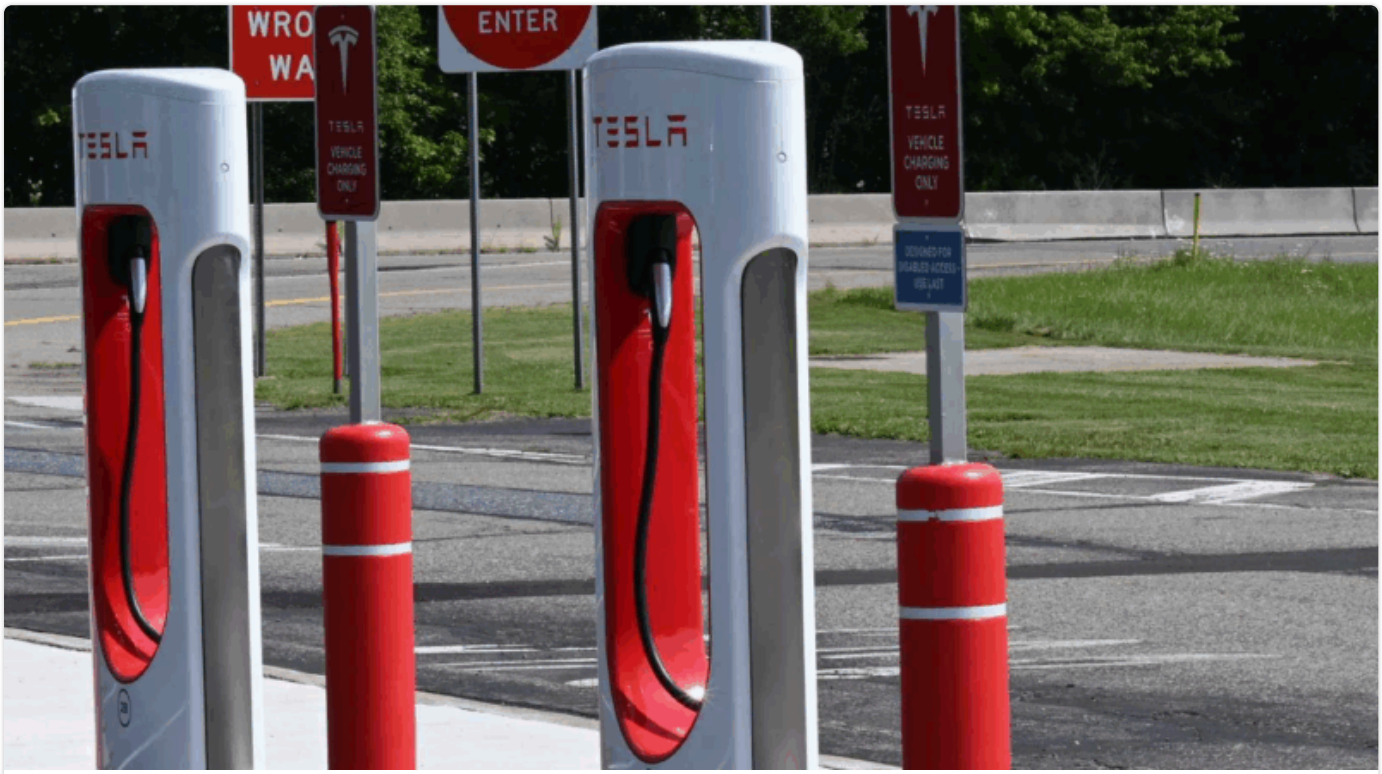


*Tesla Superchargers in a public parking lot near Belgiëplein in Brussels. (Photo by author)*

# Belgium's Electric Vehicle Journey Is Propped Up By Fleet & Micromobility

1 month ago Raymond Tribdino 10 Comments

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## A tale of two markets and a geopolitical manufacturing triumph

Seeing it and learning about this transition has so many stories to tell. But that has to be framed against this reality: retail EV takeup in Europe is slower than supply. Steve Hanley's feature a year ago remains to be a reality.

