

Russian car sales growth slowing-AEB

By Sonia Elks

Nov 9 (Reuters) – The pace of Russian car sales growth halved in October to 5 percent compared with September and could fall further in the coming months, industry data showed on Friday.

“For a while now, the market has been feeling a cooldown in consumer appetite,” said Joerg Schreiber, chairman of the Automobile Manufacturers Committee of the Association of European Businesses (AEB).

AEB said some consolidation was expected in the second half of the year and the market remained on track for sales of 2.85 million cars and light commercial vehicles in 2012.

AEB said 253,732 units were sold in October, and sales in the first 10 months of 2012 were up by 13 percent to 2.4 million.

“Retail registrations are still performing above prior year level, supported by robust order banks generated in the first half of the year and a visible increase in market incentives in recent weeks,” Schreiber said.

“Current new order intake however is generally slower compared with the same period one year ago, and will impact sales performance in the coming months.”

Western carmakers including General Motors, Ford , Renault and Fiat are investing heavily in Russia to take advantage of a market that is expected to overtake Germany as Europe’s biggest some time this decade.