

## Latvia electric vehicle adoption

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CO2 emissions exert a profound influence on climate and the environment, fueling the greenhouse effect and contributing significantly to global climate change. Nearly one-fourth of these emissions worldwide can be attributed to the transportation sector. Electric vehicles (EVs) emerge as a promising solution, potentially acting as a carbon-neutral alternative when powered by renewable energy sources. This underscores their pivotal role in mitigating the impact of traditional combustion engine vehicles on the environment.

The Electric Vehicle market is divided into distinct two distinct markets, namely Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs). This categorization allows for a nuanced understanding of the market dynamics, considering the specific attributes and market penetration of each electric vehicle type. The emphasis on new car sales and their foundational configurations ensures clarity, while the exclusion of used vehicles and customizations maintains focus on the evolving landscape of electric vehicles.

The head of the Latvian Auto Association, Andris Kulbergs, said that electric vehicles in Latvia are still considerably less popular than in other European countries.

Last year the largest increase – up to 2.5% – was due to the purchase by two companies, namely Fiqsy purchased 100 shared electric vehicles and the international shipping company DPD bought 15 electric vehicles. The number of electric cars purchased this year is just 1.5% of total sales.

He said: "The hockey championship contributed greatly this year. 80 new Skoda electric vehicles were sold at a special share price. The second thing we are observing is that second-hand electric cars are imported into Latvia every month. Of course, the number is low - 1%, but last month there was a record: 58 or half of all imported cars were BMW, which is very popular among women living in Riga and the vicinity, who have their own private homes and have a small daily mileage, 100 to 150 kilometers."

The purchase of more than 40 environmentally-friendly vehicles is undertaken by the international delivery company DPD. Currently, packages in Riga, Liepaja and Gulbene are transported with 12 electric cars.

DPD Chief Executive Jānis Grants said that the company is committed to reducing CO2 emissions and that shipments will only be transported by electric cars in Riga in 2025.

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“Very comfortable driving, there is no vibration, and in terms of equipment, they are usually better equipped than conventional vehicles. What is not so beautiful - we are currently using Volkswagen Crafter, but the maximum capacity it can travel is 150 km, practically within 100 km. What we'd like to see in the future is more battery power and the ability to make 200, even 400 km.”

He also said: “If we are talking about private transport, there are enough vehicles to choose from, but commercial transport has little choice. A couple of years back, when we started testing the first electric car, prices were twice as high as a car with an internal combustion engine. Prices have now become more affordable.”

The bank Luminor economist, Pēteris Strautiņš, believes that businesses will especially appreciate the benefits of the electric car in the long run.

The European Green Course aims to make the European Union the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The phasing-out of petrol and diesel car sales is planned by a number of European countries, with Norway planning to do so by 2025.

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