The Brussels Times reported early this year that the ECG (Association of European Vehicle Logistics) listed about 78,000 Chinese electric cars accumulated over various European port terminals, though there is a 91% increase in sales of Chinese EVs, this did not declog the ports as fast.

That being said, Belgium boasts one of the continent's highest rates of EV adoption for new car sales. That's a percentage expression, not a numerical volume. So, this success story is driven almost entirely by aggressive fiscal policy targeting corporate fleets, creating a sharp contrast with the cautious private consumer market and a negligible hydrogen sector.

## The market profile

The growth of EVs in Belgium is inseparable from the country's tax code. This may seem the impetus in all markets — incentives to go EV — but there is an important caveat to be revealed later. 2024 marked a historic milestone, with 127,750 new fully electric vehicles registered, representing a remarkable 36% increase compared to 2023. For the first time, electric and hybrid vehicles combined captured more than half (52.3%) of all new car registrations, decisively surpassing traditional internal combustion engine vehicles. BEVs alone commanded 28.5% of the market, overtaking plug-in hybrids at 15%. All the information to be cited here came from the European Alternative Fuels Observatory (EAFO) and the Belgian Transport Authority.

This aggregate success however, conceals a fundamental imbalance.

Corporate fleets accounted for a staggering 86.7% of new BEV registrations in 2024. This near-total corporate dominance is the direct result of a highly

purchasing BEVs remains securely in place until the end of 2026, compelling businesses to rapidly green their fleets. After 2026, this deductibility will begin to phase down, dropping to 95% in 2027, 90% in 2028, and continuing to decline until reaching 67.5% from 2031 onward.

## The hesitant consumer

Now this corporate enthusiasm reflects a deep reluctance among private buyers. Surveys indicate that nearly half of Belgian consumers still favor petrol or diesel for their next purchase, with only a small fraction opting for a BEV. This hesitation is rooted in affordability concerns and infrastructure anxiety. Compounding the issue, the widely popular regional purchase subsidy in Flanders was prematurely discontinued in late 2024, removing a critical financial bridge for individual buyers.

This dichotomy has created a severe bottleneck in the secondary market. With corporate leases beginning to expire, the flood of used BEVs faces insufficient private demand, leading to steep depreciation — up to 40% in four years — and raising the specter of large-scale exports of used zero-emission vehicles to markets outside Belgium.

Despite these challenges, Belgium's charging infrastructure has kept pace with vehicle growth. The country added 72% more charging points in 2024, reaching a total of 83,111 stations. This robust network supports the government's ambitious target of 2 million electric vehicles on Belgian roads by 2030 — a goal that will require bridging the chasm between corporate enthusiasm and consumer hesitation.

## Urban transport fleets

The transition of urban transport to electric power is moving at a determined, if uneven, pace. Brussels faces particular pressure to improve

progressively restricted older vehicles from entering the capital region since 2018.

The LEZ has become a political flashpoint. In 2024, the Brussels Regional Parliament voted to postpone the implementation of stricter LEZ rules — originally scheduled for January 2025 — by two years. This delay would have allowed Euro 5 diesel and Euro 2 petrol vehicles to continue operating until 2027. The postponement was championed by Francophone liberals, centrists, and socialists, along with Flemish liberals and far-right parties, while the Greens condemned it as an election ploy ahead of October's municipal elections.

The according to various newspaper reports, in a dramatic September 2025 ruling, the Belgian Constitutional Court suspended this postponement after four action groups and private citizens challenged the decision. The court ruled that the delay caused irreparable harm to vulnerable residents, specifically citing a child suffering from chronic asthma and allergies whose rights to health and a healthy environment were being violated. The suspension represents a significant victory for environmental advocates and signals that public health concerns may trump political expediency in Brussels' climate policy.

