New Car Registrations In Europe's Big 5 Markets Increased By 8.8% In 2015

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- **Full year 2015 combined registrations for Germany, UK, France, Italy and Spain totalled 10.39 million units**
- **Germany remained the largest market by volume. Spain and Italy had double-digit growth**
- **December 2015 registrations up by 11.6% on 2014**
- **Renault, Mercedes, BMW and Fiat only brands to gain market share in the top 10**

Last year new car registrations in Europe's Big 5 European markets surpassed the 10 million units mark, increasing by 8.8% compared to 2014. All 5 markets posted positive growth with Germany leading the way with 3.2 million units, up by 5.6%, although this was the lowest annual increase among the 5 countries.

It was followed by the UK, where the market rose 6.3% to 2.6 million units, reaching a new all-time record. France came third with 1.91 million vehicles registered, posting a 6.8% gain over 2014 full year results. However, a big part of the growth was driven by the healthy performance seen in Italy and Spain, the smallest markets of the top 5. In 2015 volumes rose 15.6% in Italy, the fourth largest market in Europe, and 20.6% in Spain, thanks to effective rebates and the scrappage program in Spain.

In December 2015 registrations grew by 11.6%, boosted by double-digit growth in France, Italy and Spain, and better results than during the previous months in Germany and the UK. A total of 811,700 units were registered last month across the 5 markets.

Volkswagen led the way in these markets with 12.1% market share and registrations up by 5.2% in 2015, the lowest positive growth in the top 10 brands. Ford kept its second place but lost market share from 8.0% in 2014 to 7.9% last year, and Renault outsold Opel/Vauxhall and became the third best-selling brand in the European Big 5. Renault, Mercedes and Fiat were the only brands in the top 10 to post double-digit growth.

Outside the top 10, Nissan moved further ahead of Toyota and got closer to the 10th position in the brand table, thanks to a 14.9% registrations increase. The French premium DS, Jeep and Smart were the top winners in terms of market share growth.

"Traditionally the five largest markets count for three quarters of total European volume and their positive results are an indicator of how well the car industry performed in 2015," commented Felipe Munoz, Marketing analyst at JATO Dynamics. "The brands that benefited the most from this fact were those that added new SUVs to their product ranges as this was the segment to drive the biggest part of the growth."

As in the rest of Europe, the Volkswagen Golf led these markets by occupying first place in Germany, third in Spain, fourth in the UK, ninth in Italy and eleventh in France. Last year the Golf's registrations stalled and grew only by 0.5%, resulting in a drop in market share from 3.99% in 2014 to 3.69% in 2015.

The long-standing European leader was followed by the Ford Fiesta, Volkswagen Polo, Renault Clio, Opel/Vauxhall Corsa, Peugeot 208 and the Ford Focus, all of which underperformed compared to average growth. The top 10 was completed by the Nissan Qashqai and two models that are usually out of the full European picture: the Fiat Panda and Renault Captur. These three cars were the only ones to post double-digit growth and gain market share among the top 10 models.

Other key players outside the top ten include the Volkswagen Passat (+38%), Peugeot 308 (+26%), Mercedes C-Class (+22%), Opel/Vauxhall Mokka (+29%), and the Mini 3/5-door (+45%). Fiat's new 500X led the way in terms of market share growth, followed by the new Renault Kadjar, DS 3 and the BMW 2-Series Active Tourer. Half of the top 20 models that gained the most market share were SUVs.

"As in the rest of the continent, the small and compact SUVs continued to grab a big part of the growth and these newer products were the big winners with consumers," concluded Munoz.

Our full 29 European markets release and analysis will follow shortly.

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