



Ford cars could soon drive themselves off the assembly line – AI Trial aims to enhance European EV production

- Ford trials AI tech to enable electric vehicles produced at the Ford Cologne EV Centre, in Germany, to drive off the assembly line with no-one at the wheel
- Automated driving tech could enhance efficiency and safety at the plant. Vehicles also autonomously attend final testing, self-charge, and park up ready for delivery
- The E-SELF research project is among a range of initiatives designed to enhance the Ford Cologne EV Centre, where production of EVs begins this year
- By 2026, Ford plans to sell 600,000 EVs in Europe each year. Ford in Europe is committed to offering an all-electric portfolio of passenger vehicles by 2030

COLOGNE, Germany, April 12, 2023 – For more than 100 years, vehicles around the world have been rolling off Ford assembly lines. Until now, there has been somebody at the wheel, but this could soon be about to change.

Ford is trialling AI-powered automated driving technology designed to make the process more efficient. For the project, vehicles not only drive themselves off the assembly line, they also self-drive to final testing stations and self-charge before parking up ready for delivery to customers.

The E-SELF project is among a range of initiatives that Ford is exploring as it prepares the Ford Cologne EV Centre, in Germany – subject of a \$2 billion investment – where EV production will begin this year.

“Ford is reinventing its portfolio of vehicles in Europe and exploring how we produce our new EVs is integral to that process,” said Ford project lead Frank Schwarz. “Introducing self-driving technology to the assembly line could support efficiency and safety while enabling employees to focus on critical tasks.”

Last month, Ford unveiled the new all-electric Explorer that will be the company’s first electric passenger vehicle to be built at scale at the Ford Cologne EV Centre. By 2026, Ford plans to sell 600,000 EVs in Europe each year and is committed to offering an all-electric portfolio of passenger vehicles by 2030.

Ford is conducting the two-and-a-half-year trial with partners Institute of Automotive Engineering of the Technische Universität Braunschweig and Kopernikus Automotive. The Federal Ministry of Economy and Climate Protection provided €2 million funding.

The E-SELF project uses vehicle-to-infrastructure communication to control and monitor vehicles. Sensors located around the plant can identify hazards in the vehicle’s path, such as a person or another car, and vehicles are slowed or brought to a halt as required.

Final testing alone can involve a dozen or more trips between different locations before vehicles are parked up ready for collection and delivery by road, rail and ferry. Using AI technology, those vehicles would simply drive themselves and be charged and ready to go. It works for all vehicles equipped with an automatic transmission, electronic stability control, an electric handbrake and assisted steering; the only additional requirement is a smart communication unit to enable the interaction with the infrastructure.

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About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan, committed to helping build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams. The company's Ford+ plan for growth and value creation combines existing strengths, new capabilities and always-on relationships with customers to enrich experiences for customers and deepen their loyalty. Ford develops and delivers innovative, must-have Ford trucks, sport utility vehicles, commercial vans and cars and Lincoln luxury vehicles, along with connected services. The company does that through three customer-centered business segments: Ford Blue, engineering iconic gas-powered and hybrid vehicles; Ford Model e, inventing breakthrough EVs along with embedded software that defines exceptional digital experiences for all customers; and Ford Pro, helping commercial customers transform and expand their businesses with vehicles and services tailored to their needs. Additionally, Ford is pursuing mobility solutions through Ford Next, and provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. Ford employs about 173,000 people worldwide. More information about the company and its products and services is available at corporate.ford.com.

Ford, a global American brand woven into the fabric of Europe for more than 100 years, is committed to freedom of movement that goes hand-in-hand with looking after the planet and each other. The company's Ford+ plan, with Model e, Ford Pro and the Ford Blue business units is accelerating its European transformation to an all-electric and carbon neutral future by 2035. The company is driving forward with bold, new EVs, each one designed with European drivers in mind and innovating with services to help people connect, communities grow, and businesses thrive. Selling and servicing Ford vehicles in 50 individual European markets, operations also include the Ford Motor Credit Company, Ford Customer Service Division and 14 manufacturing facilities (eight wholly owned and six unconsolidated joint venture facilities) with four centres based in Cologne, Germany; Valencia, Spain and at our joint venture in Craiova, Romania and Kocaeli, Türkiye. Ford employs approximately 34,000 people at its wholly owned facilities and consolidated joint ventures and approximately 54,000 people including unconsolidated businesses across Europe. More information about the company, its products and Ford Credit is available at corporate.ford.com.

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