ECG Business Intelligence: Market Outlook 2026 for Cars and Light Commercials

Global Sales & Production Outlook

In 2025 sales of new light vehicles – that is passenger cars and light commercial vehicles such as vans – hit 91.69 million units across the globe. Latest full year estimates from ECG's data provider, S&P Global Mobility, show that this is indeed a 3.39% year on year increase. Meanwhile 2026 is forecast to see a marginal increase of just 0.19%, but growth will accelerate in 2027 by 1.92% bringing annual sales to 93.6 million. By year end 2029, global new light vehicle sales are forecast to hit 95.9 million units.

In 2025 a total of 92.4 million light vehicles were produced, as per latest estimates from S&P Global Mobility, marking a 3.14% year on year increase. Growth is expected to falter this year, but will see a 1.55% annual increase in 2027 with volume production to hit 93.37 million units across the globe. By year end 2029, global light vehicle production is expected to hit 95.8 million units, marking a 2.09% y/y increase.

Global Sales Outlook by Region

China continues to lead in terms of largest volume sales with 28 million units sold in 2025, North America follows with 19.75 million, while Western Europe saw light vehicle sales hit 13.4 million in 2025.

In terms of growth rates, China saw sales jump by 6.48% in 2025 but will see a slight decline of -0.83% in 2026 bringing sales to 27.8 million, but growth of 2.8% will return in 2027 to see volume of 28.6 million-unit sales latest forecasts show.

North America witnessed a 1.53% jump in 2025 to reach sales of 19.7 million, but 2026 is estimated to see a 2.8% decline to 19.2 million units, before rising again to 19.3 million in 2027.

Europe, which includes West Europe, East & Central Europe, saw combined sales of 18.55 million units in 2025, marking a slight or 0.65% decline but growth of 0.89% is expected in 2026 bringing volume to 18.7 million. By 2028 sales in the Europe region will hit 19.33 million units rising to 19.7 million by year end 2029, with growth then forecast for the next 3 years at least across the Europe region.

Global Production Outlook by Region

China continues to lead in terms of largest volume production with 30.08 million units in 2024 rising by 9.57% to 32.96 million units in 2025, as per the latest updates from S&P. 2026 is estimated to see a 2.14% y/y decline in China, to 32.26 million units, staying at that level in 2027 . By 2030 China's light vehicle production will reach 32.9 million units.

Europe is estimated to have witnessed production of 16.92 million units in 2025, marking a 1.48% decline. 2026 is expected to see production of 16.83 million a slight 0.49% decline but growth is expected in 2027, 2028 and 2029 with volume rising to over 17.78 million units.

North America witnessed production of 15.24 million in 2025, down 1.34% and is estimated to drop a further 1.5% in 2026 but in 2027 production will jump 3.43% to reach 15.59 million units. By 2030 production of light vehicles in North America is estimated to hit 16.36 million.

Light Vehicle Sales by Region – Europe

West Europe witnessed a 0.69% increase in 2024 to reach sales of 13.44 million units, slowing 0.10% to 13.42 million units in 2025. In 2026 growth of 1.84% is expected to lift sales to 13.67 million continuing to rise to 13.84 million in 2027 before hitting 14.05 million in 2028.

East Europe saw sales of 3.45 million units in 2025 down from 3.6 million in 2024. In 2026 sales are expected to drop 2.99% to 3.35 million units, before rising 2.27% in 2027 to 3.43 million and further to 3.5 and 3.6 million by year end 2029.

Central Europe witnessed sales of 1.66 million in 2025, a 3.11% increase over 2024 sales. The region is forecast to continue to grow hitting 1.77 million by year end 2029.

West Europe -Sales by Market

West Europe sales in 2025 hit 13.4 million units and expected to rise to 13.67 in 2026, up to 13.84 in 2027 and crossing over into 14 million in 2028.

Germany is the top sales market, with 3.11 million units sold in 2025, rising to 3.19 in 2026 and further up to 3.27 million in 2027, peaking at 3.28 million in 2028 as per latest S&P outlook.

The UK is the second biggest sales market in Europe, with 2.34 million units sold in 2025, rising to 2.44 in 2026, and further up to 2.49 million in 2027, dipping slightly in 2028 but rising again to 2.5 million unit sales in 2029.

France is the third largest volume market with annual sales hitting 1.9 million in 2025, expected to hit over 2 million in 2026 and rising further to 2.19 million by year end 2029.

