

German ev charging points

Learn interesting facts about charging options for electric cars in general and about the charging infrastructure in Germany in particular.

In Germany, around 130,560 plug-in hybrids and 34,357 pure electric vehicles were sold in 2018. With up to 3.4 million registrations annually in total, these two market segments together account for a market share of just under five percent. In the previous year, only 25,056 pure electric cars were registered. This indicates a positive trend.

The moderate market share contrasts with the expectations of the target group. According to a panel study by the British opinion research institute YouGov, 55% of drivers see the e-car as the means of transport of the future. Nevertheless, in addition to the purchase price and range, respondents cited the distance to the nearest charging station as a key hurdle before making a purchase.

A project designed to make everyday life easier for e-mobilists comes from Apple. The American tech company has started to include the charging stations of the operator Chargepoint in its digital street maps. However, this function is not yet available in Germany.

The European Alternative Fuels Observatory (EAFO), which is funded by the European Commission, currently counts 16,055 electric charging stations in Germany with a total of 48,367 connections. For 2020, the German government's National Platform for Electromobility (NPE) anticipates a need for 70,000 public charging points, including 7,100 fast-charging stations.

In 2018, the number of charging points in Germany increased by more than 340%. In absolute terms, Germany is the European leader with 48,367 charging points. However, if you compare this figure with the country's surface area and population, it becomes clear that others are leading the way in terms of electromobility. While Germany's e-mobilists found a charging station every 111 kilometers on average in 2016, in the Netherlands it was only seven kilometers away.

In order to make improvements, the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure issued the first 26 funding notices for charging columns totaling a good 550,000 euros on June 9, 2017. The program is intended to establish a nationwide charging infrastructure with 15,000 charging stations. To this end, the ministry is providing a total of 300 million euros by the end of 2020, two-thirds of which for fast chargers.

The head of the electric mobility division at Mercedes-Benz, J?rgen Schenk, however, urges calmness. Thanks to advances in battery development, there will soon be an oversupply of charging stations. Ranges of 500 kilometers and more are on the horizon. At that point, fast chargers along the highway will be sufficient.

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Alongside BMW and Audi, Nissan is one of the suppliers most advanced in wireless charging. The Japanese are currently testing a system in which semi-autonomous e-cars exchange information, automatically navigate to the charging point and clear it for other vehicles once the power snack has been taken.

But this is still a long way from exhausting the technology. The next step is inductive power consumption at low speeds over short distances, known as semi-dynamic charging. Examples include cab stands, traffic lights and railroad crossings. In Braunschweig and Berlin, some e-buses are already being charged with electricity at bus stops on a trial basis. The final stage of development would be dynamic charging while the vehicle is in motion. An EU project called Fabric is underway on a test route in France. The idea is to install a series of charging plates in one lane of the highway that inductively supply electricity to the traction batteries of electric cars at speeds of 120 km/h.

Setting up a Type 2 charging station with two charging points costs around 10,000 euros today, while a fast charger costs more than three times that. Thanks to rising unit sales, the price of a simple charging station is likely to drop by a quarter to 7,500 euros over the next three years. Nevertheless, it will not be possible to earn money in the medium term from the construction and operation of charging stations alone.

To the annoyance of customers, the payment modes at Germany's electric charging stations differ depending on the operator. They often require membership and each issue their own cards. With around 1,700 charging points, RWE currently maintains the densest network. Customers pay a basic monthly fee of EUR4.95, which also allows them to fill up with electricity at partner companies. This option is known as e-roaming. The Group charges a further 30 cents per kilowatt hour charged.

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