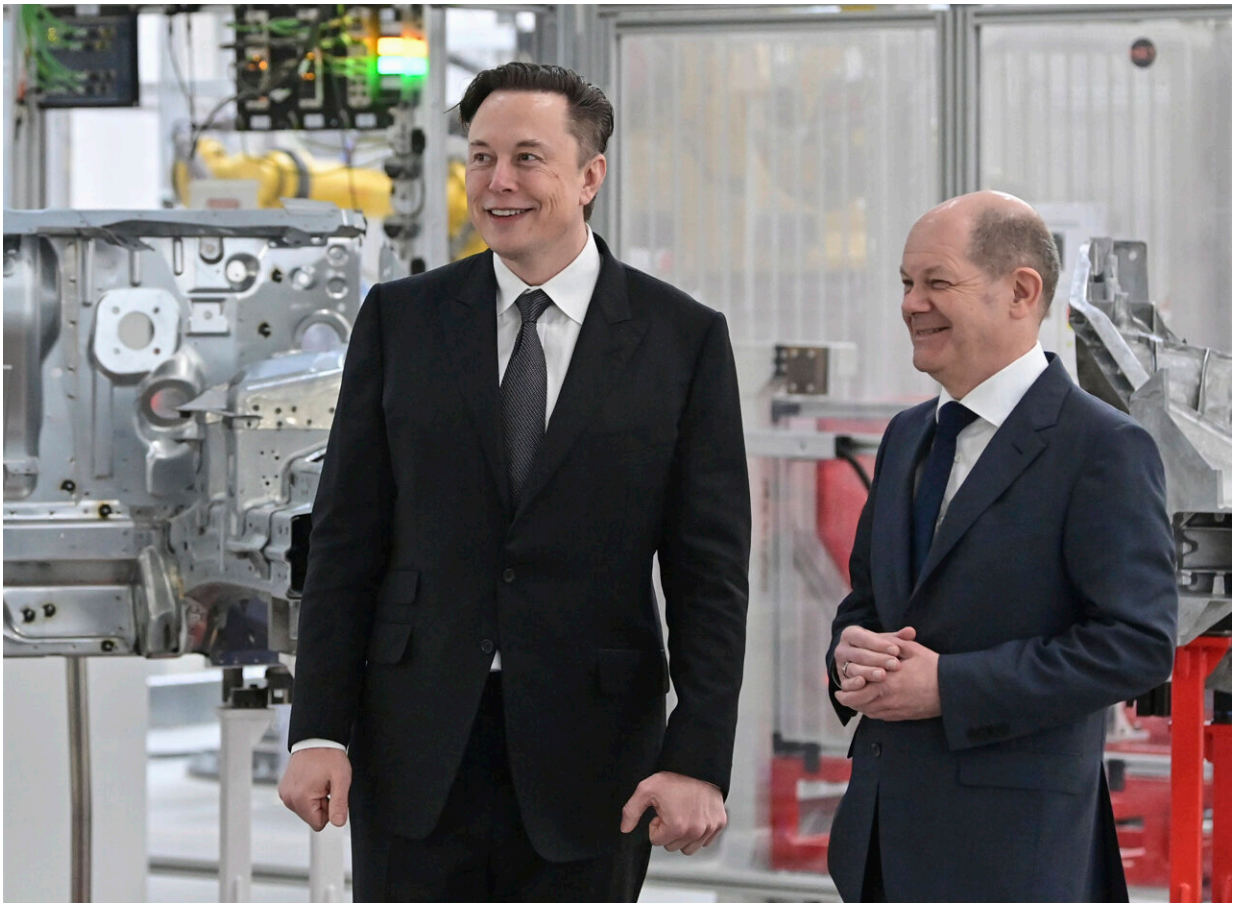


# Tesla opens 'Gigafactory' near Berlin, its 1st in Europe

March 22 2022

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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, right, and Elon Musk, Tesla CEO attend the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gr'nheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP

Electric car manufacturer Tesla opened its first European factory Tuesday on the outskirts of Berlin in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf.

The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year once it's fully up and running. Initial production will focus on Tesla's Model Y compact sport utility vehicle.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz attended the opening ceremony in Gruenheide, southeast of the German capital, with Tesla boss Elon Musk, who performed an impromptu dance for fans as the first cars rolled out of the factory for delivery.

He later posted a comment on Twitter thanking Germany with the words "Danke Deutschland!" surrounded by German flags.

German Economy Minister Robert Habeck said the opening of the factory was "a nice symbol" that gasoline-powered cars can be replaced with electric vehicles at a time when Germany and other European nations are trying to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and wean themselves off Russian oil.

