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Autos & Mobility Industry Briefing -- 17th September to 23rd September 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

BMW (history)

- Announced the UK Mini plant's annual shutdown will take place on 1st April (just after Brexit is supposed to take force) rather than during summer so that the plant will be closed in the event of any implementation chaos. ([Reuters](#))
- The EU launched a formal investigation into whether BMW, Daimler and VW colluded to restrict competition in emissions technology. ([Economic Times of India](#))
- BMW's development chief said the brand's cars will always have steering wheels and the change to autonomy will take three decades, starting from 2005, meaning a 20 year wait "until this applies to all parts of the world". ([Autocar](#))
- Radar developer Lunewave raised \$5 million from investors including BMW iVentures. ([Lunewave](#))
- Published the technical specifications for the new Z4, having earlier unveiled the new car's design. ([BMW](#))

Daimler (history)

- Co-led a \$155 million funding round in electric bus maker Proterra. BMW and GM are existing investors. ([ProTerra](#))
- The EU launched a formal investigation into whether BMW, Daimler and VW colluded to restrict competition in emissions technology. ([Economic Times of India](#))
- Daimler will retain its Aston Martin stake after the brand's IPO for at least 12 months. ([Aston Martin](#))

FCA (history)

- Calsonic (owned by KKR) has reportedly made a €5.8 billion bid for Magneti Marelli and has already lined up financing. Previous reports said FCA wanted €6 billion for the unit and KKR had only offered €5 billion. ([Reuters](#))
- Rumoured to be developing a new inline 6 cylinder gasoline engine based on the existing 4 cylinder GME engine. The new product is said to be earmarked for US plants. ([Allpar](#))
- The Jeep Wrangler is such a runaway sales success that FCA might add a third shift to the Toledo plant. ([The Blade](#))

Ferrari

- Held a capital markets day. Ferrari expects hybrids to account for 60% of its sales by 2022 and plans to create a new line of style-led limited edition models under the Icona banner. ([Ferrari](#))
- The first two Icona models will be 1 and 2 seat versions of a roadster named Monza. Final build numbers and pricing are yet to be announced, but are expected to be "less than 500" and more than "£1 million" respectively. ([Car](#))

Ford (history)

- A French government minister expressed confidence that Punch Powerglide would be announced as the buyer of Ford's Bordeaux transmissions plant by the end of October. ([Reuters](#))
 - Implication: Last time Ford sold the same plant in a government-brokered deal, it ended up taking it back a short time later, having forfeited a substantive dowry. Will it have secured the right to walk away this time?

- Ordered by a court in Thailand to pay compensation to owners of vehicles with dud transmissions. ([Detroit News](#))
- Paid \$90 million for the train station building in Detroit. ([Detroit Free Press](#))
- Building all-electric versions of the Transit van (in collaboration with StreetScooter) at its Cologne, Germany site rather than in the Turkish factory that builds ICE powered units. A partially assembled vehicle is shipped from Turkey and then the electric powertrain, cab and cargo structure are added in Germany. ([FAZ](#))
 - Implication: Whilst rumours surround the company's footprint reduction plans in Europe, this decision appears to be based more on its ability to utilise German labour than profit-making potential.

Geely (includes Volvo) (history)

- Polestar is hoping to have 75 dealers globally soon after launch, with 10 in the USA. ([Fortune](#))

General Motors (history)

- Simplified its electric vehicles organisation and created a new head of innovation role. ([Detroit News](#))

Honda (history)

- Continued to lobby against a no deal Brexit saying it would mean tens of millions in tariffs, loads more paperwork and that border controls could play havoc with the 350 daily truck deliveries that keep its Swindon plant stocked with components. The company even made a short day in the life of a trucker video to show it was serious. ([BBC](#))

Hyundai / Kia (history)

- Hyundai invested in holographic display maker WayRay as part of an \$80 million funding round. ([WayRay](#))
- Hyundai Mobis executives said the company's L2 ADAS solutions are four years behind those used by German OEMs and that it will take until 2025 to develop full autonomous driving. ([Autocar](#))

