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**The Europcar Transportation & Mobility Observatory
finds the economic crisis has changed Europeans' relationship with
their cars – but how far will they go?**

- *90% of those surveyed have changed their driving habits for cost reasons in the past 12 months*
- *Four out of 10 Europeans could consider doing without one of their car – double the number in 2008*
- *In this context, car rental represents an alternative to ownership for one out of two Europeans who consider giving up one of their cars*

Europcar, the European leader in passenger car and light utility vehicle rental, today released the findings of the second edition of the Europcar Transportation and Mobility Observatory. This survey, which aims to decipher European practices in this area and identify new types of behavior, is based on responses from more than 5,000 people, age 18 and over, in seven European countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK. This year's edition was conducted in partnership with polling institute Ipsos.

Drivers are changing their habits, mainly for economic reasons

In the past 12 months, European drivers have changed the way they drive (nearly 7 out of 10 surveyed), but also how much they drive, with 6 out of 10 using their car less often, especially for short distances. The French and Portuguese have changed their driving habits the most, at approximately 94% compared with 90% for Europeans as a whole.

In fact, some 40% of European drivers are considering doing away with one of their household cars – more than double the number (18%) who said they were considering that in the Observatory's 2008 edition. Italians topped the list of respondents saying they could give up one of their cars at nearly 55% (up from 19% in 2008), followed by respondents in Spain (47% in 2009) and France (40% in 2009, 35% in 2008). While falling to 6th place, more Germans were willing to consider giving up their cars this year (29%) than in 2008 (17%) when it placed 3rd.

As was the case last year, the primary reason behind such a radical move remains the cost of ownership: 83% of respondents who are willing to do without one of their cars said it could be for financial reasons (up from 66% in 2008), compared with 48% for environmental considerations.

At the same time, 93% of those surveyed said they appreciate the freedom and independence of having a car.

Car rental is an attractive alternative for one out of two Europeans who consider giving up one of their cars

What alternative means of transportation would Europeans use if they don't drive their cars? The survey reveals that in terms of mobility strategies, 80% of respondents would first turn to public transportation (bus, subway, rail), followed by walking and cycling. For individual motorized transportation, car rental was the leading alternative at 53% -- and even 60% in France and Spain --, followed by carpooling (48%), and two-wheeled motor vehicles (35%).

If 60% of Europeans who have not hired a car in the past 12 months see car rental as a good solution for vacations and long journeys, 50% of respondents also like it for weekends and short trips. Car rental is also increasingly seen as "utilitarian": 58% of those surveyed said they would turn to car rental when moving house or when their personal car is being repaired, up from 23% in 2008.

"We launched our Observatory last year to detect trends and anticipate needs in transportation and mobility across Europe," noted Guirec Grand-Clement, Europcar Global Sales and Marketing Director. "It has proven to be a timely decision. As the second edition shows, the economic crisis has prompted Europeans to take stock of their real mobility requirements and the various options available to meet them. European drivers have already changed their approach significantly and are giving serious consideration to still more changes. As the European leader in our industry, we will continue to explore these trends and offer responses to meet the new needs of today and tomorrow."

5 types of car drivers in Europe with very different mobility strategies

The Europcar Observatory findings revealed five main categories of drivers in Europe, according to: 1) respondents' attachment to car ownership and 2) the degree to which their relationship with the car is changing.

The 5 categories are:

1. "No choice dependents"

These are primarily people living in rural areas, where there are no alternative means of transportation. Having their own car gives them freedom and independence; it is also necessary for them to be mobile. They are sensitive to cost, however, and have had to change their driving habits significantly for that reason. For these drivers, car rental does not appear to be more practical and economical than owning a car.

2. "Detached urbanites"

These drivers do not like cars in general and, of the five categories, they are the most likely to support a ban on cars in city centers. Most of them would consider doing away with their car. Their primary alternative would be public transportation.

3. "Strategic nomads"

These drivers are considering doing away with their car for both cost and environmental reasons. They draw on the complete range of alternatives to get around – from public transport and walking to car rental and car sharing – depending on their particular need or activity at any given time. Most of these drivers have already rented or have considered renting a vehicle, and recognize that it allows them to adapt the car to their needs while being practical, ecological and economical.

4. "Car lovers"

These drivers love cars in general. They are attached to their car and use it for most of their journeys. They are nonetheless open to car rental, which is perceived as practical and an opportunity to try a new car.

5. "Exclusive owners"

When it comes to mobility, these drivers can only reason in terms of their own car. There is no question of them giving up ownership. If they care about environmental issues at all, it is not in the context of their car.

About Europcar

Europcar is the European leader in passenger car and light utility vehicle rentals. The company serves business and leisure customers throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia-Pacific. Excluding franchise operations, in 2008 Europcar signed more than 10 million rental contracts, with 8,000 employees and a fleet exceeding 225,000 vehicles. In September 2008, Europcar and U.S. market leader Enterprise Rent-A-Car joined forces in a strategic commercial alliance to form the world's largest car rental network, with more than 1.2 million vehicles and 13,000 locations around the world. Europcar is owned by the French investment company Eurazeo.

Europcar is the European market leader and is also leading in its environmental approach to car rental. It opened its first "environmental agency" in Paris in 1999, and in 2008 it was the first company in Europe to have its "Environmental Charter" – which formalizes its commitments in favor of sustainable development -- certified by Bureau Veritas. In 2008, Europcar was also the first company ever to win the World Travel Award for "the World's Leading Green Transport Solution Company."

For more information: www.europcar.com

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