

German Automakers Voice Opposition to U.S. Tariffs

Voice of the World

By SUN Jin

Washington's unilateral tariffs on European vehicles since April have significantly undermined German automakers' profitability.

BMW's profit dropped about 29 percent and Mercedes Benz's over 50 percent in the first half of 2025, with both companies citing the tariffs as one of the primary factors.

The latest 15 percent U.S. tariff on EU vehicles fails to lift confidence among Germany's automotive giants still bruised by trade tensions.

According to the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), German automakers exported nearly 450,000 vehicles to the United States in 2024 while they produced over 840,000 vehicles in the United States.

America's 50 percent import tariff on steel and aluminum has cascaded through supply chains. Oliver Blume, CEO of the Volkswagen Group said the company's factories in the U.S. face a steep increase in tariffs, adding 1.3 billion euros to Volkswagen's costs in the first half of 2025.

Hildegard Müller, president of VDA, pointed out that though tariffs declined, totaling billions of euros would impose significant pressure on the automotive industry.

Trade uncertainty has emerged as a significant business risk. *Automobil-*



Employees work on new cars in the body shop at a Volkswagen plant in Wolfsburg, Germany. (PHOTO: VCG)

woche's journalist Frank Volk wrote that policy unpredictability could trigger worse damage than the tariffs themselves.

Michael Schumann, chairman of the Board of Directors at the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade, said the Chinese market could be an anchor for global enterprises.

More and more German automotive companies are paying greater attention to China, which offers a stable institutional environment and clear growth prospects.

China is not just a market, but a partner in technology.

Thomas Becker, vice president for sustainability and mobility strategy at

the BMW Group, said the automaker has benefited a lot from China's advancing technologies in critical areas like high-tech, digitization, and future mobility, particularly autonomous driving.

Arno Antlitz, CFO and COO of the Volkswagen Group, expressed strong confidence in the company's localized platform development and battery partnerships in China.

The BMW Group announced a new collaboration with Chinese firm Momenta to develop intelligent driver assistance solutions tailored for the Chinese market.

The Volkswagen Group and its Chinese partners are co-developing an electrical and electronic architecture for Volkswagen-branded electric vehicles

produced in China. Volkswagen's software unit CARIAD has formed a joint venture company with Horizon Robotics to develop advanced driver assistance systems and autonomous driving technologies specifically tailored for the Chinese market.

Guntram Kaiser, CEO and founder of Kaiser Communication, suggested that as China's contribution in technology, software and other fields is increasing, these achievements can be fully utilized. They can be introduced in the European and German markets.

Ferdinand Dudenhöffer, director of the Center for Automotive Research in Germany, said China has made great strides in the automotive industry in recent years. The lithium-ion battery's home is in China and it is developing its greatest advantages in China.

Mercedes-Benz and BMW are leveraging Chinese companies' extensive battery expertise and cost advantages through scale. Collaboration between Chinese tech champions and German automakers with strong brands can become a win-win relationship.

Thorsten Giehler, director of the Economic and Social Development Department at GIZ, the German agency for international cooperation, said both Germany and China support a rules-based trade and investment system. He hoped that the two could once again work together as standard-bearers of the global rules-based system, and through bilateral cooperation jointly shape international norms and prevent the world from fracturing into isolated islands.

Opinion

Beyond Science Fiction: Robotics' Leap into Daily Life

By LI Linxu

The 2025 World Robot Conference (WRC) in Beijing wasn't just another tech expo; it showcased the accelerated transformation of robotics from specialized tools into intelligent, embodied partners poised to reshape our world.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the WRC. Over the past decade, it has become "an innovation driven event," "a gathering to promote industry," "an exhibition for application promotion," and "a platform for international cooperation" in the global robotics field.

The WRC has driven breakthroughs in many aspects of robotics, particularly in technological innovation. More than 100 cutting-edge robotics products debuted at this year's event, nearly twice as many as last year, demonstrating the conference's growing role as a global stage for innovation.

The 10-year evolution of the WRC also parallels China's ascent as a global robotics innovation hub. Last year, China accounted for two-thirds of global robotics patent applications. A comprehensive range of proprietary core components for robotics has been established, and critical advancements have been made in robotics large models, intelligent collaborative control, and human-machine interaction.

The debut of state-of-the-art products, ranging from agile quadruped robots, rescue robots, and inspection robots, to cutting-edge catheter-shaped robots and robotic lawn mowers, also offered a glimpse into the latest trends of

industrial development and application scenarios in robotics.

Robots now permeate a significant number of major economic sectors, transforming workflows, boosting efficiency, and creating new possibilities across various industries.

A major highlight of this year's expo was the blockbuster appearance of embodied intelligence. A record 50 humanoid robotics integrators showcased their latest innovations and industry solutions — the largest assembly ever seen at any robotics exhibition to date.

Meanwhile, a powerful consumerism trend has emerged. The inaugural E-Town Robot Consumption Festival, running alongside the WRC, bridges the gap between high-tech manufacturing and mainstream consumers. The push towards consumer markets signifies a maturation where robots transition from industrial assets to integrated elements of daily life.

The expo, therefore, crystallizes an exciting trajectory: robots are becoming smarter, more embodied, and increasingly woven into the societal fabric — from factories to homes. China's vibrant industrial ecosystem and focused initiatives are undeniably accelerating this global revolution.

