

Telekom Austria turns phone boxes into car recharging stations

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A picture taken on January 2010 in Paris, shows public phone boxes. Telekom Austria has decided to turn its public telephone boxes -- which are in danger of becoming obsolete anyway thanks to mobile phones -- into battery recharging stations for electric cars.

If you've run out of juice for your environmentally friendly electric car, a recharge may be only a phone call away, literally, under a new scheme unveiled by Telekom Austria here Tuesday.

The [telecommunications company](#) has decided to turn its public telephone boxes -- which are in danger of becoming obsolete anyway thanks to mobile phones -- into battery recharging stations for [electric cars](#).

Admittedly, the scheme is still in its infancy: there are just 223 electric cars currently registered in Austria at the moment, plus 3,559 [hybrid cars](#), from a total 4.36 million cars on Austrian roads.

But the Austrian motor vehicle association VOeC is

predicting that the number will rise to 405,000 by 2020.

In a bid to find new uses for its 13,500 phone boxes around the country, Telekom Austria has therefore come up with the idea of turning them into recharging stations for [electric vehicles](#): cars, scooters and bicycles.

Telekom Austria chief Hannes Ametsreiter unveiled the first such phone box in front of the company's headquarters in Vienna on Tuesday.

And the aim is to convert 29 more phone boxes by the end of this year, Ametsreiter told journalists.

"In the longer run, we'll have to sound out the market to see exactly how many phone boxes will be converted," the telecom chief said.

In the initial trial period, recharging will cost nothing. An electric car needs around 6.5 hours to be recharged, an electric scooter 80 minutes and an electric bike 20 minutes.

But in future, payment, which is expected to cost a single-digit euro sum, will be via mobile phone, Ametsreiter said.

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