



AD PUNCTUM

Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 28th December 2017 to 1st January 2018

News is arranged by company and topic. Stories that apply to more than one company or topic are duplicated.

News about the major automakers

FCA (history)

- An executive said that the next all-new Alfa Romeo product, an SUV, will be a “little bit bigger” (by around 200 kg) than the recently launched Stelvio. They also implied that the likely powertrain is a 48V 2.0 litre gasoline engine, citing some DNA problems with a plug-in hybrid. ([Detroit Bureau](#))

Ford (history)

- Experienced industrial unrest in Craiova, Romania -- employees staged an impromptu strike just before Christmas and this may continue in the new year. A recent internal memo reportedly asked whether workers wanted “a higher salary increase or to secure the future of this factory?”. ([World Socialist](#))

Hyundai / Kia

- Union leaders in South Korea pencilled in strike action beginning on January 2nd after talks on a new labour agreement failed to reach an agreement by the end of 2017. An earlier tentative agreement was rejected by workers in a ballot. ([Wards](#))

PSA (includes Opel/Vauxhall) (history)

- Reportedly meeting with French unions to discuss a new labour law that came into force during December. There is speculation that PSA wish to use the new regulations to make it easier to separate employees. ([Les Echos](#))

Renault (history)

- Reported final 2017 French market registrations of 673,869 units in total -- 554,505 Renault cars and LCVs and 119,357 Dacia vehicles. The total share was 26.4%, slightly down on 2016. ([Renault](#))

Toyota (history)

- A director at Toyota’s Indian JV said the government’s plan for all-electric vehicle sales by 2030 was “not practical and not the way forward”, calling for more leeway in meeting the underlying environmental aims. ([Times of India](#))

VW Group (history)

- Will reportedly create a new brand in China with joint venture partner JAC Motors with a portfolio made-up of re-badged SEAT vehicles. As part of the plan, some models may launch in China before traditional markets, including SEAT’s first electric vehicle. ([Autofactil](#))
- Porsche sources told a reporter at a recent test that the Mission E all-electric sports car will have three power levels: 300 kW, 400 kW and 500kW, with the higher power levels delivered through upgraded rear wheel drive units. The target starting price was said to be \$75,000 - \$80,000 with an annual sales goal of 30,000 units. ([Automobile](#))

- The German constitutional court ruled against VW's attempts to stop a special auditor appointed by shareholders from looking into the diesel scandal. ([Der Spiegel](#))
- Confirmed that the VW brand manufactured more than 6 million units in 2017, setting a new record and marking a return to form following the diesel scandal. ([VW](#))

Other

- **Ssanyong** announced global sales of 143,685 units in 2017, a decrease of (7.8)% from 2016. A 3% increase in South Korea partially offset a (29)% fall in export markets, mostly a c.(13)k drop in Tivoli. ([Ssanyong](#))

News about other companies and trends ...

Economic / Political News

- **China** acted to improve emissions levels by banning 553 vehicles from sale effective 1st January 2018. ([Xinhua](#))
- **Spain's** passenger car market had 1,234,931 registrations in 2017, an increase of 7.7% over 2016. ([ANFAC](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental (history)

- **SoftBank** said it had successfully closed its tender offer for 15% of **Uber**. Based on the share sale, Uber is valued at around \$48 billion. ([TechCrunch](#))

Driverless / Autonomy (history)

- **Didi Chuxing's** CEO said that he believes the company could be the second-best developer of self-driving cars -- behind only **Waymo/Google**. ([QZ](#))
- **Velodyne** said it was reducing the price of the VLP-16 lidar unit by "up to 50 percent". Although the press release contains no specific pricing, this implies unit costs of around \$4,000 for the 16-line unit. ([Velodyne](#))
 - Implication: In addition to being a market share grab / defence following on from a number of recent lidar announcements, recent improvements in signals processing hardware may mean that some groups are interested in using an array of 16-line units rather than waiting for more capable products to fall in price.

Electrification (history)

- **Shenzhen** completed the transition of its public transport bus fleet to 100% all-electric vehicles, meeting an earlier target commitment. The Chinese city has around 16,500 buses in service. Taxis are next on the list. ([EV Obsession](#))

Connectivity

- **Zurich Insurance** acquired telematics hardware supplier **Bright Box**. ([Telematics News](#))

Other

- **Repair bills** in the 2020s could be lower thanks to advances in self-healing glass by Japanese researchers. ([Autocar](#))