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EUROPEAN CAR MARKET STRUGGLING AS ECONOMIES SUFFER

- **European car market fall by 8.3% year-to-date**
- **Some markets down by almost 50%**
- **VW still Europe's top selling brand**
- **Golf is top selling model**

JATO Dynamics, the world's leading provider of automotive data and intelligence, reports today that the total European car market has fallen by 8.3% (116,627 units) in September to 1,284,757 units. The Year-to-date total stands at 11,515,898 units, 4.4% (or 527,810 units) lower than in the same period in 2007.

"The post-holiday period is traditionally a month of strong car sales in Europe," says Nasir Shah, Global Business Development Director at JATO. "However, given the dramatic economic developments of the last few weeks, it's absolutely no surprise to see the market drop by a significant margin."

Brand Performance

Volkswagen was Europe's top-selling car brand in September, ahead of Ford, Opel/Vauxhall, Renault and Peugeot, which also reflects the top five market performer's year-to-date.

Whilst nine of the top ten brands have posted a drop in sales compared to the first nine months of 2007, 6th placed Fiat is the only top ten brand to have posted sales growth during the same period, up 1.6%. However, outside the top ten, certain brands have managed to increase market share so far during 2008. Strong sales earlier in the year have kept 11th placed BMW up by 1.2% year-to-date, while Nissan is up an impressive 16.8% YtD. Of the other high volume brands, Skoda (up 0.7% YtD) Mazda (up 7.1% YtD), Mini (up 8.6% YtD), Smart (up 23.1% YtD) and Dacia (up 39.8% YtD), all have good reason to be optimistic so far in 2008.

September saw only one top ten brand post increased sales, with Audi up by an impressive 17.2%, buoyed by the strong performance of the new A4 model. As a premium brand, this is an impressive performance in September given the extraordinary economic climate.

Top Ten Brands

Make	Sep_08	Sep_07	% Change Sep	Sep YtD_08	Sep YtD_07	% Change YtD
VOLKSWAGEN	133,801	135,000	-0.9%	1,197,177	1,221,320	-2.0%
FORD	114,747	127,935	-10.3%	968,622	1,002,372	-3.4%
OPEL/VAUXHALL	104,143	128,052	-18.7%	919,488	1,032,989	-11.0%
RENAULT	85,688	93,302	-8.2%	868,026	895,084	-3.0%
PEUGEOT	84,112	92,804	-9.4%	799,512	847,254	-5.6%
FIAT	77,833	78,289	-0.6%	752,737	741,119	+1.6%
TOYOTA	69,425	73,976	-6.2%	604,777	695,410	-13.0%
CITROEN	68,293	74,342	-8.1%	674,990	723,975	-6.8%
MERCEDES	65,220	69,232	-5.8%	541,787	558,542	-3.0%
AUDI	62,831	53,618	+17.2%	505,294	506,667	-0.3%

Top Models

The Volkswagen Golf was once again Europe's top-selling new car in September (up 5.1%), ahead of the Peugeot 207, Opel/Vauxhall Corsa, Ford Focus, Opel/Vauxhall Astra, Ford Fiesta, Renault Clio, Audi A4 (up 73.4%, thanks to the new model), Volkswagen Passat and Fiat Panda (up 12.0%), rounds off the top ten.

Year-to-date, the remarkable Golf again leads (up 12.2%), ahead of the Peugeot 207, Opel/Vauxhall Corsa, Ford Focus, Opel/Vauxhall Astra, Ford Fiesta, Renault Clio, Audi A4/S4/RS4, VW Passat and Fiat Panda.

Top Ten Models

Make & Model	Sep_08	Sep_07	% Change Sep	Sep YtD_08	Sep YtD_07	% Change YtD
VOLKSWAGEN GOLF	40,249	38,297	+5.1%	360,743	321,474	+12.2%
PEUGEOT 207	33,853	37,479	-9.7%	332,458	336,958	-1.3%
OPEL/VAUXHALL CORSA	33,378	36,302	-8.1%	290,369	311,024	-6.6%
FORD FOCUS	32,963	37,160	-11.3%	295,418	320,464	-7.8%
OPEL/VAUXHALL ASTRA	31,586	41,379	-23.7%	266,496	315,356	-15.5%
FORD FIESTA	31,223	37,949	-17.7%	254,647	282,245	-9.8%
RENAULT CLIO	28,135	31,637	-11.1%	271,948	295,470	-8.0%
AUDI A4/S4/RS4	27,575	15,899	+73.4%	196,072	174,098	+12.6%
VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT	22,954	22,974	-0.1%	193,137	230,428	-16.2%
FIAT PANDA	21,955	19,603	+12.0%	173,285	198,983	-12.9%

National Trends

The UK new car market fell by almost 89,000 units in September compared to the same month in 2007, a drop of 21.2%, a factor that has significantly affected the overall European market total for the month.

