

Teslas turn toxic as sales crash in Europe and the UK

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EV sales in the region are growing, but not for Tesla.

JONATHAN M. GITLIN – FEB 5, 2025 10:10 AM |

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Tesla sales in Europe have driven off the dockside and into the water. Credit: HAKON MOSVOLD LARSEN/NTB/AFP via Getty Images



TEXT SETTINGS

Early car sales data for January is starting to arrive from countries across the pond, and they paint an alarming picture for Tesla. Sales are crashing in France, Germany, and the UK—all affluent countries that are key markets for Tesla's electric vehicles. Coming on the heels of a large financial miss, it's just one more problem for the automaker.

Tesla sales dropped around 13 percent across Europe in 2024, but so far this year, the scale of the problem is far greater. In France, sales of new Teslas fell by 63 percent, while total car sales in the country fell by just 6 percent, with EV sales dropping just half a percent.

Germany was already looking like lost ground for Tesla—its 41 percent drop in 2024 accounted for most of Tesla's lost sales across Europe. That must make the 59 percent drop in German Tesla sales recorded during January even more painful on the profit and loss statements.

Across the Channel, the British auto industry just released its sales data for January. Here, Tesla sales fell less precipitously—just 12 percent. However, battery EV sales were 35 percent higher in the UK in January 2025 than in January 2024. The cake is growing, but Tesla is getting to eat less and less of it.

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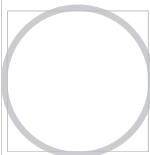
In fact, no Tesla cracked the UK's top 10 best-seller list last month, something that has regularly happened in the past, although that may be due to having just two models for sale in most markets.

Large declines have also been recorded in Sweden (44 percent), Norway (38 percent), and the Netherlands (42 percent).

Tesla's limited and outdated model range is undoubtedly a contributing factor to its poor sales in Europe, and the company must be hoping that the recently facelifted Model Y crossover can stimulate more traffic at its showrooms. Its investment in the Cybertruck is of no help in the region, as the steel-clad pickup truck is too large and heavy for use with a normal driver's license and does not conform to road legality regulations.

But the behavior of Tesla CEO Elon Musk could also be to blame for much of Europe's distaste for his cars. Lately,

Musk has repeatedly inserted himself into European politics to create friction and promote his far-right causes. Over there, at least, it seems car buyers may be sick of him.



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Jonathan is the Automotive Editor at Ars Technica. He has a BSc and PhD in Pharmacology. In 2014 he decided to indulge his lifelong passion for the car by leaving the National Human Genome Research Institute and launching Ars Technica's automotive coverage. He lives in Washington, DC.



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