Mazda

- Lost 44,000 vehicles and 23,000 CKD units in the plant shutdowns caused by flooding earlier in the year. ([Mazda](#))
- Continuing to invest in diesel engine technology, saying it is often the "most sustainable" option. ([Autocar](#))

Nissan (includes Mitsubishi) (history)

- The R-N-M alliance announced a collaboration with Google to use the latter's Android system for in-car infotainment, with Google Maps providing directions from 2020. ([Renault](#))
- Nissan will recall about 240,000 vehicles to fix problems with the brakes that could cause fires. ([Detroit News](#))
- Undertaking a minor restructuring in Europe, eliminating around 200 posts. ([Chronicle Live](#))

PSA (includes Opel/Vauxhall) (history)

- Called for the French government to resurrect a scheme that gave grants to buyers of plug-in vehicles, and also make it more generous (paying out €2,000 per vehicle instead of the €1,000 payout before the scheme ended). PSA said Renault wanted the same thing but Renault spokespeople declined to comment. ([Economic Times of India](#))
- German politicians called on PSA to provide a right of return for Opel employees involved in the proposed Russelsheim technical centre sale to Segula. ([FAZ](#))
- In addition to the previously-reported line rate drops at Opel plants, PSA is planning extensive down days with the Eisenach plant reportedly only working eight days during September. ([FAZ](#))
- Considering whether to install new manufacturing equipment in Ellesmere Port that could make either CMP or EMP2 based vehicles. ([The Times](#))
- The Opel / Vauxhall Grandland X has already reached 100,000 sales and the Eisenach plant will produce it from 2019 onwards. ([Opel](#))

Renault (history)

- The R-N-M alliance announced a collaboration with Google to use the latter's Android system for in-car infotainment, with Google Maps providing directions from 2020. ([Renault](#))

- Showed EZ-PRO, a concept autonomous vehicle system with “highly modular robo pods” that allow the vehicle to be configured between various jobs such as passenger and goods delivery. Renault is the third major OEM this year to put forward such a solution for high utilisation of urban fleet vehicles. ([Renault](#))
- Launched a new round of discounts in the UK, offering £5,000 off some models. ([Motors.co.uk](#))

Tesla (history)

- Signed a three year agreement with lithium miner Ganfeng Lithium. ([Economic Times of India](#))

Toyota (history)

- Will invest in a 30 billion yen fund run by Sparx group that will concentrate on sources of renewable energy. ([Toyota](#))

VW Group (history)

- Said it is on track to achieve “capital market readiness” at its truck division (recently named TRATON) by the end of 2018 and investment banking experts will soon be retained for a “potential” IPO. ([VW](#))
- Unveiled the production version of the e-tron SUV. Some commentators were disappointed by the car’s performance figures compared to Tesla’s Model X, given the starting price of €80,000. ([Audi](#))
- Pulling out of Iran, according to a US government official. ([Bloomberg](#))
- Audi launched a pilot subscription service priced at \$1,395 per month. Subscribers can change vehicle up to twice per month and choose from a range of A4, A5 cabriolet, Q5 and Q7. In addition, they receive 48 hours of discounted rental (Audi say it is free but taxes and fees are excluded) through Audi’s Silvercar each month. ([Audi](#))
- Appears to have slightly altered its outlook on ID pricing to be equal to a “comparable” diesel, implying the vehicle could be more costly than initial expectations if the firm argues the comparator should be high performance. The downside is that a sales target of over 100,000 units is high in the context of high performance diesels. ([VW](#))
- Audi’s imprisoned CEO will reportedly be removed from his post at a meeting on September 28th. ([Handelsblatt](#))
- Porsche invested in holographic display maker WayRay as part of an \$80 million funding round. ([WayRay](#))
- The EU launched a formal investigation into whether BMW, Daimler and VW colluded to restrict competition in emissions technology. ([Economic Times of India](#))
- Porsche released details of the modular units that make up its fast charging solution, and will presumably be used by the Ioney charging network. ([Porsche](#))
- Seat executives said the brand would have two electric only models by 2021 and two PHEVs by 2020. ([Autocar](#))
- Created a training program to develop software competences in-house and will run its first class in 2019. ([VW](#))
- SEAT launched the Tarraco large SUV, with sales set for early 2019. ([VW](#))
- Showed the ID Buzz van. Although billed as a concept, sources say it could be in production by 2021. ([VW](#))
- TRATON signed a cooperation agreement with Hino that will create a shared procurement arm and see the two partners jointly develop electrified powertrain. ([VW](#))
- Porsche said it had given up on diesel engines for good. Although there are no cars currently on sale with diesel engines, Porsche had implied it would offer some in future. Now it won’t. ([Porsche](#))

