



Visiting the world's largest charging park

PetrolPlaza visited the unique charging park in Germany to learn more about this mobility project. The chairman of the association in charge of the site and Hectronic guide us through this impressive park-and-ride location.

The largest charging park in the world opened in Southern Germany in October 2023. This Park&Ride location with 259 charging spots beat [Shell's park in Shenzhen Airport \(China\)](#) by one – the Chinese site has far more power available. The charging park in Merklingen, a town in Baden-Württemberg with 2,000 inhabitants, is meant to cater to people traveling from that area to Ulm and Stuttgart. The project was carried out by 12 municipalities structured as the Swabian Alb Regional Association, the state of Baden-Württemberg, and Deutsche Bahn.

The chargers installed in Merklingen deliver no more than 11 kW in AC charging. Most users leave their car there for long periods of time which allows for an effective charging experience. The parking solar roofs are covered with photovoltaic panels that feed energy into the chargers and the grid.

Klaus Kauffman, Mayor of Laichingen and Chairman of the Swabian Alb Regional Association, believes these kinds of locations are a big step towards the mobility revolution.

With a share of about one-fifth of all new cars, 524,219 new fully electric cars were registered last year. The growth slowed down compared to 2022 due to a phase-out of state support. The goal of the government and leading automakers to get at least 15 million electric vehicles in Germany by 2030 looks challenging.

The parking also offers barrier-free payments. Hectronic, a technology supplier from the Black Forest, supplied outdoor payment terminals that make charging just as easy as refueling. The charging and billing solution complies with Germany's new calibration law.

"We have been a pioneer in this field with projects around the world. Our goal was to make it as easy as possible to charge the vehicle – even for inexperienced users," explains Sascha Schiele, Sales Director e-Mobility & Parking Solutions at Hectronic.

All charging points and payment terminals are connected with each other through fiber optic cables, ensuring fast and constant data exchange.