

Lithuania builds 'dream' Tesla factory with Minecraft

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In this undated photo received on Saturday, Feb. 4, 2017 taken by Darius Kniuksta, a scene from a video game featuring a Tesla gigafactory. Lithuanians badly want Tesla Motors to build its next giant factory on their soil, so to grab the attention of the California tech company they built a virtual version of a facility inside the "Minecraft" video game. Vladas Lasas, who was behind the project, says they wanted to send a message to Tesla CEO Elon Musk that Lithuania "has plenty of skillful" people as well as a perfect factory site. (Darius Kniuksta via AP)

Lithuanian entrepreneurs eager to woo Tesla Motors to their shores have built an entire factory to impress the electric carmaker... inside the

Minecraft video game.

Responding to a plan announced last year by Tesla CEO Elon Musk to build a second factory in Europe, 40 gamers used the popular online building game to construct a virtual replica—in just 35 hours—of the company's battery production plant.

But this time, instead of the original site in the US state of Nevada, the plant was located in the Baltic EU state.

The gamers then posted a 2:28-minute video on YouTube, showing off their model, which is complete with solar energy panels and electricity generators.

"Welcome to the dream," reads a caption seen in the 3D video as the viewer is shown through the virtual plant.

It appears the gamers knew how to appeal to the tech geeks at Tesla, which tweeted on Saturday: "Lithuania knows the way to our heart".

Lithuanian entrepreneur Vidas Lasas, who was behind the initiative, said his nation of three million faces tough competition from at least 10 European countries.

"We have teams to build a virtual factory in less than a week. And we could have real teams working in real factories within a couple of years," he told AFP on Saturday.



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Lasas said the new "gigafactory" would provide a significant boost to the Lithuanian economy, and could help curb emigration by young people to richer Western EU states.

Tesla has another plant in the Netherlands.

Lithuanian Economy Minister Mindaugas Sinkevicius hailed the initiative and said "it was only the beginning in the effort to have Tesla in Lithuania".

"This non-governmental initiative proves that our IT specialists are not only talented but also inventive enough to surprise the world," he said.

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