Quite controversial, in many aspects, especially if taken from the Asian perspective.

Despite these regulatory battles, major transport providers are already moving ahead with electrification. Official taxi companies like TaxisVerts and ride-hailing services such as Bolt and Uber offer dedicated electric ride options. These services leverage the extensive BEV charging network and the corporate tax breaks to run a growing fleet of electric models, including the Tesla Model 3 and Volkswagen ID.4, which are now practical for high-mileage commercial use.

While the four-wheeled electric transition struggles with consumer adoption, Belgium's two-wheeled electric mobility sector tells a starkly different story — one of remarkable consumer embrace alongside aggressive municipal regulation. *CleanTechnica* is preparing a separate article on this topic.

E-bikes have quietly achieved what battery electric cars have not: genuine mass-market consumer acceptance. Electric bicycles now command over 51% of Belgium's bicycle market, with approximately 290,000 units sold annually. Belgians demonstrate its commitment by spending an average of more than €3,700 ($4,300) per e-bike, a premium price point that reflects both the quality of vehicles and the seriousness with which consumers view this transportation mode. Unlike the electric car market dominated by corporate tax incentives, e-bike adoption is driven primarily by individual consumers seeking practical, affordable mobility for daily commutes and errands.

The shared e-scooter sector, however, has experienced a dramatic regulatory reckoning.

In February 2024, Brussels authorities slashed the number of permitted shared e-scooters from over 20,000 to just 8,000, citing concerns about sidewalk clutter, parking chaos, and safety issues. This aggressive restriction had immediate consequences: Lime, one of the major operators, withdrew entirely from Brussels in July 2025 after unsuccessfully contesting the new limitations. Despite these restrictions, demand remains robust — more than 703,000 users took 7.55 million scooter trips in Brussels during 2024, demonstrating that regulatory crackdowns have constrained supply rather than eliminated demand.

Note that most of the safety issues for scooters are similar to those in Singapore. These include higher injury risks and hospitalization rates for e-

pedestrians or other scooters that is usually caused by lack of riding skills or irresponsible riding behavior, non-use of helmets, and inadequate infrastructure in all areas where the mobility solutions are available. Compound all that with very complex Belgian traffic environments.

This micromobility dichotomy reveals a broader pattern in Belgium's electric transition: technologies that individuals can own and control (e-bikes) flourish, while shared mobility services face municipal skepticism and restriction. The contrast also highlights a generational and cultural divide about what constitutes legitimate urban transport, with traditional cycling infrastructure embraced while newer micromobility options remain contested.

## Geopolitics and Belgian manufacturing

One of the most significant recent developments involves the unexpected revival of Belgium's industrial importance in the face of international trade tensions.

The Volvo car factory in Ghent has become a strategic manufacturing asset for the Swedish-Chinese automaker.

In response to potential EU tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles and severe US tariffs reaching as high as 147% on such imports, Volvo accelerated the production of its popular compact EV, the EX30, at the Ghent plant. Production officially commenced in April 2025, marking a significant shift from the vehicle's original Chinese manufacturing base in Zhangjiakou.

This decision was driven by the urgent need to maintain the EX30's affordability in Europe and to make the model saleable in the critical American market. The move not only safeguards the vehicle's competitive pricing but also promises to significantly reduce customer delivery times —

Belgian automotive sector during a period of uncertainty in European car manufacturing.

## Hydrogen mobility

In stark contrast to the BEV revolution, fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) remain a marginal, low-volume niche — but present in the public transport sector. Twelve FCEVs is not a big number. While fuel cell electric cars, such as the Hyundai Nexo and Toyota Mirai, technically qualify for the same 100% corporate tax benefits as BEVs, their adoption is crippled by the near-total absence of refueling infrastructure.

