

PRESS RELEASE

European EV sales surge 51% as Middle East conflict puts oil dependence in the spotlight

- European BEV registrations surged 51% in March 2026, with over 242,000 new electric cars registered across 15 key EU markets, accounting for 22% of all new car sales.
- More than 500,000 electric cars were registered across the EU in Q1 2026 – enough to reduce oil consumption by two million barrels per year – underscoring the strategic as well as environmental significance of accelerating EV adoption.
- All five of Europe's largest countries recorded BEV growth above 40%, as renewed Middle East conflict sharpens focus on the continent's oil dependence.

20/04/2026 – European battery electric vehicle (BEV) registrations surged 51% in March 2026 across 15 key EU + EFTA markets, as renewed conflict in the Middle East brought the continent's reliance on oil sharply into focus. New data published today by New Automotive and E-Mobility Europe reveals that over 224,000 new electric passenger cars were registered in March alone, accounting for 22% of all new car sales across tracked markets (and an estimated 21.2% EU-wide).

In the first quarter of 2026, EU member states registered more than 500,000 new electric cars, a 33.5% increase on the same period last year.

Chris Heron, Secretary-General of E-Mobility Europe, said:

“March's surge in electric car sales is one of Europe's biggest recent gains in energy security, in a month when oil dependence has become a real vulnerability. Across the EU's major markets, EV sales are growing at rates above 40%, marking a clear step change, not statistical noise. That translates into half a million electric cars registered so far this year, cutting roughly two million barrels of oil demand annually.”

Growth across all major markets

BEV registrations accelerated across every major EU market in the first quarter of 2026. Europe's five largest countries - Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and Poland – all recorded BEV growth above 40% year-to-date. Key highlights include:

- Italy shifting gears with BEV registrations up 65% year-to-date. Having stagnated at around 5% market share at the end of 2025, Italy's BEV share grew to 8.6% in March.
- Germany is rebounding strongly following the introduction of new incentives, with around one in four cars registered in March fully electric – a 42% year-to-date increase.

- France continues to lead among large markets with a 28% BEV share in March, underpinned by its social leasing scheme, and nearly 50% year-to-date growth.
- Nordic countries remain at the vanguard. In Denmark, 76.6% of all new cars registered in March were fully electric; in Finland, the figure reached nearly 50%, with both markets recording strong growth.
- Norway continues to set the global benchmark, with 98.4% of new car registrations in March fully electric.

Energy security as a catalyst for change

The data comes at a moment when Europe's dependence on imported oil is under renewed political scrutiny. Analysts and policymakers have increasingly pointed to the transport sector's reliance on fossil fuels as a structural vulnerability. March's figures suggest that consumers and fleets are already accelerating their decisions to switch to electric, even before impacts from the ongoing oil crisis are fully reflected in data.

Ben Nelmes, CEO of New Automotive, said:

"These numbers tell a story about more than the car market. Every electric vehicle registered means Europe is less reliant on imported oil. At a time when energy security has moved to the top of the political agenda, the EV transition is delivering real and measurable resilience. The pace of change we're now seeing across major European markets - including countries like Italy and Poland that were slower to start - suggests the transition has entered a new phase."

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Data covers new passenger car registrations across 15 European markets: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. These markets account for approximately 81% of the combined EU and EFTA car market.
- Data is aggregated from primary national sources, including government vehicle registries and national industry associations.
- For data enquiries, contact: data@newautomotive.org

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