FIAT GROUP AUTOMOBILES IRELAND STATEMENT

REGARDING 2013 NUMBER PLATE CHANGES

**Highlights:**

* FIAT Group Automobiles Ireland cautiously welcomes changes to number plate system
* 131 / 132 identifier accommodates second buying period in July of 2013
* While change is welcome, FGAI fears it won’t go far enough to change old buyer habits
* As long as year identifier remains, sales will remain skewered towards beginning of year
* Ease of identification of 2013 vehicles and high character count the amongst concerns

**Press Release:**

Fiat Group Automobiles Ireland cautiously welcomes proposed changes to the number plate system which is being reported in the media today. If the reports, which indicate that the "13" prefix will be replaced by "131" for the January-June period and "132" for the July-December period, are accurate then this is positive development for the Irish Motor Industry and one which FIAT Group Automobiles supports in general terms.

The good news, however, is tinged somewhat with disappointment that the changes don't go far enough to allay concerns over the seasonality of the Irish car market which causes numerous problems for distributors, dealers and consumers alike.

Unless the year identifier is eradicated altogether from Irish number plates, FIAT Group Automobiles Ireland believes that 25 years of Irish car buying habits are unlikely to change and most buyers will continue to purchase their cars in the first three months of the year.

Fiat Group Automobiles is also concerned at the increasingly cluttered nature Irish number plates. While the likes of Germany and the UK have a maximum of seven characters on its number plates, Ireland could potentially have number plates with as many as ten or eleven characters, thereby rendering them even more difficult to read and recall.

The Irish Motor Industry hugely important to the overall Irish economy - it employs 37,000 people in every corner of the country; it makes up a disproportionately large percentage of the state's overall tax revenue and it is widely used by economists as a barometer of overall consumer confidence in Ireland.

The reported changes in the number plate system for 2013 demonstrate that the government is willing to work with the Industry and FIAT Group Automobiles views the number plate revisions as a very positive first step, but hopes that further engagement and cooperation with the government will follow and more positive revisions can be introduced in the near future.

- Ends -