Annual FCEV sales are counted only in the dozens across the entire nation, primarily registered by specialized corporate fleets or government-backed demonstration projects that operate in close proximity to the country's handful of hydrogen refueling stations. The vast majority of Belgium's strategic hydrogen focus is directed toward decarbonizing heavy industry and maritime transport, leaving FCEVs largely outside the mainstream mobility conversation.

Belgium's tipping point for wider EV adoption demonstrates the immense power of sustained fiscal policy to accelerate fleet electrification, while underscoring the political and infrastructural challenges that remain.

The corporate market has responded decisively to tax incentives, but the private consumer market lags behind, constrained by higher upfront costs and lingering range anxiety. The looming depreciation crisis in the used EV market, combined with the phase-down of tax benefits starting in 2027, will test whether Belgium's electric revolution can extend beyond company car parks and into the driveways of ordinary citizens.

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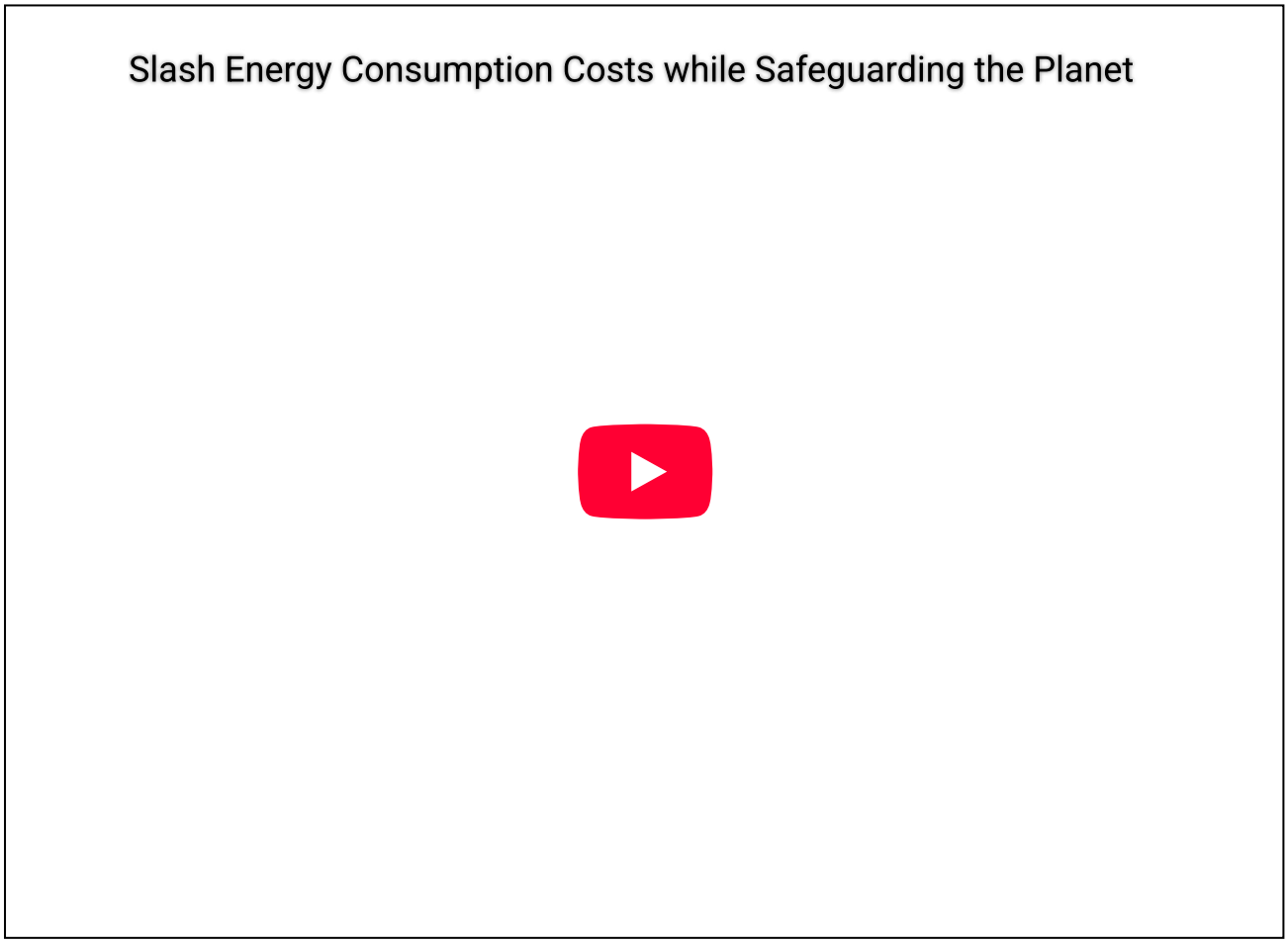

