

Pyongyang electric vehicle charging infrastructure

DETROIT -- While sales of electric vehicles surge in China, adoption of more environmentally friendly vehicles is stumbling in the United States and Europe as carmakers and governments struggle to meet years-old promises about affordability and charging stations.

Solar panels power charging at Detlef Mueller-Salis' home in Mainz, Germany, so he thought he was all set to go electric. But range concerns, charging times and confusing charging payment methods have proved frustrating.

The smaller Fiat could run 220 kilometers (136.70 miles) on a charge in summer and 180 in winter, he said, against the manufacturer's specification of 320 kilometers. Constantly checking the battery before quick trips to visit grandchildren and elder parents grew annoying.

So did going on vacation with payment cards from five different charging plans. The Porsche took 30 minutes to charge instead of the 22 minutes advertised, not a huge difference but "not what the company promised," said Mueller-Salis, who is retired from a logistics company. Driving fast on the autobahn reduced range so that "you paid for it with charging time."

Both retirees in their 70s, Ken and Roxanne Honeycutt mainly drive their used Kia Soul around their town near Oakland, California. They charge the EV, with a range of about 111 miles (179 kilometers), in their garage and don't rely much on public infrastructure. But for longer trips they have to plan fast charging stops ahead of time.

"We wanted to try it," Roxanne said of the EV. "Sometimes we found that the charging stations don't always work, they're broken down, so that gives you a little bit of anxiety if you know okay, I need to charge."

On one cold, rainy January day, the Soul's range dropped faster than expected, so they had to stop twice to charge. Another time, they hit multiple non-functioning chargers -- even in California, where EV adoption leads the rest of the country. Their range dropped to 13 miles.

Electrified vehicle sales will reach 17 million this year, or one car in five sold globally, according to the International Energy Agency. That includes plug-in hybrids that combine electric with internal combustion motors.

Higher prices matter. A Volkswagen ID. 3 hatchback costs 39,995 euros (about \$42,090), compared to the similar-sized Volkswagen Golf fuel engine version at 27,180 euros (\$29,136), according to the ADAC auto association.



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U.S. EV prices have fallen significantly since 2022, but the average price in October for a new one, \$56,902, still exceeded the average \$48,623 for a new vehicle. It remains an issue for the more mainstream American consumers EV makers hope to target, according to a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago.

EV sales plunged in Germany early this year after the government abruptly cancelled the purchase premium of 6,750 euros for cars up to 40,000 euros and 4,500 euros for cars up to 65,000 euros. ADAC says that means most internal combustion models are a better deal over a car's lifetime.

Conservative political parties and the industry are now questioning the EU's goal of eliminating most fuel engine vehicles by 2035, a decision that's up for review in 2026. The European Auto Manufacturers' Association is urging that carbon dioxide limits which carmakers must meet by 2026 or face heavy fines be relaxed. Some carmakers have pushed back electrification plans.

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