East Europe – Sales by Market

East Europe witnessed sales of 3.4 million units in 2025 down from 3.6 million in 2024. This will drop further in 2026 to 3.35 million before rising again to hit over 3.6 million in 2029. Russia is the top volume market, which witnessed a drop of around 300K units from annual sales in 2025, which means that in 2025 Türkiye is the second largest market by volume in East Europe. But Russia is expected to regain its position with sales to rise to 1.37 million in 2026 and further to over 1.47 million in 2027 and 1.5 million in 2028.
Meanwhile Türkiye is expected to see sales drop to 1.2 million units in 2026 down from the peak of 1.34 million in 2025. Russia and Türkiye continue to rival each other as the top volume sales market in East Europe.

Central Europe -Sales by Market

Overall Central Europe is witnessing strong growth in sales. In 2024 sales hit 1.61 million rising to 1.66 million units in 2025 and forecast to rise further to 1.68 million in 2026, 1.71 million in 2027, and up to 1.73 in 2028 and 1.77 million in 2029.

The biggest contributor in terms of volume sales is Poland, with sales of 651,125 in 2025 expected to rise to 673,000 by 2029. Poland is the only Central European market with annual sale over half a million units.

The Czech Republic follows with sales hovering around a quarter of a million units. In 2025 this is at 258,719 units and expected to rise to 260,306 units in 2026, and further to around 262K by 2029.

Romania is the third main market, with sales of 166,572 estimated in 2025 and expected to rise to almost 200K per annum by 2029.

Sales by Market

In this section we look at the main brand players in the top volume markets in Europe. What stands out significantly, is the shifting sands of time. A player at the top of the market today, is not necessarily at the top come year end 2029. We use the latest S&P forecast data, to bring you the latest update on sales outlook in top European markets, by brand.

Germany

- Light Vehicle Sales in Germany are predominantly made up of Passenger Cars, which account for 84.6% of the total volume of 3.11 million units sold in the country in 2025.
- Sales of Light Vehicles will increase to 3.30 million by year end 2029, with PCs making up 85.69% of the sales as per latest outlook data from S&P.
- By year end 2029, total PC sales in Germany will hit 2.85 million units, up from 2.63 million sold in 2025. While LCVs will hit sales of 473K end 2029, down from 478K in 2025.
- Top brand Volkswagen will continue to lead with annual sales of 497K in 2029, down from 518K in 2025. BMW also retains its rank as second, with sales of 236K in 2029, down from 251K in 2025. In third place in 2029 is Mercedes-Benz having beaten Skoda with estimated sales of 236K while Skoda will see sales drop slightly to 231K. Audi retains its rank as 5th top player in Germany in 2029 with anticipated sales of 171K down from 199K in 2025.
- By 2029 two Chinese owned brands are forecast to be within the Top 15 brands in Germany. BYD is forecast to sell 68,591 units, while MG is expected to sell 57,934 units. In 2025 BYD sold under 20K in Germany, while MG sold 25K.

United Kingdom

- Light Vehicle Sales in the UK will hit 2.53 million in 2029 rising 7.8% from sales in 2025, of which 84.8% will be Passenger Cars accounting for 2.1 million units. This is a 7.7% increase from volume of PC sales in 2025.
- LCV sales are expected to rise 8.19% from volume sold in 2025 to 383K sales in 2029.
- Overall, the UK light vehicle market is witnessing projected growth.
- Volkswagen is the top sales brand in the UK and will maintain its pole position in the foreseeable outlook. VW sales in 2025 hit around 174K and this is projected to drop slightly to 171K in 2029. BMW is second and again retains its rank with sales in 2029 hitting 138K. In third in 2029 will be Audi, who will beat Kia, to sell 118K in 2029. Mercedes is forecast to be fourth with sales of 109K in 2029, while Kia will drop to fifth position with sales of 107K down from 115K in 2025 in the UK.
- Meanwhile MG and BYD are forecast to significantly jump rank, with MG to sell 97K in 2029, and BYD 83K. In 2025 MG sold 81K and BYD sold 46K in the UK as per S&P data.

France

- Light Vehicle sales in France are forecast to hit 2.19 million units in 2029, rising from 1.98 million sales in 2025.
- Of the total, Passenger Cars account for 83.2% in 2025 or 1.6 million units, and will see sales rise to 1.83 million in 2029, while still accounting for 83.5% of the total LV market.
- Light Commercial Vehicle sales will hit just 361K in 2029, up from 332K in 2025.
- Overall the French market is expected to see growth in the next few years in light vehicle sales, predominantly from the PC sector.
- Renault retains its position as the top player in the French passenger car market, with sales of 295K in 2025 dropping to 264K in 2029. Peugeot retains its second position with sales of 221K in 2029, also a decline from 238K sold in 2025. In third spot if Dacia with anticipated sales of 173K in 2029, up from 145K in 2025.
- By 2029, Toyota overtakes Citroen for fourth position in the market. Toyota sales in 2029 are expected to hit 119K. Volkswagen comes in fifth in 2029, with sales of 112K up from 109K in 2025. Citroen which saw sales of over 120K in 2025, sees a decline to 106K in 2029 and dropping two places in the rankings.
- However newcomer MG loses its position as a top brand in France by 2029, with Tesla gaining ground in the country.