## Raymond Tribdino

Raymond Gregory Tribdino, or Tribs, is an automotive and tech journalist for over two decades, a former car industry executive, and professor with deep roots in the EV space. He was an early contributor to EVWorld.com (1997-1999), was the motoring and technology editor for Malaya Business Insight (www.malaya.com.ph) and now serves as Science and Technology Editor for The Manila Times (www.manilatimes.net), along with co-hosting "TechSabado" and "Today is Tuesday." He's passionate about electrification, even electrifying his own motocross bike.

Raymond Tribdino has 306 posts and counting.

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## 10 Comments

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**Jon's Thoughts** ★★★★★

a month ago

The variety of approaches in european countries to incentivize BEV uptake is likely helping to focus in on what works and what doesn't. I find it surprising that if BEVs become cheaper in the used market to the point where they rival FF vehicles on sticker price that tney won't sell well. I wonder if the popularity of e-mobility and lower popularity in individual uptake in BEVs is an indication of an age related factor in vehicle preference. Do older folks with more money to buy a new car show greater hesitation to go BEV or do younger consumers with modest means that are looking to buy new find only gas mobile affordable?

Anyway it appears they have the right approach to phaseout on incentives, making it gradual rather than abrupt as some countries have done. Interesting that the courts sided with individuals and the health benefits of going electric, it is doubtful that the young folks in the US bringing suit will be as successful in federal courts.

2 0

**dashpool**

a month ago

Much like the UK or Germany, most of these 'corporate fleet' EV sales are nothing of the kind. i.e. they are actually private vehicles, obtained via leasing schemes run by employers.

It isn't like Belgium's EV sales are mostly of typical company vehicles like vans. 30% of new vehicles were BEVs, in Belgium, and there just aren't that many true company cars.

Anyway, this makes the description here of "unwilling private buyers" way off the mark. People just (obviously) prefer to buy EVs from pre-tax earnings and save thousands of €.

Also, the overall vibe here that Belgium is struggling to go EV seems maximally wrong ... it is one of the European countries with the highest proportion of BEV+PHEV sales. I've driven my BEV in Belgium, and the infrastructure is very good; it is a small country, and the high population density helps.

So, some Chinese cars are sitting around in a Belgium port: what does this tell you, especially given that Belgium's ports serve the surrounding countries, too? Maybe this particular company just got their pricing wrong.

3 0

**Deckard_Cain**

almost all highway gas stations. But most importantly, at least in Brussels, the amount of level 2 chargers (4kW to 11kW) on the streets is enormous.
Me and my partner got an EV in 2022 as a company car (it took a bit of convincing her) without a garage to charge (we lived in a rented apartment). There were already plenty of street chargers then. Now there's even more! A lot of people are skeptical because of range anxiety and because of having to wait 30 minutes to recharge the car each time they stop on a road trip. 800V cars can't come soon enough.

3 0

**Myth Dispulsion** → Deckard_Cain
a month ago

The overlooked large, vast, party that could electrify is the one practicing what it preaches: government. Let all governments electrify at least some of their fleets. Governments usually have properties where the fleets are located that would support charging, too.

