on challenges and provide recommendations.

For 2026–2027, key legislative priorities include Euro 7 brake emissions, the future of the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation (MVER); the implementation of the Data Act and the Digital Omnibus package; and regulatory developments on batteries (Rechargeable Electrical Energy Storage Systems - REESS), the End-of-Life Vehicles Regulation (ELVR), the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR). We are also examining the "Post-production Cyber Security Support Period," a developing topic right now, with potentially critical implications.

With the Data Act now in effect, how is CLEPA tackling the challenges in its implementation? What improvements does the Act need to ensure fairer access, and how confident is CLEPA that the European Commission would expand its guidelines?

The Data Act is an important step forward, and we have already seen some positive developments, with OEMs generally making more data available than before. However, we are not yet at the point where companies can build scalable, cross-brand digital services.

The challenge is not only access to data, but also the type of data provided, its frequency, quality, cost, and the reliability and continuity of access. These differences still make it difficult to develop viable digital services and justify the required investments.

CLEPA is active in initiatives such as the Connected Vehicle Field Test by CARUSO, which will provide insights into which OEMs share which data points and under what conditions.

Enforcement of the Data Act is mainly the responsibility of member states, while the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) primarily provides guidance. We welcome the expected guidance on issues such as definitions and fair compensation. At the same time, questions remain regarding the outcome of the digital OMNIBUS — the EU's regulatory initiative aimed at simplifying and consolidating digital legislation.

However, policymakers must also address the underlying infrastructure, including simplified consent management, effective access mechanisms and consistent data availability across brands. Only then can companies develop truly competitive cross-brand digital services.

As we approach the post-2028 horizon for the MVER, what changes is CLEPA lobbying for? How can policymakers futureproof the MVER from the perspective of suppliers' ability to sell to the independent aftermarket, access to vehicle data, software-defined vehicle (SDV)/electric vehicle diagnostic rights and other aspects to ensure aftermarket competitiveness?

The MVER remains an important tool for maintaining competition and consumer choice in the aftermarket. However, vehicles are becoming increasingly software-defined, connected and electrified, and the regulatory framework needs to evolve accordingly.

We welcome the Directorate-General for Competition's (DG COMP) openness to extending the MVER beyond 2028 and considering targeted updates to both the Regulation and the

Supplementary Guidelines.

Key areas requiring attention include access to tooling, visible branding, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity requirements, repair and maintenance information (RMI) and OBD information, as well as restrictions on the independent aftermarket imposed by warranty programs. New challenges linked to software-defined vehicles, including software activation mechanisms and software embedded in hardware, also need to be addressed.

The objective is clear: suppliers must be able to continue serving the independent aftermarket, and consumers must retain access to competitive repair and maintenance solutions.

What challenges and opportunities does the new ELV Regulation pose for remanufacturers? While CLEPA has supported the 25% recycled-plastic mandate, what policy requests does it have regarding the regulation?

Remanufacturing has an important role to play in building a more circular automotive economy, but regulation must recognize the practical realities of these business models.

CLEPA supports ambitious recycling targets, including the 25% recycled-plastic mandate, but recycling criteria should remain flexible to allow different facilities and approaches to contribute. Tracking pre- and post-consumer materials across complex supply chains is challenging, and policies should support circularity rather than create unnecessary barriers.

CLEPA also agrees with the decision to exempt remanufactured parts from mandatory VIN labeling requirements, as this would add complexity without clear benefits.

A key challenge is that remanufactured products often compete with lower-cost imported new spare parts, even though they meet stricter regulatory and quality requirements. The regulatory framework should therefore ensure a level playing field and recognize the value of remanufacturing for sustainability and European value creation.

Does the rapidly increasing presence of mainland Chinese brands in the European vehicle fleet necessitate any changes in the EU regulatory framework to ensure repair information is shared with the independent aftermarket?

The existing EU framework for RMI is sufficient and applies equally to European and non-European vehicle manufacturers. The main challenge is enforcement.

Some non-European brands entering the European market do not always fully comply with existing requirements regarding access to OBD and RMI information. Historically, lower vehicle volumes resulted in limited enforcement pressure, but this must change as these brands become more established in Europe.

The European Commission should make greater use of market surveillance tools and work closely with national type-approval authorities to ensure that all manufacturers comply with EU rules.

Fair access to repair information is essential to preserve competition and consumer choice.

As the European auto industry grapples with slow EV uptake, rising mainland Chinese competition and margin pressures, what should automotive suppliers and aftermarket players do to safeguard their future and increase profitability?

The automotive sector is undergoing a major transformation, with companies facing pressure from

slower-than-expected EV adoption, increasing global competition and margin challenges.

To remain competitive, suppliers and aftermarket players need a regulatory environment that supports innovation and fair competition. This means ensuring that manufacturers from outside the EU operate under the same regulatory requirements as European companies, while also considering measures such as the Industrial Accelerator Act to strengthen Europe's industrial base.

Fair access to in-vehicle data can enable competitive aftermarket and SDV business models. Companies must also be able to provide affordable repair and maintenance services through open access to diagnostic tools, repair information and vehicle data. OEM cybersecurity and server requirements should not create unnecessary barriers to competition, and access to OEM servers, RMI, OBD data, tooling and intellectual property should be transparent, affordable and based on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) principles.

At the same time, the industry needs stronger enforcement and dispute settlement mechanisms to ensure that the rules are applied consistently. Suppliers should also continue investing in remanufacturing, circular business models, software, digital services and cybersecurity capabilities to strengthen competitiveness in an increasingly challenging global market.

A strong and innovative aftermarket is essential not only for businesses but also for consumers, ensuring affordable mobility and choice throughout the vehicle life cycle.

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