

Source: / www.dougjack.co.uk/western-europe-bus-and-coach-registrations.html

European Registrations Hold Up Well

Although there is still some talk of financial doom and gloom, registrations of new buses and coaches in Western Europe have held up remarkably well.

Detailed analysis has been carried out on registrations of new vehicles, above 8.0 tonnes gross, in the 15 “original” EU countries, plus Norway and Switzerland. As the chart shows, overall registrations fell from 22,149 in 2013 to 21,802 in 2014. That is a fall of less than two percent which is certainly not serious.

Looking at registrations of Class I city buses, they were practically level at 10,017 in 2013 and 10,006 in 2014. In the last four years from 2011 they have been remarkably consistent and always within a margin of less than one percent over than period.

Registrations of Class II interurban vehicles also remained strong, while demand for Class III express coaches declined overall, despite the de-regulation of the German market. Most of the shortfall can attributed to Class III luxury coaches for touring and private hire.

There are a number of reasons for that. Many people have less disposable income, especially those who have retired. They have cut back on coach tours. Also, many of these vehicles are owned by smaller companies, often families. They have tended to keep vehicles for longer and some of them have found it difficult to obtain bank finance to purchase new vehicles.

That is a vicious circle which is a cause for concern in the manufacturing industry. The longer they retain their existing vehicles, the more difficult it will be to bridge the financial gap to buy new coaches. On the other hand, it means that the valuations of used coaches, up to and around six years old, remain good, because of their relative scarcity.

Looking at the registrations overall in 2013 and 2014, Portugal and Greece have both fallen sharply and there is little prospect of them returning to their traditional volumes for several years. Registrations in Italy and Spain have also been substantially down on pre-crisis levels, although Spain is showing welcome signs of some recovery.

On the other hand, most of the Northern European markets have held up well, and, in some cases, registrations increased compared with the previous year. In the Nordic markets, there is strong political and social pressure to replace older and more polluting vehicles with new low emission buses and coaches.

The European Union has set tough targets to cut carbon emissions by 2020. Because the average bus and coach has a life of at least 15 years, the oldest vehicles have much more polluting engine exhaust systems. Their replacement will be essential.

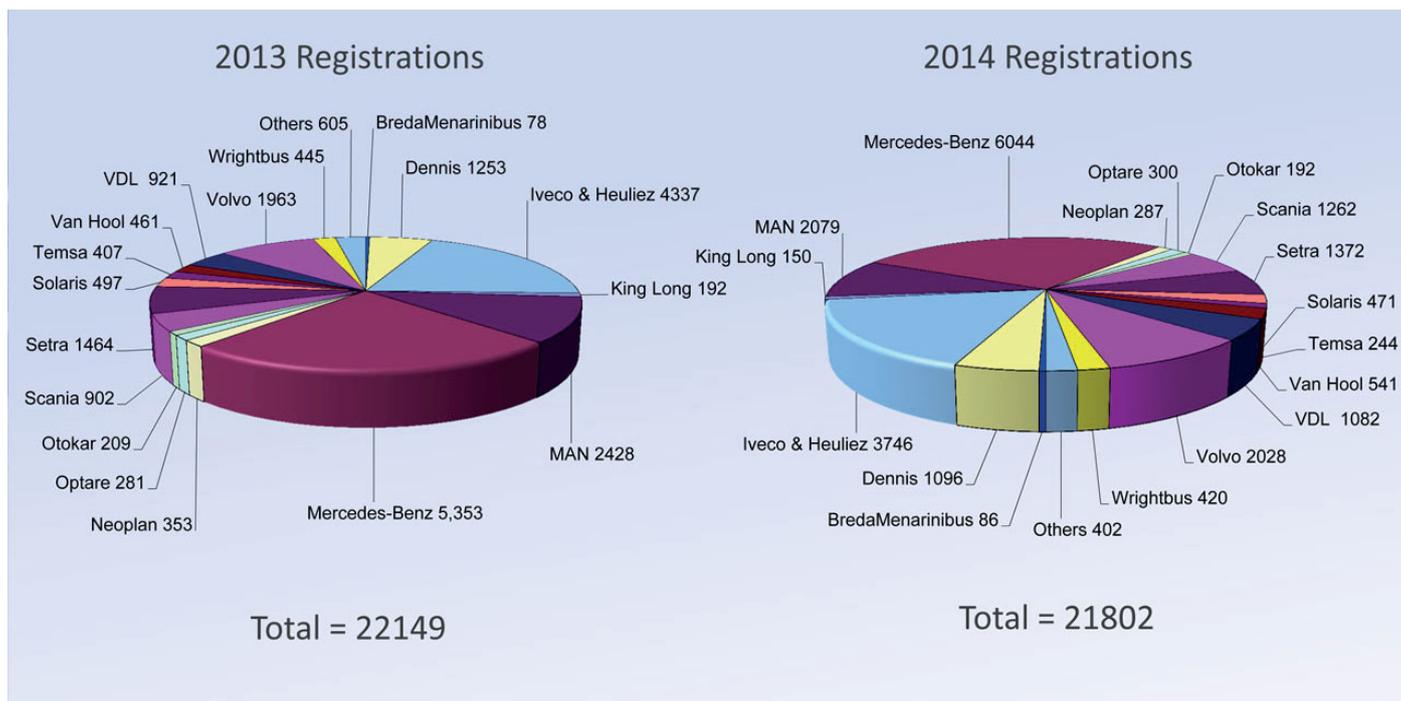
Having reached the middle of 2015, the forecast for the full year registrations is predicted to be around five percent than 2014. There is continued weakness in some of the southern European countries, although Italy is talking about leasing large numbers of city buses to reduce average age profiles. That will not come through in registration statistics before 2016.

