

European first-half recreational vehicle sales remain almost steady relative to last year

Motor caravan sales increase partially offsets slight dip in caravan sales

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First-half recreational vehicle sales in Europe were essentially on a par with those of the same period last year. The 123,818 motor caravans and caravans sold during the first six months of 2008 represent a 2,8% dip (3,566 vehicles) relative to the first half of 2007. Caravan sales were down 7,1% to 66,590 new units, whereas motor caravan sales were up 2.8% to 57,228 new units.

Germany was the market leader for new motor caravans with 14,736 vehicles sold (up 13.6%), followed by France with 13,596 (down 3.6%) and Italy with 8,863 units (down 14.5%). The weakest sales performance was registered in Denmark with 200 units sold (down 34,0%) and Slovenia with 264 newly registered vehicles (up 38,9%).

The slide in the European caravan market is largely attributable to slower sales in Britain (down 8% to 17,511 units), The Netherlands (down 12.7% to 8,970 units), France (down 10% to 6,872 units) and the Scandinavian countries (Denmark down 12,8% to 4,588 units; Finland down 17.8% to 985 units; Sweden down 9% to 3,691 units; and Norway down 5.3% to 3,166 units). Bucking this trend were Italy (up 6.7% to 1,433 caravans), Spain (up 4.4% to 2,806 units) and Slovenia (up 34,5% to 156 units). The German market registered a 0.6% sales increase to 12,069 new caravans, which was on a par with sales during the first half of 2007.

Slowdown in German motor caravan and caravan exports

“The European export market has been hard hit by the financial crisis, high interest rates, and sharp energy price increases throughout Europe,” notes Hans-Karl Sternberg, president of Europe’s caravanning industry association Caravanning Industrie Verband e.V. (CIVD). “The strength of the euro has made life difficult for German vendors in the sizeable British market in particular,” said Mr. Sternberg. “Thus European dealers still have quite a bit of inventory from last year, with the result that orders from European export markets have fallen short of 2007 levels.”

This evolution has put a wrench in the works for the German caravan and motor caravan export market, which has been a mainstay of the German recreational vehicle sales up until now. Export sales of German caravans sales were particularly hard hit, dropping 15.9% to 19,741 units, whereas German motor caravan export sales registered a relatively minor 2.8% decrease to 12,343 units.

For further information about caravanning, including photos, visit www.civd.de