Tesla began building the vast facility less than three years ago, before it received official permits to do so. Had those permits not been issued, the company would have had to level the site.



Elon Musk, Tesla CEO, right, claps hands at the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gruenheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP





The construction site of the new Tesla Gigafactory for electric cars is pictured in Gruenheide near Berlin, Germany, Friday, March 18, 2022. Electric car manufacturer Tesla is opening its first European factory on the outskirts of Berlin today, in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf. The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File



Tesla employees attend the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gruenheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP





Tesla cars are parked at the new Tesla Gigafactory for electric cars in Gruenheide near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. Electric car manufacturer Tesla is opening its first European factory on the outskirts of Berlin in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf. The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn



German Economy and Climate Minister Robert Habeck, delivers a statement in front of the new Tesla Gigafactory for electric cars in Gruenheide near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. Electric car manufacturer Tesla is opening its first European factory on the outskirts of Berlin in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf. The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn



The construction site of the new Tesla Gigafactory for electric cars is pictured in Gruenheide near Berlin, Germany, Friday, March 18, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn





A truck loaded with Tesla cars leaves the new Tesla Gigafactory for electric cars in Gruenheide near Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. Electric car manufacturer Tesla is opening its first European factory on the outskirts of Berlin in an effort to challenge German automakers on their home turf. The company says its new "Gigafactory" will employ 12,000 people and produce 500,000 vehicles a year. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn



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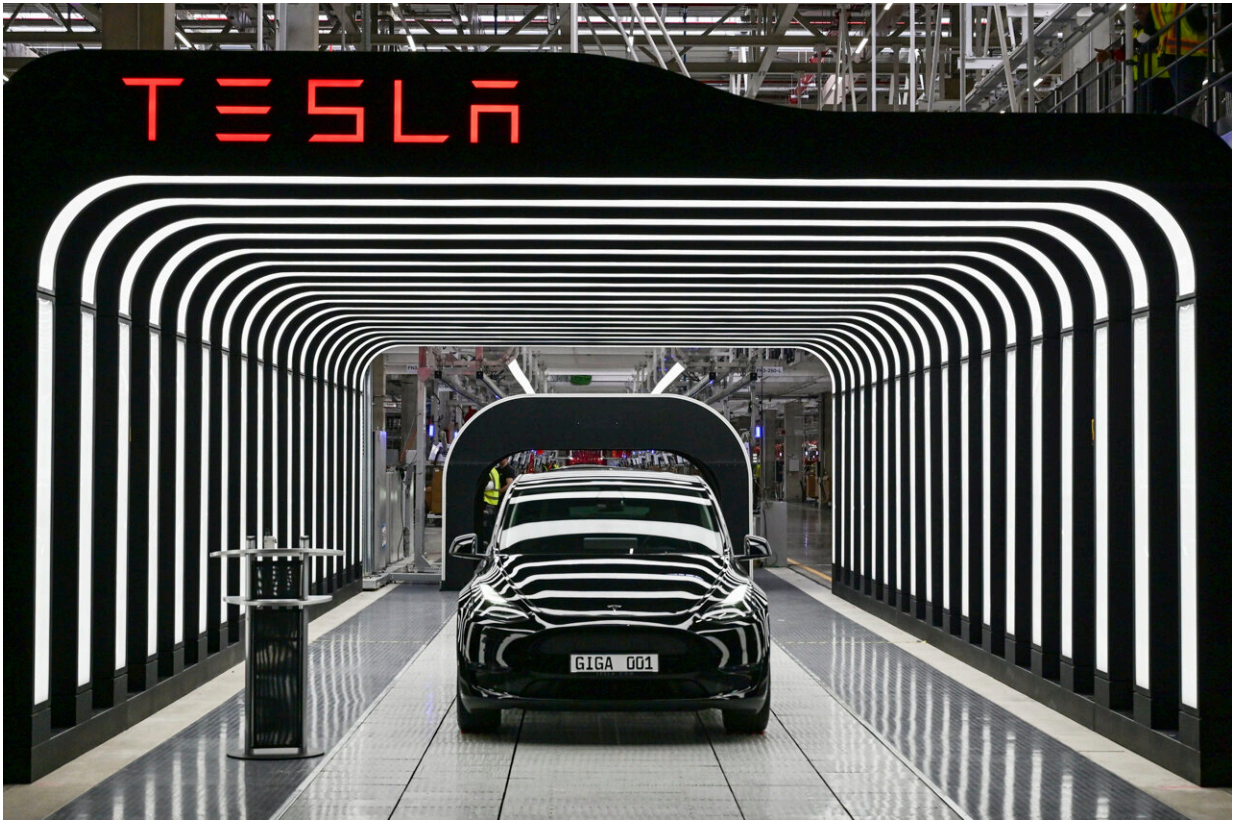


