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15.01.10

Western Europe

All's well that ends well

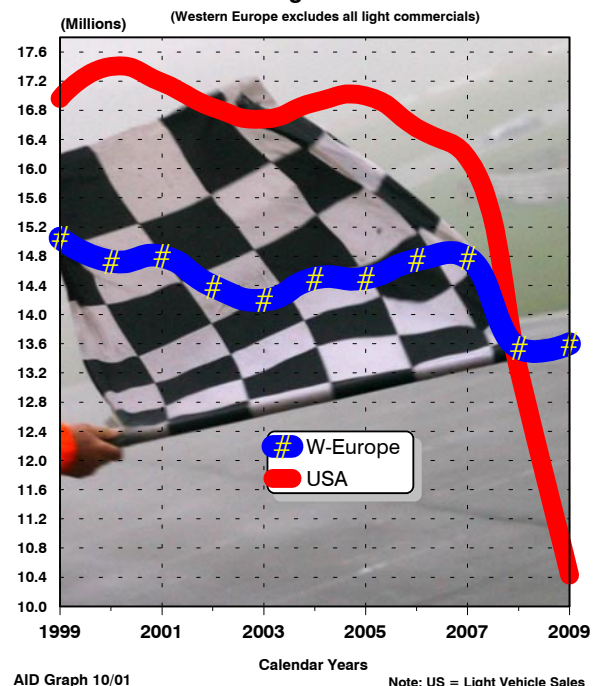
Worst potential car sales slump for decades turned after all into all round satisfactory year

IT could have been so much worse. With 13.6 million new cars sold in Western Europe last year, 2009 has indeed turned into a far, far better car sales year than feared, thanks in large measure to government sponsored scrappage incentives which acted like a life-preserving adrenalin shot to a seriously sick patient.

Against some of the worst possible odds, last year's remarkably positive turnout - with sales marginally topping the 13.55m new cars sold in 2008 - is due in large measure to the spectacular success of scrappage incentives in Germany. Here, Europe's largest market, last year's sales soared 23.2 per cent to the way and ahead highest level seen since reunification, thus averting almost single-handedly a near certain car sales famine.

With Germany taken fully out of the reckoning last year's West European sales fell 6.1 per cent. That's also reflected in the underlying competitive picture of last year's market. So much so in fact that Volkswagen Group stands out as the biggest overall winner in the leading pack. Buoyed a great deal by the strength of its domestic German market the

Western Europe Passenger Car Sales



AID Graph 10/01

Note: US = Light Vehicle Sales

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