

BYD says to build second EU factory despite EV slowdown

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BYD's Stella Li shrugged off a European Union inquiry that could lead to tariffs on Chinese EVs.

Chinese electric vehicle giant BYD is still committed to building a second factory in Europe and will roll out hybrid cars as the EV market

slows down, a group executive told AFP.

Stella Li, vice president for Europe and the Americas, also shrugged off a European Union probe that could lead to tariffs on Chinese EVs.

"When your competition worries about you, that means that you're super good," Li said in an interview Thursday at the Top Marques auto show in Monaco.

BYD's first factory in Europe, in Hungary, will begin production by the end of next year, Li said.

The company is still studying where it can build a new one and "when the time is ready we'll invest in a second facility", she said.

With EV sales dropping in several EU nations, BYD is launching [plug-in hybrid vehicles](#) (PHEV) such as the Seal U DM-i, which was featured at the Monaco event.

Such cars have both a [combustion engine](#) and a midsize electric battery that can be plugged in to charge.

For car buyers, PHEVs are "the first baby step to enjoy the technology," Li said.

BYD sold 1.5 million PHEVs last year, accounting for half of its global sales.

Critics say PHEVs are heavy and still consume too much petrol, producing harmful emissions for the planet when they are not charged.

Li said such cars can be more attractive to consumers who are concerned about not having enough charging stations and have "anxiety" about the

range of electric cars.

'Very competitive'

The European Commission last year angered China by opening an anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric cars, with growing expectations the EU will impose import duties in response.

The EU has until July 4 to order a provisional hike in duties on Chinese electric vehicles (EVs)—currently at 10 percent—with the expectation it could make its move some time in June.

"If I'm a smart consumer, I'll think that it's a good image. That means that Chinese cars have a good quality and are very competitive and accessible," Li said.

"We disagree about the accusations" on subsidies, she said, adding that duties on Chinese cars would "hurt European consumers" by limiting their access to "affordable technology".

Li added, "We'll continue to invest in Europe and build success here."

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