Other

- **Aston Martin** set the price range for its IPO, valuing the firm at between £4.02 billion - £5.07 billion. ([Aston Martin](#))
- **Aston Martin** will sell a limited edition of 19 pairs of cars in collaboration with Zagato. There will be a DB4 Zagato continuation model that will be track-only and a DBS Zagato that they can actually drive on the road. The price for the pair is a cool £6 million (excluding taxes). ([Aston Martin](#))
- **Aston Martin** released a teaser image of a hypercar dubbed “Project 003” that will be released in late 2021 and limited to 500 examples. The company confirmed that there will be space for luggage. ([Aston Martin](#))
- **Lucid Motors** announced it had received over \$1 billion in investment from PIF, the same Saudi fund that invested in Tesla (and was the supposed underwriter of the infamous “funding secured” tweet) fundraising. ([Lucid](#))
- **Rivian Automotive** will unveil its pick-up truck and large SUV in November, saying prices will start at \$90,000 but lower specification vehicles with prices of around \$50,000 will be available after launch. ([Fox News](#))
- **Revolution Racecars** says it will build a £100,000, 300hp, 675kg track-only two seat sportscar with 300hp. ([Autocar](#))

- **Elio Motors** announced the pre-sale (a pre-ICO?) of the ElioCoin “security token”, hoping to raise \$25 million in the scheme. So far it appears to have a single taker. ([Elio](#))
- **VinFast** told local media that its products should be compared with Mercedes and its cars would be priced around 1 billion VND (approximately \$43,000). ([Vietnam Net](#))

News about other companies and trends ...

Economic / Political News

- **European** passenger car registrations in August were 1,171,760 units, up 29.8% on a year earlier. ([ACEA](#))
- The **German** government was rumoured to be leaning towards ordering hardware retrofits for Euro 5 capable diesel vehicles to reduce pollution. ([Reuters](#))
- The **US** announced a new round of tariffs on Chinese products, increasing the likelihood of retaliation. ([Reuters](#))
- A **German** think tank said sales of vehicles with internal combustion engines needed to end before 2030 if the automotive industry was going to contribute enough to **reductions in CO₂** emissions. This is a different standard to the EU’s proposals for 2030 fleet average CO₂ which would still enable conventionally powered vehicles to be on sale. ([The Guardian](#))
- The **German** government are prepared to offer subsidies of one million euros to get two **battery factories** built in the country. ([Manager Magazin](#))

Suppliers

- **BorgWarner** held an investor day. ([BorgWarner](#))
- **ZF** will invest €12 billion in electrification and mobility projects over the next five years. ([ZF](#))
- **Magna** is selling its fluid pressure and controls business to **Hanon Systems** for \$1.2 billion. ([Hanon Systems](#))
- Holographic display maker **WayRay** raised \$80 million from investors including **Porsche** and **Hyundai**. ([WayRay](#))
- **Wabco** will form a joint venture with **FAW** in China to market brake systems for commercial vehicles. ([Autocar](#))
- **Varroc** and **Elba** agreed on a lighting components joint venture to be based in Romania. ([Autocar](#))
- **Valeo** and **Wabco** are partnering to sell their safety technologies for commercial vehicles. ([Valeo](#))