Model Y electric vehicles stand on a conveyor belt at the opening of the Tesla factory in Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gruenheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP





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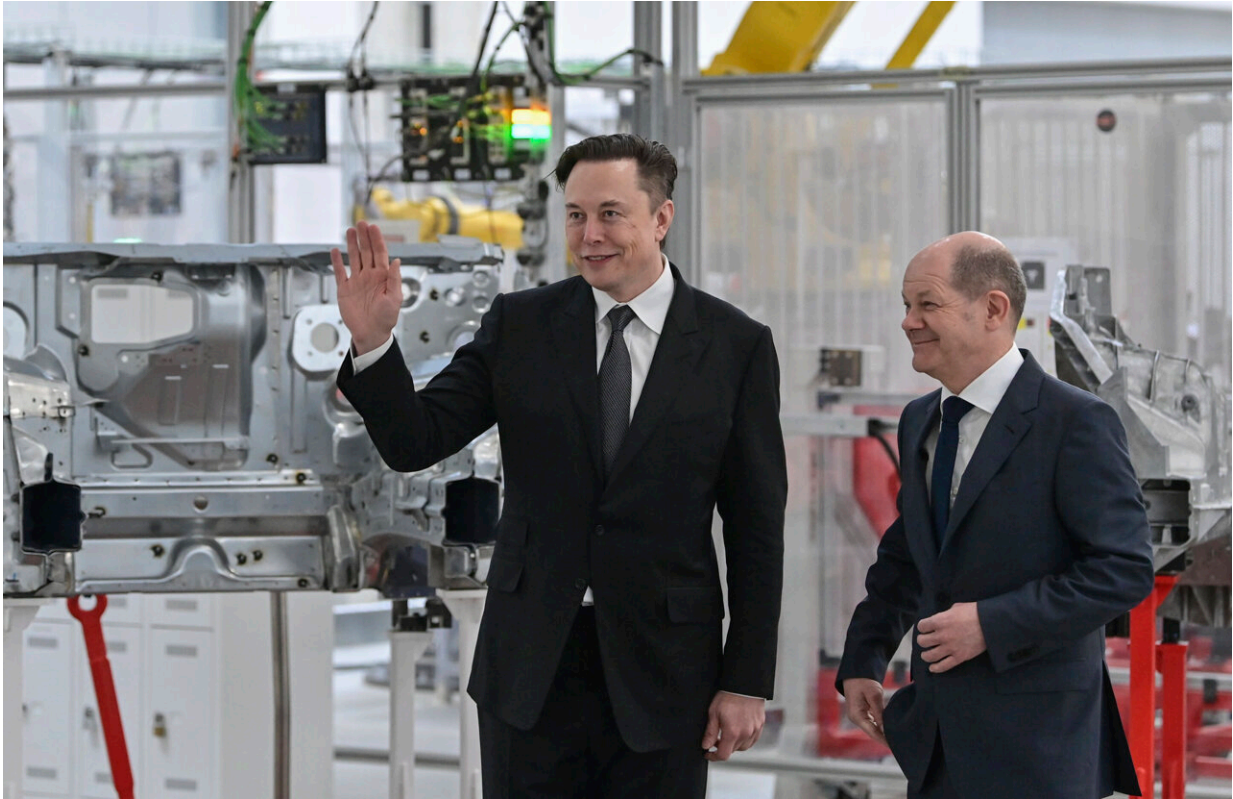


A Model Y electric vehicle rolls off the assembly line at the opening of the Tesla Gigafactory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gruenheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP



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Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Dietmar Woidke, Minister President of the State of Brandenburg, and Elon Musk, Tesla CEO, from left, attend the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The first European factory in Gr'nheide, designed for 500,000 vehicles per year, is an important pillar of Tesla's future strategy. Credit: Patrick Pleul/Pool via AP

"That's a different company risk culture," Habeck said, after being asked to compare Tesla's approach with the slow pace of German construction projects such as Berlin's nearby new airport, which opened with a nine-year delay.

Environmental activists have warned that the factory could affect



drinking water supplies in the region.

Tesla has dismissed those warnings. The company refused most media access to the site and the ceremony Tuesday.

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