

Virus lockdowns send European car sales down 55%

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Window shopping was all most European consumers could do last month as non-essential businesses have been closed to stem the spread of the new coronavirus, leading to a collapse in car sales last month

European automobile sales fell by 55 percent last month due to the coronavirus outbreak as lockdown measures went into effect in most

nations, the industry's trade association said Friday.

New car registrations—a proxy for sales—slumped to 567,308 vehicles last month, compared to over 1.2 million during the same month last year, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) said.

"All 27 EU markets contracted in March, but Italy took the biggest hit, with registrations falling by 85.4 percent to 28,326 new cars," the European Automobile Manufacturers Association said.

France was also particularly hard hit with a 72.2 percent drop, as was Spain where sales tumbled 69.3 percent.

In Germany, where restrictions have been less onerous, sales fell by 37.7 percent.

For the first three months of the year, sales were down by 25.6 percent to 2.48 million vehicles.

All carmakers suffered, but Fiat Chrysler saw the worst drop, at 76.6 percent, as it is heavily dependent upon Fiat's home market of Italy.

VW Group remained the top selling automaker in Europe, and even saw its market share increase to 26.6 percent in the first quarter of the year with just over 660,000 [sales](#).

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