Ride-Hailing, Car Sharing & Rental (history)

- **Uber** is reportedly in detailed discussion to acquire **Careem**. ([Reuters](#)) It is also said to be in early talks about buying food delivery service **Deliveroo**. ([The Guardian](#))
- **Lyft** said it had reached the 1 billion trips milestone. ([Lyft](#))
- **Lyft** has partnered with **Trafi** to add a multi-modal dimension to its app (in some cities). ([Trafi](#))
- **Didi Chuxing** has started to record in-car audio during trips. Passengers must agree as a condition of being allowed to book journeys on the network. ([Business Insider](#))
- **Ola** raised a further \$50 million in a deal valuing the company at over \$4 billion. ([TechCrunch](#))

Driverless / Autonomy (history)

- **Knorr-Bremse** and **Continental** intend to jointly develop a turnkey solution for heavy trucks that will allow them to operate in autonomous platoons. ([Knorr-Bremse](#))
- **BMW’s** development chief said the brand’s cars will always have steering wheels and the change to autonomy will take three decades, starting from 2005, meaning a 20 year wait “until this applies to all parts of the world”. ([Autocar](#))
- Radar developer **Lunewave** raised \$5 million from investors including **BMW iVentures**. ([Lunewave](#))
- **Leddartech** released a white paper discussing the application of lidar for vehicle identification. It contains more data on resolution than is normally disclosed. Even with lidar mounted only a few metres from the vehicle, Leddartech report a resolution of 14cm - 24cm on a target moving at 100 km/h for a 16 line unit, underlining why in practice self-driving vehicle developers are rarely using the units for object identification. ([Leddartech](#))
- **Bosch** invested in lidar developer **ABAX Sensing**. ([Bosch](#))
- The **Knight Foundation** is spending \$5.25 million on a series of experiments in American cities aimed at better understanding the interaction between autonomous vehicles and communities. ([Venturebeat](#))

- Self-driving software developer **Oxbotica** raised £14 million. ([FINSMES](#))
- **Robosense** said its 64 line lidar system will cost under \$200 per unit once in mass production. ([Robosense](#))

Electrification (history)

- **LG Chem** signed a supply agreement with lithium miner **Ganfeng Lithium** running from 2019-2025. ([Economic Times of India](#))
- Start-up **CyClean** aims to combine zero emissions and cryptocurrency by making electric products, such as electric scooters and solar panels that reward users with the company's proprietary cryptocurrency for using its products (seemingly paid for in old-fashioned hard currency). ([CyClean](#))
- **Amazon** is going to start offering third party chargers with full installation. ([Electrek](#))
- Truckmaker **Kamaz** and **Cummins** will develop electric powertrains for heavy vehicles. ([Autocar](#))
- **VW's** TRATON truckmaking unit signed a cooperation agreement with **Hino** that will create a shared procurement arm and see the two partners jointly develop electrified powertrain. ([VW](#))
- **Total** acquired French electric vehicle charging provider **G2mobility**. ([Total](#))

Connectivity

- **VW's** Traton truck division and **Solera** announced a strategic partnership to sell fleet management tools. ([VW](#))
- The **Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi** alliance announced a collaboration with **Google** to use the latter's Android system for in-car infotainment, with Google Maps providing directions from 2020. ([Renault](#))
- **TomTom** said it was under pressure as deals like the Google and R-N-M one eat into its mapping revenue. ([Reuters](#))

Other

- Electric scooter rental firm **Lime** has suffered two fatalities in the last few weeks. ([TechCrunch](#))
- **Amazon** reportedly plans to open 3,000 cashless stores by 2021. ([Bloomberg](#))
- Trucking firm **Convoy** raised a further \$185 million. ([TechCrunch](#))
- **Lime** said it had reached 11.5 bike and scooter rentals. ([TechCrunch](#)) **Bird** just reached 10 million. ([TechCrunch](#))