"September is normally a successful month in the UK due to a registration-plate change", says Shah. "But the UK is not alone in suffering losses, with Spain down by 31.9% and Italy down 5.9%. Nobody could have predicted falls like these a year ago, but in the current climate they are not a total surprise."

Interestingly, Iceland, which like other key European markets has recently suffered significant losses in its banking sector, recorded the largest percentage fall in new car sales, falling by an astonishing 47.6%. Elsewhere, significant market falls have been recorded in Latvia (down 43.7%) and Ireland (down 39.8%).

But it's not all doom and gloom in the markets. Luxembourg performed strongly compared to a very poor performance in September 2007, with a 133% rise in new car registrations. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Cyprus have also recorded significantly increased new car markets in September.

For the year-to-date, the most significant falls have been in Spain (down 258,303 units, or 21.4%) and Italy (down 224,823 units, or 11.6%), while the most significant percentage drops have been in Latvia (down 34.3%) and Iceland (down 29.9%).

Slovakia and Lithuania have recorded the greatest growth YtD at 21.1% and 20.0% respectively. In terms of unit growth the French market leads ahead of Germany and Belgium.

Country	Sep_08	Sep_07	% Change Sep	Sep YtD_08	Sep YtD_07	% Change YtD
Austria	22,510	22,016	+2.2%	232,158	231,543	+0.3%
Belgium	37,838	36,611	+3.4%	440,731	418,599	+5.3%
Cyprus	2,285	1,952	+17.1%	17,722	17,845	-0.7%
Czech Republic	15,304	11,910	+28.5%	137,966	123,788	+11.5%
Denmark	11,908	13,477	-11.6%	121,713	119,109	+2.2%
Estonia	1,681	2,211	-24.0%	20,820	24,221	-14.0%
Finland	9,843	9,826	+0.2%	118,550	108,711	+9.1%
France	160,565	148,164	+8.4%	1,575,765	1,523,361	+3.4%
Germany	261,284	265,473	-1.6%	2,371,373	2,340,492	+1.3%
Great Britain	330,295	419,290	-21.2%	1,794,419	1,940,515	-7.5%
Greece	18,814	19,367	-2.9%	225,929	228,224	-1.0%
Hungary	13,248	13,738	-3.6%	120,327	128,743	-6.5%
Iceland	584	1,115	-47.6%	8,732	12,448	-29.9%
Ireland	3,458	5,745	-39.8%	149,101	180,752	-17.5%
Italy	177,057	188,258	-5.9%	1,716,722	1,941,545	-11.6%
Latvia	1,294	2,298	-43.7%	16,546	25,173	-34.3%
Lithuania	1,525	1,659	-8.1%	18,417	15,343	+20.0%
Luxembourg	4,053	1,740	+133%	40,228	38,152	+5.4%
Norway	8,453	9,340	-9.5%	87,456	97,874	-10.6%
Poland	24,091	22,753	+5.9%	236,638	217,383	+8.9%
Portugal	14,726	12,994	+13.3%	163,032	154,871	+5.3%
Slovakia	6,370	5,207	+22.3%	65,571	54,132	+21.1%
Slovenia	5,321	4,859	+9.5%	55,255	50,189	+10.1%
Spain	65,706	96,475	-31.9%	948,029	1,206,332	-21.4%
Sweden	22,777	23,806	-4.3%	195,284	219,505	-11.0%
Switzerland	22,254	20,695	+7.5%	217,688	210,663	+3.3%
The Netherlands	41,513	40,405	+2.7%	419,726	414,195	+1.3%
Grand Total	1,284,757	1,401,384	-8.3%	11,515,898	12,043,708	-4.4%

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Editorial note: JATO Dynamics background

JATO was founded in 1984 and provides the world's most timely, accurate and up-to-date information on vehicle specifications and pricing, sales and registrations, news and incentives. The company has representation in over 40 countries, providing unique local market expertise. The JATO client base includes all of the world's volume vehicle manufacturers, giving them the ability to react to short-term market movements, plan for long-term developments and ultimately to meet consumers' needs. JATO's data has also been adapted for consumer use in motoring web portals where customers can see the advantages and disadvantages of a specified model against any other while major leasing companies use JATO data to drive the vehicle quotation process. Visit JATO at www.jato.com

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