

Registrations of new passenger cars in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, September 2020

One out of five cars drives electrically

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In September, 21,454 new passenger cars hit the roads of Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2,765 or 11.4 percent fewer than in the same month last year. The effects of the corona crisis have thus led to a market decline of 27.7 per cent since the beginning of the year compared to 2019. The latest figures on alternative drives are much more encouraging. Their market share in September was a record 34.9 per cent, of which electric cars and plug-in hybrids alone accounted for 20.2 per cent. This means that one in five new passenger cars registered in September can be driven electrically and recharged on the power grid.

This year, light and shadow are close together in the Swiss market for new passenger cars. With only 163,556 new registrations after nine months, the overall market is heading for its worst car year since the mid-1970s, when the oil crisis caused demand for cars to collapse. The auto-suisse forecast of 240,000 registrations by the end of the year, which would mean a drop of around 23 per cent compared to the previous year, is likely to be difficult to achieve given the continuing effects of the corona crisis. At the same time, alternative drive systems are celebrating one record after another, especially in terms of market share. At a cumulative 24.1 per cent since the beginning of the year, almost one in four new passenger cars now has a hybrid, electric, CNG or fuel cell drive. By the same time a year ago, the alternative share was 11.6 per cent.

11.7 per cent share of plug-in vehicles after nine months

Electric cars and plug-in hybrids in particular are currently growing strongly and are setting a record month with 2,869 and 1,462 vehicles respectively placed on the market in September. In addition, they can benefit from the smaller overall market share. Fully electric models have increased their number of units by 26.5 per cent to 11,169 since the beginning of the year, thus increasing their market share from 3.9 to 6.8 per cent year-on-year. This picture is even clearer for plug-in hybrids. The 238.3 per cent growth in enrolments is offset by a five-fold increase in market share from 1.0 to 4.9 per cent after nine months. Hybrids without external charging facilities recorded an increase in new registrations of 39.1 percent, while their market share almost doubled from 6.3 to 12.0 percent within one year.

"Without the corona crisis, significantly more vehicles with alternative drive systems would have come to Switzerland this year," explains auto-suisse media spokesman Christoph Wolnik. The numerous plant closures during the lockdown in March and April would of course have put a damper on all forecasts: "We are pleased about the high market share of the new drive systems. However, this is being bought at a high price due to the sharp slump in the market as a whole". The negative economic impact on the Swiss automotive industry is enormous. In addition, despite the alternative boom, additional CO₂ sanctions are threatened for 2020 because numerous launches of new models with alternative drive systems have been postponed, Wolnik concluded.

The detailed figures by brand are available at www.auto.swiss.

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