Bayerische Motoren Werke AG (BMW), the biggest luxury-car maker, was fined 156 million Swiss francs ($163 million) by competition authorities for preventing vehicle sales to Swiss customers in other European countries.

The fine was imposed on Munich-based BMW for “impeding direct and parallel imports,” the Swiss Competition Commission said today in a statement. It plans to provide further details in a briefing at 9:30 a.m. local time.

Swiss regulators said Oct. 26, 2010, they had information suggesting BMW branches were barring sales to Swiss citizens in the European Economic Area, which includes the 27 members of the European Union, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

In Switzerland, BMW was selling the 5-Series sedan from 62,200 Swiss francs ($65,090) as of late 2010, including a 7.6 percent value-added tax, according to the company’s website. The starting price for the same car in Germany, sales tax included, was 41,900 euros ($52,660).

BMW stock has gained almost 20 percent this year, the second-biggest advance in the nine-member Bloomberg Europe Autos Index, which is up 14 percent, valuing the German company at 39.7 billion euros.

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