



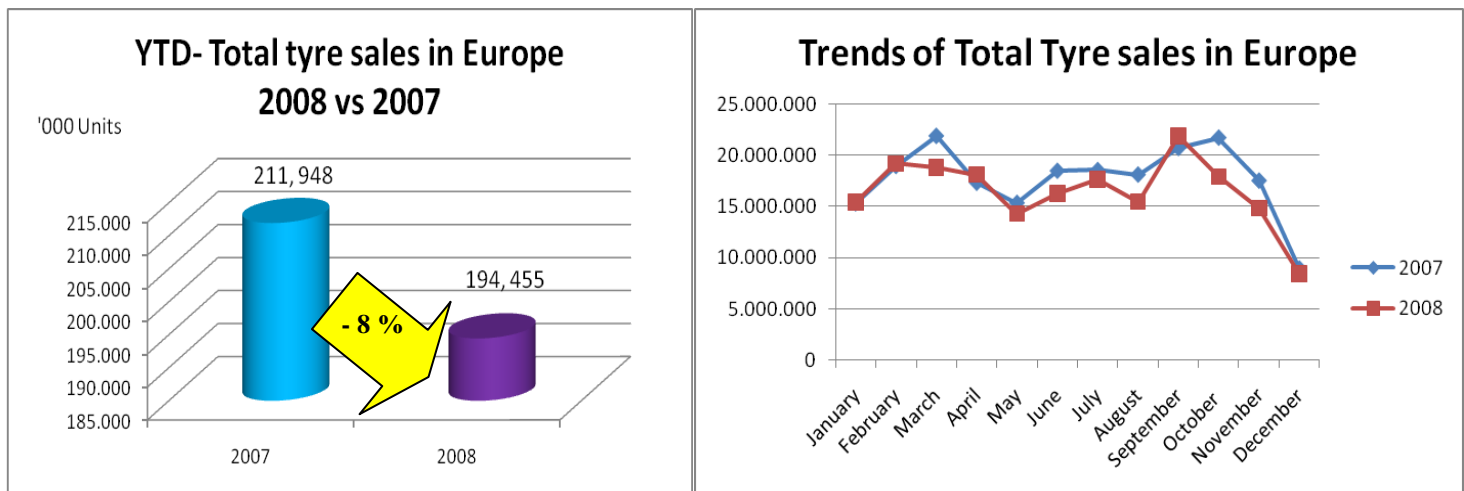
In 2008, all tyre markets drop

Brussels, 14th January 2009 – The demand for new tyres on the replacement market in the European Union + Norway and Switzerland **fell by 8%** in 2008 compared to last year. In particular sales of passenger car tyres decreased by – **8%** and sales of truck tyres by – **16%**.

