

AUTOMOTIVE

BMW, Audi, Porsche to bring major charging network to Europe

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BMW at-home charging station

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Luxury automakers BMW, Audi and Porsche are working together to establish electric vehicles as a more conventional means of travel by building a high-powered charging network in Europe.

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Within 2017, building should be underway for a massive electric vehicle-charging network that will give drivers of the ecofriendly vehicles easier means to travel long distance through Europe. BMW Group, Daimler AG, Ford Motor Company, Volkswagen Group, Audi and Porsche have all signed a memorandum of understanding to begin planning for the new system.

"The network will be a key milestone on the way to creating an international, brand independent, standardized charging infrastructure, especially for long distance battery electric vehicle (BEV) travel," said Oliver Scharfenberg, spokesperson for **Audi**. "We believe that range anxiety is the major challenge facing electric vehicle adoption today.

"As emobility is now at a turning point and the market ramps up, we have to make sure that our customers can take full advantage of the benefits of electric vehicles," he said. "That is why we plan to create a seamless, reliable charging infrastructure in Europe.

"It will reduce range anxiety and help increase consumer interest and adoption of BEVs."

Future of driving

The future electricity network will be the one of the fastest charging stations by far and have power levels up to 350 kilowatts. Construction will begin in 2017 at a projected 400 locations throughout Europe and by 2020, thousands should be deployed and usable for electric vehicle owners.



Porsche charging station

Automakers are hoping that a charging network such as this will ease consumers' fears of not being able to go on long road trips after purchasing an electric vehicle. Innovations and big changes are needed to move the auto industry forward and for consumers to be comfortable with big changes.

For instance, autonomous driving is making its way onto the roadway and an Audi executive explained at ad:tech New York 2016 the importance of educating the consumer on these technologies to combat fear.



Audi charging station

Driverless cars are making their journey to the mainstream, and during the Nov. 2 session, "Shifting Gears: How the Connected Car Will Change the Auto Industry," the executive discussed how the main goal is to introduce consumers to autonomous driving and make them comfortable with the idea. Audi is also working on integrating its in-car technology with infrastructure so that consumers will be informed of upcoming traffic lights, weather and pot holes while they travel ([see more](#)).

Audi, along with BMW, Porsche and the others, hope to install open-network charging stations throughout major highways to make it more feasible for electric vehicle drivers to travel long distance, with an experience that is indicative of stopping for gas.

Auto innovations

In other innovations, BMW's Indian subsidiary partnered with the nation's popular transportation application Ola on a luxury service, part of its plan to capture a share of the on-demand mobility trend.

As Ola's luxury category partner, BMW India helped launch Ola Lux, a premium passenger experience that will operate a fleet of the brand's cars. Combining BMW's aspirational positioning and its desire to be part of the future of mobility, this collaboration will allow BMW to introduce riders to its vehicles in an accessible way ([see more](#)).

BMW hopes to help support the growth of the auto industry into the future. The charging network will be a huge move for the market in Europe.

"The system will offer ultra- fast charging, which is three times faster than what is known as high performance networks today," Audi's Mr. Scharfenberg said. "The network will cover long-distance travel routes in Europe.

"By employing the Combined Charging System (CCS) charging standard, it is the first network to truly promote long-range and cross-border travel for all BEV drivers, independently of the brand," he said. "It complements the other necessary public charging infrastructure (i.e. inner-city charging) and will be open for cooperation with existing charging networks and infrastructure."

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