Italy

- Light Vehicle Sales in Italy are forecast to stay in the 1.7 million unit range with slight shifts. In 2025 annual sales hit 1.71 million and in 2029 are forecast to hit 1.76 million units.
- Passenger Car sales account for 89% of the volume in 2025 and in 2029 will account for 89.6%. Volume-wise PC sales in 2029 will hit 1.58 million units, up from 1.53 million in 2025.
- Light Commercial Vehicle sales in Italy will decline to 182K in 2029, down from 189K in 2025.
- Overall the Italian light vehicle market is relatively stable, mainly on the back of passenger car sales.
- Fiat retains its pole position in Italy, with sales in 2029 forecast to hit 193K up from 144K in 2025. Fiat is significantly ahead of its rivals in the market and enjoys strong brand loyalty in Italy. In second position in 2029 will be Volkswagen who is forecast to beat Toyota for the position. In 2029 VW is expected to sell 122K units in Italy, up from 110K in 2025. Meanwhile Renault is expected to be third by 2029, with sales of 94K up from just 76K in 2025. Toyota comes in fourth in 2029, dropping from second place in 2025! Toyota sales in 2029 are expected at 80K down from 117K in 2025. Meanwhile in fifth place in 2029 will be Dacia with sales of 78k down from 99K sold in Italy in 2025.

Spain

- Sales of Light Vehicles in Spain are forecast to jump from 1.33 million in 2025 to 1.39 million in 2029.
- Of this, Passenger Cars account for 85.9% of the volume in 2025 rising to 86.6% in 2029. This equates to 1.15 million PC sales in 2025, rising to 1.20 million sales in 2029.
- Light Commercial Vehicle sales are expected to remain around under the 190k per annum mark. In 2025 LCV sales reached 188K while in 2029 are expected drop slightly to 186K.
- Spain is witnessing a lot of fighting for top position in the market. In 2029 the latest S&P outlook shows Kia in the lead with annual sales of 90K units, up from just 64K in 2025. In 2025 Kia was 7th position! Meanwhile Volkswagen is forecast to jump one rank to become the second major player in the market in 2029, with annual sales of 82K up from 76K in 2025. In third is Toyota in 2029, losing its top rank and sliding to number 3 with sales of 77K, down from 98K in 2025. Renault meanwhile comes in fourth in 2029, with sales of 64K down from 82K in 2025 when it held second place. Hyundai is fifth in 2029 with anticipated volume sales of 55K down from 65K in 2025. BYD sees major growth by 2029, with BYD seeing sales jump from just 23K in 2025 to over 46K in 2029.

Türkiye

- Sales of Light Vehicles in Türkiye will hit 1.26 million units by year end 2029, down from 1.34 million in 2025.
- Of this Passenger Car sales will drop to under 1 million units in 2029. In 2025 PC sales in Türkiye hit 1.07 million units. PC sales account for 79% of sales in 2025 and 78% of sales in the country in 2029.
- Light Commercial Vehicle sales are expected to hit 275K units in 2029, almost the same as the 273K sold in 2025.
- Türkiye is a battleground for newcomers keen to get a foot in Europe. BYD will lead the market in 2029 as per S&P's outlook. In 2029 BYD will sell 95K units, up from 49K sold in 2025. Renault is forecast for second position with annual sales of 94K in 2029, a significant drop from its pole position in 2025 when sales hit 130K. Homegrown newcomer TOGG is forecast to come in third, with sales of 71K in 2029, up from 37K in 2025. Toyota is forecast to come in fourth, losing a rank, with sales of 64K. Another newcomer Chery is forecast to be fifth top volume selling brand in 2029 in Türkiye with annual sales of 61K. Other newcomer brands include Habas and MG who also make it into the Top 15 in 2029.

Light Vehicle Production by Region – Europe

The changing production landscape of Europe is evident.

We see Germany continuing to keep its top position, but it is losing volume. In 2024 Germany produced 4.19 million units, but by 2030 annual production will hit 3.78 million.