While there were some serious doubts about the introduction to Euro6 vehicles they are now well accepted.

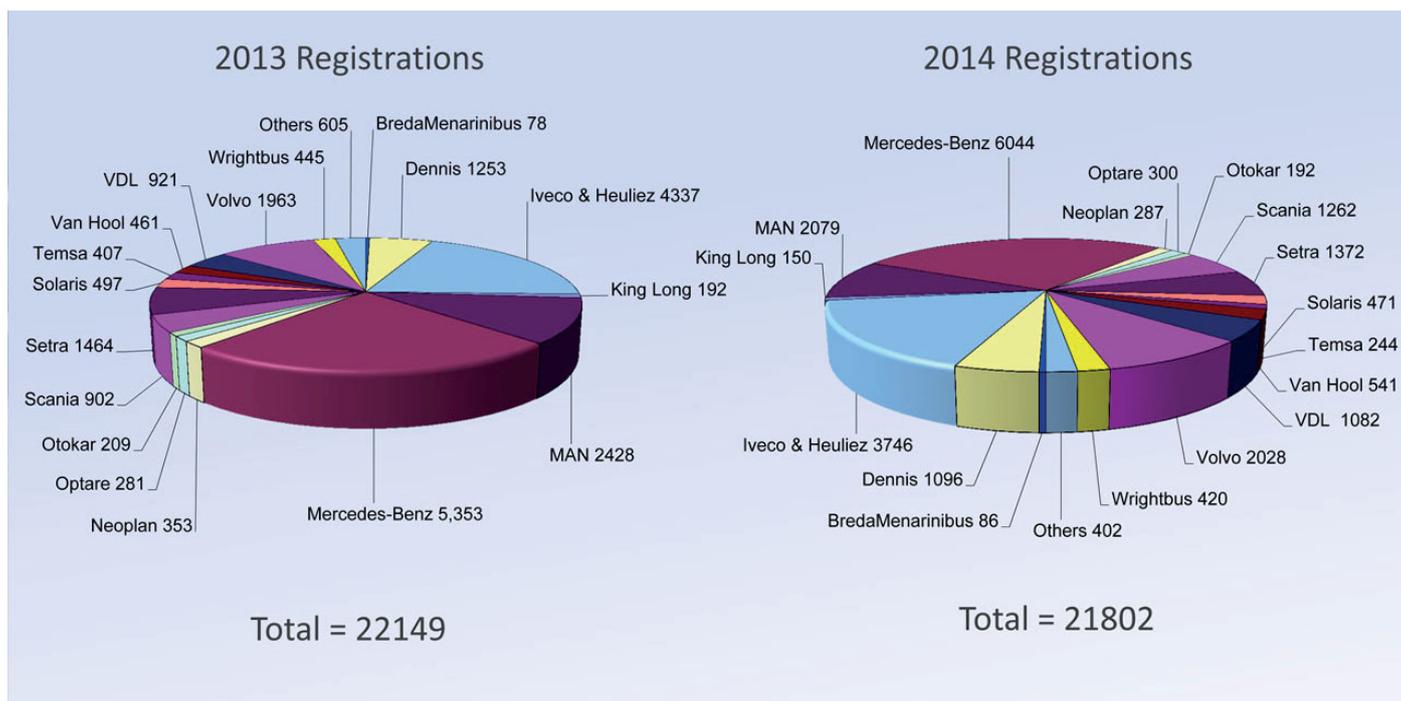
Transport Resources International Ltd

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Operators are finding that the superior fuel consumption, compared with previous emission levels, is helping to offset the higher initial price.



Western Europe Bus and Coach Registration Totals (over 8 tonnes gross) for 2013 and 2014



Western Europe City Bus Registration Totals (over 8 tonnes gross) for 2013 and 2014