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There's fast chargers in almost all highway gas stations. But most importantly, at least in Brussels, the amount of level 2 chargers (4kW to 11kW) on the streets is enormous.

Me and my partner got an EV in 2022 as a company car (it took a bit of convincing her) without a garage to charge (we lived in a rented apartment). There were already plenty of street chargers then. Now there's even more!

I continue to support higher-power AC even if it's increasingly doomed by DC fast charging, which itself is increasing in power, especially for 800 volt vehicles and the 1,000+ volt systems already conceived and tested, and I wish that at least in commercial and industrial areas we could get three-phase AC usable by the J3068 connecter type Europeans already have. (CCS 2) The up-front cost of an EV is raised with higher-power AC capability, and in the US with going to three-phase support, and it's a challenge for auto makers they wish not to be presented with, never mind accept, but worthwhile if it could be done in conjunction with J3068 or CCS 2, and suitably high public AC, either Level 2 single-phase 19.2 kW in the USA, or higher power up to at least the forties kW with three-phase supply. J3068 was intended for trucks and buses but uses a power range now in the lower set of values to much lower, for light-duty vehicles. (It is also fine for trucks and buses that are stationary, out of service, for numerous hours.)

0 0

**Myth Dispulsion** → Deckard_Cain
a month ago

For other charging in town, higher-power AC and vehicle-to-grid, i.e., bi-directional AC chargers, which has utilities interested, plus the carry-aboard or carry-along cable, the concepts are to be tested, in EV Central USA: California. It is in the Bay Area. The power level planned, 7s kW, is not high, is fairly routine for US EVs, but still tests the

> with chargers now delivering up to 350 kW, alongside growing integration of smart charging solutions. Despite this progress, significant challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to charging infrastructure, especially for residents lacking dedicated parking spaces. Meanwhile, the bidirectional EV charger market remains in its early stages but is gaining momentum, driven by rising interest in V2G technologies that ease grid strain.

> This Agreement will develop a curbside alternating current (AC) bidirectional EV charger ("V2G Charger") and a complementary Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) J3068 Active Cable ("Active Cable") to enable scalable, public V2G charging. The Active Cable is a smart charging cable that manages communication and control signals between the charger and the EV, allowing bidirectional power flow

see more

0 0

**FMSV**

a month ago

"Corporate fleets accounted for a staggering 86.7% of new BEV registrations in 2024" - Ok, but what is the number for the total market (BEV, PHEV, ICE)?

0 0

**scott** → FMSV

a month ago

Also of interest: what percentage of total vehicles in Belguim are corporate fleet cars? Are corporate cars per capita higher than typical countries in Europe?

0 0

**Rudy**

a month ago

The article on Belgium BEV adoption is very well described and interesting.

The lack of adoption of the private sector vs corporate fleets is surprising.

I would well imagine that anyone who gets a corporate BEV car to drive, would be more inclined to replace the family car with another BEV instead of going for an ICE vehicle.

1 0

**⭐ ⭐ ⭐ Good Guy Locke ✓verified ⭐ ⭐ ⭐**

a month ago

I see why 'Belgium' is a terrible curse word (if you know, you know).

Belgium is about 174 miles long, from northwest to southeast. North to south it is about 157 miles (note, this varies as it is not a perfect rectangle, but these are the larger measurements).

This means that with most Chevy's (save the Bolt), Teslas, and other auto types, one can drive from one end of the country to the other without plugging in. And they are concerned about

And here I was thinking that only people in the USA had (okay Locke...be gentle) views that differed from objective reality.

0 0

**Assaf** ★★★★★

a month ago edited

Raymond, thank you for this insightful and extensive overview! I have learned so much. This shows that sometimes a sharp-eyed visitor can tell a better story than locals (we have 2 regular Europe-based writers here, but neither of them has written about Belgium in a long while).

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