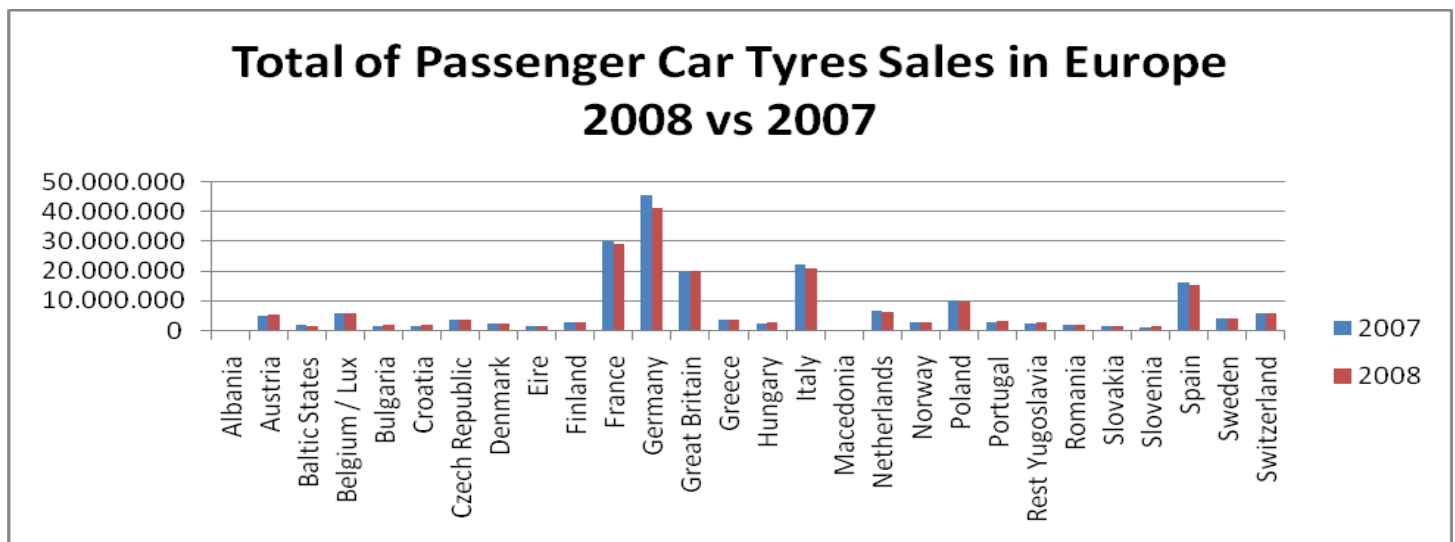
This severe European decline confirmed in December 2008 (-6 % in total and – 32% for truck tyres) reveals a continuous strong deterioration of tyre demand also observed in other markets: North America, Asia as well as South America. This demonstrates that the Tyre Industry is equally impacted by both the worldwide economic slowdown and the difficulties met by the automobile manufacturers.

Year 2008

Over the year, sales of new tyres started to decrease from May i.e. for eight consecutive months. The total 2008 tyre sales reached 194 455 964 units.

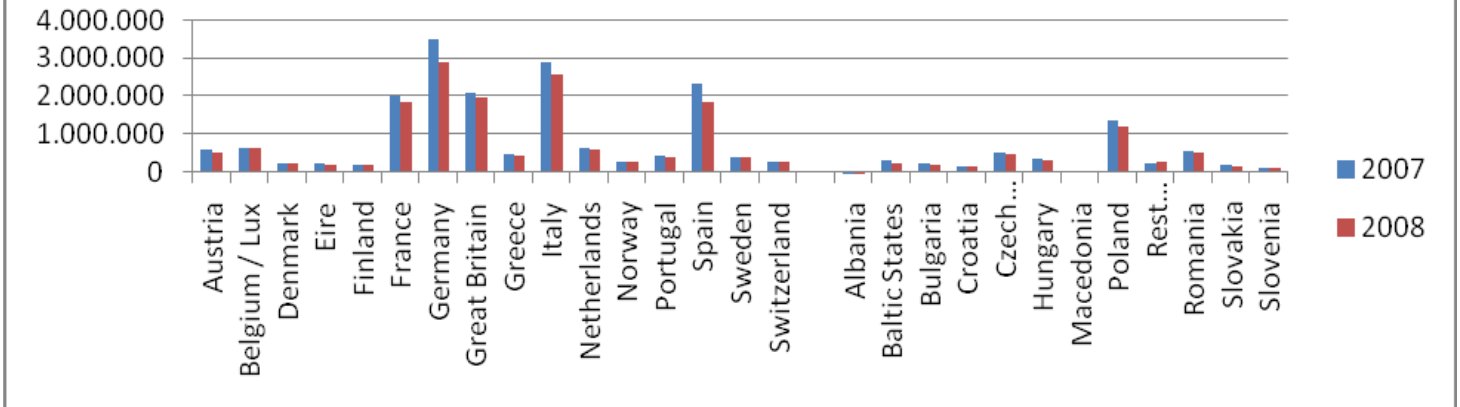


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Total of Truck Tyre Sales in Europe 2008 vs 2007



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The fall in worldwide tyre demand has compelled tyre manufacturers to take immediate actions to respond to exceptional costs due to under-utilization of capacity. This leads to significant cut back on tyre production – deemed necessary to maintaining some flexibility in 2009. The first months of the current year will tell us more about future expectations.

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