

Daimler to rev up e-mobility drive: report

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel sits in an electric car at the Daimler subsidiary car2go booth at the 2013 Frankfurt car show

German luxury automaker Daimler, owner of the Mercedes-Benz and Smart brands, plans to speed up its push into electro-mobility in the race against US pioneer Tesla and German rival BMW, a report said Wednesday.

Business daily Handelsblatt reported that Daimler plans to market six new electric models by 2020, starting with an SUV based on the Mercedes GLC, to be presented at the Paris Motor Show in September and hitting the market next year.

Daimler plans to launch a new sub-brand of e-cars with a range of over 500 kilometres (300 miles), to be built in its plants in Germany, the United States and China, the report said.

The strategic shift would be subject to approval by the [supervisory board](#) of the Stuttgart-based company at a July 20 meeting, the business newspaper said, citing unnamed company sources.

Contacted by AFP, Daimler did not comment on the specific report but confirmed that the group wants to focus more on electric cars in coming years.

Handelsblatt labelled the change, together with planned reforms to flatten the corporate giant's management structure, "the biggest reform" during the reign of CEO Dieter Zetsche since 2006.

The move away from polluting combustion engines has become more urgent since the emissions-cheating scandal last year engulfed German auto giant Volkswagen and cast suspicion on the entire sector.



An electric car2go Smart vehicle at the 2012 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas

Volkswagen chief Matthias Mueller—who apologised to angry shareholders at VW's annual general meeting Wednesday—earlier this week expressed doubts about the future of diesel technology.

Pointing to the scandal and tougher emissions standards on the horizon, he said that "we have to ask ourselves whether... we want to spend more money on the further development of diesel" and promised that VW would take a "fundamental" look at the issue.

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