Growth is being witnessed instead by Spain rising from 2.3 million in 2024 to 2.6 million by 2030.

Czech Rep loses its position in 3rd place to Türkiye which sees volume production rise to 1.86 million by 2030. In 2024 Czech Rep saw volume production of 1.44 million units, while Türkiye witnessed 1.34 million. But by year end 2030, Türkiye will have production of 1.86 million units per annum. Czech Rep meanwhile will see volume drop to 1.16 million as per current forecast data by S&P, and will fall below France in the rankings.

Slovakia and Hungary also see considerable volume increase, while the UK is falling fast out of the race.
Slovakia production volume in 2024 hit 993,088 units. By year end 2030 this is forecast to reach 1.013 million units. Hungary meanwhile witnessed just 436,273 units produced in 2024. By year end 2030 Hungary will see 860,248 units produced.

The UK meanwhile witnessed production of 883,939 units in 2024 and is destined to 648,316 units by year end 2030.

Production by Market -Germany

Germany maintains its position as top volume production country in Europe, despite volume dropping from 4.27 million in 2023 to 3.78 million by 2030. This decline in Germany's production landscape means shrinking of volumes and market shares for the main players.

Passenger cars account for 95% of volume production in 2025; and will rise to 96% of production in Germany in 2030.

BMW is the largest volume brand produced in Germany, accounting for 24.4% of the volume in 2025, and declining to 23.9% by 2030. Mercedes is second with 20% of the volume in 2025 and maintaining a 20% grasp in 2030. Audi accounted for 14.7% of volume produced in

Germany in 2025, and will witness growth in market share to account for 16.3% in 2030. While Volkswagen will see brand market share drop from 22% in 2025 to 15% in 2030.

BMW will also see a decline, with volume produced of 983K in 2025, dropping to 868K in 2030.
VW will see production volume drop from a peak of 876K in 2025 to 578K units in 2030 as per latest data forecast from S&P. While Audi will see volume production of 593K in 2025 drop to 591K in 2030, despite market share increasing.

Production by Market – Spain

Passenger cars account for 77.9% of the volume produced in Spain in 2025, and by 2030 will account for 84% of the volume produced in Spain. Overall total light vehicle production will rise from 2.25million in 2025, to 2.67 million per annum by 2030.

Volkswagen will be the largest volume producer in Spain by 2030 defeating Renault, Peugeot and SEAT according to the latest outlook. VW volume will rise from 238,474 units in 2025 to over 361,770 units in 2030. Meanwhile new entrants Omoda and Jaecoo will see combined volume production rise from 68K in 2026 to over 192K in 2030.

Production by Market – Türkiye

Passenger Car production accounts for 64% of the total volume in 2025, and by 2030 will drop to 59%. LCV production accounts for 495K in 2025, and will rise to 747K by 2030. PC accounts for 888K in 2025 and will rise to 1.11 million in 2030. Total production will rise from 1.38 million in 2025 to 1.86 million units in 2030, cementing Türkiye's prominence as a production hub in Europe.

Toyota will become the top volume producer in Türkiye by 2030 with volume over 216K, while Renault is forecast to be second with 204K while MG will produce over 172K per annum by 2030. Hyundai and BYD follow both with over 150K production per year. And new brand Togg is forecast to witness production of just under 100K by 2030.

Production by Market – France

Passenger Car production accounts for 67.5% of total production in France in 2025, hitting 975K. By 2030, PC production will account for 72.6% with 997K units produced per annum. Meanwhile LCV production hit 468K in 2025 and will drop to 375K in 2030.

Peugeot maintains its top position in France, but volume declines from 336K in 2025 to 297K in 2030. Meanwhile Toyota maintains its position in second place with volume of around 258K in 2025 to a similar 253K in 2030. Renault saw production of around 162K in 2025, and will gain slightly to 184k by 2030. Ford will make a comeback, with production jumping to almost 100K by 2030.

Meanwhile Ineos and Alpine are forecast to see significant production growth, with 2030 volumes of 35K and 22K respectively.

Production by Market – Czech Rep.

Czech Rep has no light commercial vehicle production and relies on passenger car production. Volume of 1.44 million in 2025 will drop to around 1.16 million by year end 2030.

Skoda is the top vehicle producer in the Czech Rep. with 896K produced in 2025. This will fall to 718K in 2030. Hyundai will retain its place as second strongest producer, with volume of 289K in 2025 dropping to 271K in 2030. Toyota is third, with volume of 217K in 2025 expected to decline to 156K in 2030. Suzuki will begin production in 2028 with volume of around 15k expected in 2030.