

Honda speeds up plans to electrify car models in Europe

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All of Honda's models available in Europe will have electric options by 2022

Japanese car-making giant Honda announced Wednesday it will speed up plans to have electric options for all new car models for the European market by 2022, as it launched its latest hybrid.

But the world's seventh-largest car maker said there were no current plans to build any new models in Europe, following its announcement in February that it was closing its UK-based plant in Swindon.

"Our full line-up will be electrified by 2022," said Tom Gardner, Honda's [senior vice president](#) in Europe.

"Customers are quite quickly moving towards cleaner, more efficient vehicles," with the rapid electrification of Europe at the forefront of Honda's [business strategy](#), Gardner told AFP in an interview.

Honda unveiled its latest model of its popular Jazz hatchback, one of six new models planned for the European market, at an event held in Amsterdam.

The new two-motor hybrid Jazz will be available for European markets by mid-2020, Gardner said, with the roll-out of five other models planned by 2022.

Previously the world's seventh-largest car maker according to Global Manufacturing Magazine aimed for launching those models by 2025.

But asked whether the models will be locally made for the European market, Gardner said: "Our new hybrids are being built in Japan... and we're able to bring them to Europe."

This follows Honda's announcement that it will shut its UK plant by 2021 with the loss of 3,500 jobs, citing "unprecedented changes" in the global auto industry.

The factory in Swindon, southwest England, which is Honda's only EU plant, will shut "at the end of the current model's production life-cycle", the company announced in February, as carmakers worldwide

increasingly invest in greener electric vehicles over diesel cars.

The car maker's Swindon plant has been producing Honda's Civic [model](#) for more than 24 years, with 150,000 units rolling off the line annually.

Honda has insisted that its decision was not related to Brexit, but an analyst said Britain's move to leave the European Union may well have served as a catalyst prompting the decision.

Gardner said Honda broadly welcomed the latest Brexit deal agreed upon by Boris Johnson and the European Union, as the firm was looking at opportunities provided by a "strong UK-Europe trade agreement."

But "the Brexit situation is changing day-by-day and hour by hour. We see it moving very fast," Gardner added.

"Like any manufacturer we appreciate simplicity and clarity of regulations to trade," he said.

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