

# Automotive News Europe

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## After the Landwind disaster, ADAC will also crash the Brilliance limousine BS6

### No ESP, just two airbags and a 2-star safety rating

**Munich.** German auto club ADAC will smash after the China-built SUV Landwind also the new Brilliance BS6 limousine, which will be launched this month in Europe. "We will do a crash test for sure. But we will test a car that we purchase, not one that is given to us [by the carmaker]," an ADAC spokesman told *Automotive News Europe* (ANE). He said the test "may happen within days or weeks." The BS6 has no ESP, just two airbags and the car received only two out of 5 stars in Euro NCAP-style crash test carried out by the TÜV Nord German testing organization. Last year the Chinese automaker Jiangling Motors Company stopped sale of the China-built Landwind SUV after it badly failed an ADAC-run crash test.

Hans-Ulrich Sachs, managing director HSO Motors Europe, Brilliance's importer for Europe, is confident that Brilliance's market launch will not be stalled because of safety concerns. "We have two small things that we have to correct," he told ANE. The BS6 sedan is due to arrive at European dealers this month. The car is built by Chinese automaker Brilliance Jinbei Automotive in a joint-venture factory with BMW in Shenyang, near China's border with North Korea. The plant also builds BMW's 3- and 5-series models for China.

## Mercedes: More components from eastern Europe

**Stuttgart.** Mercedes-Benz will double its purchasing of components for the next C class from eastern Europe, a high-level company executive told *Automotive News Europe* (ANE). The new C class will buy 28.5 percent of its production material for the C class from automotive suppliers in eastern Europe, compared with 17 percent for the current model. Overall sourcing for components from non-traditional markets outside western Europe and North America will rise to 45 percent from 30 percent. Most of the components will be electronic components, including CD changers.

Frank Deiss, vice president and head of material purchasing at Mercedes Car Group, would not comment on exact figures for the next C class. But he told ANE that emerging markets will play a larger role in Mercedes purchasing in the future. "We don't take enough advantage of emerging markets." Mercedes plans to significantly increase volume out of China or India over the next few years, Deiss said. At the moment, less than 10 percent of Mercedes' purchasing comes from the Asia-Pacific region.

Mercedes is already using Chinese suppliers for production of the E class at a DaimlerChrysler factory near Beijing. But Deiss said he will consider using these suppliers for deliveries to Germany as well.

## Fiat may sue Chinese carmaker Great Wall Motor

### The doors of the new Iperì minicar look the same as those on the Panda

**Turin.** – Fiat may sue the Chinese carmaker Great Wall Motor, because some technical details of the new Iperì minicar are equal to Fiat's Panda. Fiat executives told *Automotive News Europe* (ANE), the doors on the Iperì look exactly the same as those on the Fiat Panda, Europe's best-selling minicar. "We are currently considering legal action," a high-level Fiat Auto executive told ANE. Doors and doorframes are the most complicated and expensive parts to engineer in a car bodyshell, industry experts say.

Great Wall, which makes SUVs and pickups, plans to start selling the Iperì in Europe next year. The Iperì was unveiled at the Beijing auto show last month. Great Wall began selling its Hover large SUV in Italy in October. "By the end of 2007, we will be selling our vehicles in nine European markets," Great Wall General Manager Wang Fengying told ANE. Western carmakers such as General Motors and Honda have failed to win legal battles in China over alleged counterfeiting of their products by Chinese carmakers.

## Mercedes plans S-class convertible

**Munich.** – Mercedes-Benz will show an S-class convertible concept at the Detroit auto show, which begins January 7. A Mercedes source told *Automotive News Europe*, that the production of the four-door car is planned within a year. The V-12-powered convertible concept will have a softtop folding roof. The 1950s Mercedes 300 convertible inspired the concept, the source said.

## Rolls-Royce will debut convertible in Detroit

**Munich.** – Rolls-Royce will debut a convertible version of its Phantom luxury sedan at the Detroit auto show, CEO Ian Robertson told *Automotive News Europe* (ANE). Robertson declined to disclose the name for the four-seat convertible. Rolls-Royce convertibles traditionally have used the name Corniche. The BMW-owned British luxury brand debuted a convertible concept at the 2004 Geneva auto show called the 100EX. Many of the features on the 100EX will be on the production model, Robertson said. These include a stainless-steel engine hood and a teak panel that covers the roof when it is folded.

## Hyundai CEO: We stop convertible plans

**Munich.** – Hyundai has postponed plans to build a Golf-sized coupe convertible in its new plant in Nosovice, Czech Republic. "Cost is the issue," Hyundai Europe President Ike Oh told *Automotive News Europe*. "We are investigating how profitable the car will be." Hyundai Europe wants a coupe convertible to boost its image. The coupe-convertible segment is expanding with new entries including the Ford Focus Coupe Cabriolet, Volkswagen Eos and Opel Astra TwinTop. Oh said: "We are discussing this matter with Korea continuously and we hope they find a solution to continue the development eventually."