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BYD opens Hungary electric bus factory, targeting 400 a year capacity

In what BYD called "a hugely significant day for all of us in BYD, for Komarom and for the Hungarian automotive sector", the company today opened its first owned bus plant in Europe in the northern Hungarian town of Komarom.

The new plant sees an investment by BYD that will total some €20 million (or about HUF 6.2 billion) in the three years to 2018. Currently, there are 32 employees of whom 68% are factory workers. Eventually it will employ some 300 people, the vast majority being locally recruited Hungarians with a technical background, who will assemble up to 400 electric buses a year on two shifts. Those buses will be exported to customers across continental Europe.

Initial output will be electric buses and coaches but other products will soon follow, including electric forklift trucks and then light commercial vehicles. The plant consists of five buildings: a main office, a battery test and maintenance centre, an inspection line and water leak test booth, a bus and truck assembly hall and a paint shop.

It is planned that the Hungary plant will produce the bus chassis for the UK (for assembly into complete vehicles under the BYD ADL partnership) and the newly announced BYD factory in France. There are plans to deliver up to 40 vehicles by the end of this year.

The official name of the business is 'BYD Electric Bus and Truck Hungary Kft'.

Speaking at the official opening ceremony in Komarom today, Isbrand Ho, Managing Director of BYD Europe, told the audience of VIP guests, including - representing the Hungarian Government - Mr Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, together with other senior officials: "As you can see, we are ready for production which will begin shortly. On time and, I'm delighted to say, on budget".

Mr Ho explained why BYD chose Hungary and Komarom for its new factory: "Firstly because of its central location and its long tradition of engineering excellence but also we are very conscious of the strong heritage of bus making in this immediate area. Now the Government is reinforcing that industry and we are proud to be at the forefront of that movement".

Mr Ho also paid tribute to the very friendly welcome received from the authorities - local and national.

"We are very pleased that BYD, a major Chinese multinational on the cutting edge of new automotive technology, has chosen Hungary as the location for its first fully-owned bus plant in Europe, which will eventually employ 300 people," Mr Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said at the opening event. "This investment demonstrates Hungary's success in attracting both industrial investment and innovation, and the international competitiveness of its auto sector."

Mr. Duan Jielong, Chinese Ambassador to Hungary said: "I hope the BYD investment project can achieve mutual benefits and common development and move forward the bilateral cooperation on production capacity inclusive of automotive industry by making full use of the advantages with our joint efforts."

For BYD this more than 66,000 square metre complex is just the first of a series of European production facilities it is planning. The event today follows an announcement just two weeks ago of the acquisition of an 80,000 square metre site for bus making in Beauvais, to the north of Paris.

Mr Ho explained BYD was completely confident that it will need this extra bus making capacity. "The answer is simple - air quality - or, perhaps I should say, bad air quality, something which impacts the citizens of every major city worldwide. Not a week goes past without another report linking the serious detrimental health consequences of breathing polluted air and most of that pollution comes from road vehicles, largely diesel powered.

"City buses are not only a prime contributor to this but also, since they have totally predictable route patterns, are one of the easiest classes of vehicles to be electrified. Learning from the streets of major Chinese cities where poor air quality is not new, we are targeting our world leading battery technology on the city bus sector, although our ambitions stretch way beyond this humble type of vehicle.

"It is no coincidence therefore that BYD electric buses already make up the largest fleet of zero emission buses at a major international airport - Amsterdam's Schiphol - and the largest fleet of electric city buses - in service on the streets of London", said Mr Ho.

About BYD

BYD Company Ltd. is a leading high-tech multinational company based in Shenzhen, China. Since its establishment in 1995, BYD has developed solid expertise in rechargeable batteries, becoming a relentless advocate of sustainable development. It has successfully expanded its renewable energy solutions globally with operations in over 50 countries and regions. After 22 years' development, BYD has created a Zero Emissions Energy Ecosystem - affordable solar power generation, reliable energy storage, cutting-edge electrified transportation and a state of the art monorail. These Four Green Dreams make BYD an industry leader in the energy and transportation sector. BYD is listed on the Hong Kong and Shenzhen Stock Exchange. For more information, please visit <http://www.byd.com>

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