

China's Geely takes stake in German 'flying taxi' firm Volocopter

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German "flying taxi" developer Volocopter said Monday it had raised 50 million euros (\$55.1 million) from investors including automaker Geely, risking a revived debate about Chinese investments in EU firms.

"The new funds will be used towards bringing the VoloCity aircraft to commercial launch within the next three years," Volocopter said in a statement.

Small firms, including German contenders like Volocopter and Lilium, are in a race with established [aircraft manufacturers](#) like Airbus and billion-dollar tech giants like Uber to produce the first air taxis.

An array of 18 helicopter-style rotors powered by batteries heave the VoloCity into the sky, with the company saying it can carry two passengers with hand luggage up to 35 kilometres (22 miles), at speeds of up to 110 kilometres per hour.

The Financial Times reported that Geely's stake in Volocopter will amount to around 10 percent of the firm.

Chairman Li Shufu said the [investment](#) underlines Geely's "confidence in Volocopter air taxis as the next ambitious step in our wider expansion in both electrification and new mobility services".

Volocopter said its founders remain the largest shareholders, alongside household names like Mercedes-Benz parent Daimler and chipmaker

Intel.

Geely's arrival as a major Daimler investor—secretively building up a roughly 10-percent stake before unveiling it in February 2018—unsettled German politicians and businesses.

It followed a series of Chinese investments into key industries, sparking fears of vital technologies slipping out of German control and prompting Berlin to tighten laws on foreign investments, especially in "strategic" sectors.

But Daimler has sought to downplay the influence of Geely, which alongside its Chinese products has been buying up European carmakers like Sweden's Volvo.

"We are delighted to see our partners at Geely investing into Volocopter and becoming shareholders as we are since 2017," Daimler chief executive Ola Kallenius said.

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