

## Škoda Auto's sales down by 7% at 435,600 units in Jan-Aug

The car maker Škoda Auto sold 435,600 units worldwide in Jan-August this year, a drop of around 7% compared with the previous year, Reinhard Jung said at a press conference at the International Motor Show in Frankfurt yesterday.

However, sales in July and August surpassed last year's sales.

According to Jung, Skoda fared better compared to the development in the global market and it expects positive figures at end-Q3 as well.

In the first half of 2009, sales decreased by a tenth to 330,000 units due to the economic crisis, which is, however, partially softened by the car-scrapping scheme introduced in Europe, mainly in Germany.

The firm wants to deal with the crisis by launching new models. In spring, it started selling the Skoda Yeti sport utility vehicle and it introduced a new Superb Combi model and a new Octavia model using LPG in Frankfurt yesterday.

The firm expects to sell around 2,000 Superb Combi cars, the production of which is to be launched in October, by end-2009, spokesman Evzen Krauskopf said at the motor show yesterday.

According to earlier information, Skoda Auto plans to sell around 600,000 units this year, which would be a drop of 10 percent against last year.

Czech car output may grow this year up to 1 million units from last year's 950,000 thanks to the car-scrapping scheme introduced in Europe, Martin Jahn, president of the Czech Automotive Industry Association (SAP), told CTK at the motor show yesterday.

"The Czech car industry managed to deal with the crisis quite well. Skoda, TPCA, Hyundai and suppliers profited notably from the European car-scrapping premium and so the impact...was not so tragic as expected at the beginning," Jahn said. Most firms were able to balance production shutdown by cutting costs, not only by dismissing staff, Jahn added.