Zero-Emission Public Transport Boosted in Europe

New Electric Buses Presented in Bonn

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The German City of Bonn, where the UN Climate Secretariat (UNFCCC) is headquartered, today joined a Europe-wide initiative to boost zero-emission public transportation.

The initiative, involving six buses with the slogan 'Unsere e-Mission für Bonn' (our e-mission for Bonn), was launched by the city's Lord Mayor Ashok Sridharan; Chief Executive Officer of the local transport company SWB Bus and Bahn Heinz Jürgen Reining and other dignitaries.

Children from the Gottfried Kinkel Primary School, winners of a UN climate song competition in 2015, sang their award-wining chanson 'Climate Astronauts' to kick off the proceedings.

Nick Nuttall, UNFCCC Spokesperson, said: "The Paris Climate Change Agreement has thrown down the climate action gauntlet to everyone—governments, cities, regions, business and citizens."

"There is an urgent need to decarbonize all sectors of society with transportation and mobility a particular challenge—so congratulation to the European Union; the International Association of Public Transport, SWB, the City and all involved".

"It is time to fast-track and catalyze cleaner, greener urban mobility and this can be a lightning-rod towards a crucial transformation which is already seeing growth in electric vehicles world-wide and government policies triggering investments by major car companies in e-models," said Mr Nuttall.

The city of Bonn aims to eventually have a bus fleet comprised entirely of vehicles that are powered by electricity.

The initiative, which comes in the 20th anniversary year of the UN in Bonn, is part of the European Union's Zero Emission Urban Bus Systems (ZeEUS) project, which is currently testing electric bus technology at 10 sites throughout Europe.

An e-bus in front of the UN campus in Bonn. Image: Stadtwerke Bonn / Martin Magunia

Global Demand for Electric and Hybrid Buses to Grow at 17% Per Annum

In addition to concerns over climate change, rising air and noise pollution and increasing urbanization is propelling demand for electric hybrid electric buses.

According to recent research, the global market for electric & hybrid electric buses offers significant growth potential, with a projected annual growth rate of 17% annually from 2016 to 2021.

In 2015, a major share in global demand for electric & hybrid electric buses was accounted for by China.

Other major global economies such as the US, Canada, UK, Germany and France have already deployed a large number of new buses with electric and hybrid fuel systems.

Electric Vehicles a Perfect Fit for Decarbonized Electric Grids

Electric vehicles fit perfectly into the new, clean energy infrastructure that we need in order to keep climate change within manageable boundaries.

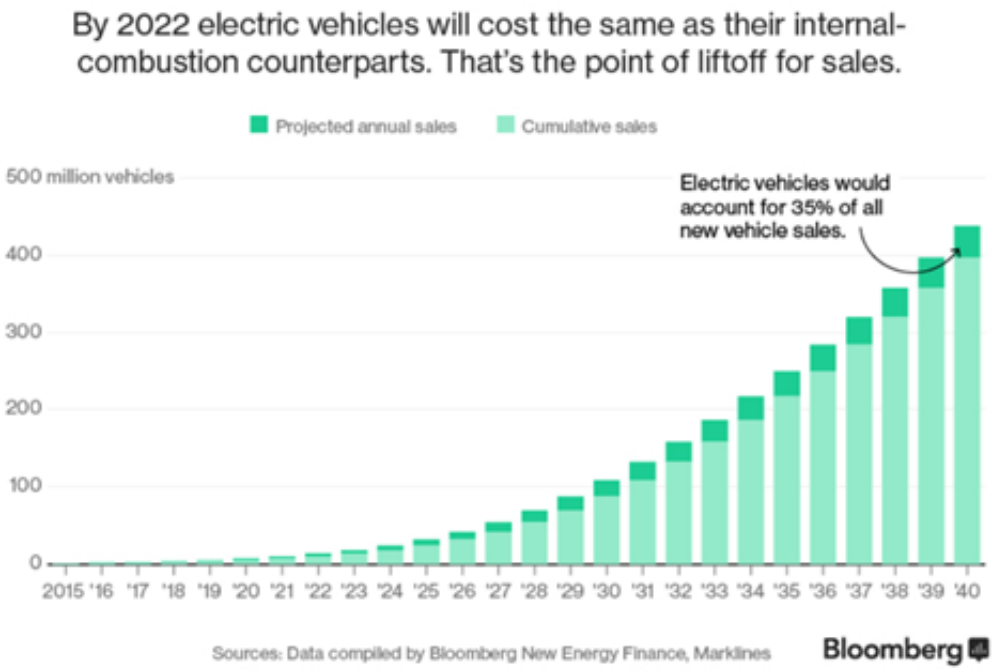
The world has been adding more electricity-generating capacity from wind and solar than from coal, natural gas, and oil combined since 2013.

As electric grids are decarbonized, electric vehicles and renewable power create a mutually beneficial circle of demand. This is because electric cars can reduce the overall cost of battery storage by storing intermittent sun and wind power in batteries.

Cost is a major factor: Battery prices fell 35 percent last year and are on a trajectory to make unsubsidized electric vehicles as affordable as their gasoline counterparts by 2022.

BNEF expects long-range electric cars will cost less than $22,000 in today's dollars by

2040, and thirty-five percent of new cars worldwide to have a plug.



How the UN Promotes the Electro-Mobility and Clean Transport Agendas

The UN puts a strong emphasis on clean transport. Urban electric mobility was extensively showcased as part of a special action agenda during the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015, which saw the launch of the Paris Declaration on Electro-Mobility and Climate Change.

Partners to the declaration commit to broaden their efforts and call for a decisive joint effort towards sustainable transport electrification so that at least 20% of all road vehicles are electrically powered by 2030.

Other initiatives presented in Paris as part of the action agenda have equally ambitious and specific targets for clean transport:

- The International Association of Public Transport (UITP) Declaration on Climate Leadership aims to double the market share of public transport around the world by 2025.
- The International Union of Railways (UIC) Low-Carbon Sustainable Rail Transport Challenge aiming to double railway share of passenger transport by 2050.
- UN-Habitat's Urban Electric Mobility Initiative Urban Electric Mobility Initiative aims to increase the sale of electric vehicles by 30% by 2030 to achieve a 30% reduction of CO2 emissions in urban areas by 2050

The climate action initiatives of cities, regions, business and investors in the area of clean transport, including that of UN-Habitat, are visible on the UN's NAZCA portal.

Image at top of article: Hannah Schmeller, UNFCCC