As embodied intelligence moves from labs into logistics centers and living rooms, the robots of tomorrow are rapidly taking shape today, promising to reshape how we work, live and interact with technology. The future isn't just automated; it's embodied, intelligent, and arriving faster than anticipated.



Humanoid robots give a demo of sorting tasks in industrial scenarios. (PHOTO: HONG Xing / Science and Technology Daily)

China's Climate Early Warning AI System

AI Ripples

By GONG Qian

The China Meteorological Administration (CMA) has a brand new AI-powered meteorology solution for early warnings for all, dubbed MAZU, and donated the MAZU-Urban, a multi-hazard early warning AI system, to Djibouti and Mongolia at the opening ceremony of the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 26.

Since January, the AI agent MAZU-Urban has been piloted in 35 countries and regions across Asia, Africa and Oceania. It is jointly developed by the

Shanghai Meteorological Service and some sci-tech research institutions including the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.

MAZU is named after the ancient Chinese goddess of the sea and embodies a spirit of protection and preparedness. It stands for multi-hazard, alert, zero-gap and universal.

The solution aims to jointly address global climate challenges by building a global early warning service network covering multiple hazards, and share China's experience and technological achievements with the world, particularly with other developing countries.

The core strategy of the MAZU initiative is to break down the barriers of meteorological infrastructure with cloud

technology. The cloud-based early warning system serves as the core, designed to maximize access to advanced technologies.

Benefiting from China's latest technological achievements and meteorological service products, other developing countries could have modern early warning capabilities, such as high-resolution forecasting, without investing heavily in local supercomputing centers and data storage facilities. This can be an effective way to bridge the digital and intelligent divide.

Unlike traditional one-way technical aid, the MAZU initiative focuses on equal collaboration and common growth. It aims to make global meteorological science and technology a public

good, while fostering a fairer and more balanced global meteorological governance system.

According to the CMA, MAZU-Urban features a "3-in-1" smart architecture integrating all-in-one, tablet and mobile devices. The all-in-one device serves global meteorological and emergency departments, aligning international standards with local guidelines to boost risk awareness, real-time monitoring, and localized defense planning.

The tablet device targets industry users, offering customized risk assessments based on multi-source data. The mobile app focuses on the public, delivering location-based alerts, evacuation instructions, shelter navigation, and emergency contacts.

Lunar Soil Brick Maker Advances Building on Moon

From page 1

In the final phase, researchers had to ensure the device could adapt to the wide variety of lunar soil compositions. Lunar regolith varies significantly between regions — from basaltic mare soils to feldspathic highlands. To simulate real lunar conditions, the team prepared multiple types of artificial lunar soil and tested the printer across repeated cycles, refining the system for broader adaptability.

Turning sunlight into structure

At the heart of the system is a parabolic mirror that concentrates sunlight, which is then transmitted through fiber

bundles to a focal point. Here, the concentrated energy raises the temperature of the lunar soil simulant to over 1300°C, melting it into a moldable state. In indoor testing environments where real sunlight is unavailable, the team used solar simulators to replicate the intense energy conditions required for the experiments.

The resulting bricks are composed entirely of in-situ lunar soil — no additives are required. The bricks are dense and strong, meeting not only habitation structure requirements but also for equipment platforms and lunar roadways.

Next steps: From bricks to habitats

Despite this achievement, Yang emphasized that significant challenges remain before lunar buildings become a reality. The bricks themselves are not sufficient to form self-sustaining structures under lunar conditions. On the moon, extreme temperatures, vacuum and microgravity demand a hybrid construction strategy. The lunar soil bricks would primarily serve as exterior protective layers, to be integrated with rigid pressure-resistant modules or inflatable habitat systems.

According to DSEL, the roadmap for lunar construction comprises three key steps. First, completing a full technical verification chain — brick

already worked along the railway. Through the Lancang-Mekong Integrated Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation Center, the six countries also joined hands to combat cross-border criminal activities like telecommunication fraud.

At the 12th LMC Senior Officials' Meeting via video link on July 31, Vice

production, structural assembly, and load-bearing evaluations. Second, deploying the brick-making machine and construction work during an actual lunar mission to test its function under real conditions. Third, integrating the machine with robotic systems and pressure-capable habitat modules to form a full-scale lunar construction system.

As space agencies worldwide move toward long-term lunar exploration, technologies like this represent a quiet but critical shift — from mission-based exploration to infrastructure-driven settlement. The lunar soil brick maker may not be glamorous, but it could be the cornerstone upon which the idea of real extraterrestrial homes is built.

Foreign Minister Sun Weidong noted that China will continue to act on the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness in its neighborhood diplomacy, enhance strategic communication, deepen solidarity and cooperation, strengthen security shield, and foster closer people-to-people ties with Mekong countries, so as to inject strong impetus into building a Lancang-Mekong community with a shared future and jointly usher in a new golden decade of the LMC.

Every Language Deserves Its Large Language Model

By SUN Jin & DU Peng

Large language models (LLMs) must not cater solely to dominant languages. Every language deserves its own culturally-grounded LLM to preserve its unique linguistic identity.

This urgency was highlighted at a recent international seminar on multilingual LLMs during the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference held in Shanghai.

Vlado Delić, professor of the Faculty of Technical Sciences at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, said that nations with minority languages are at risk of AI marginalization. The lack of digital corpora results in severely inadequate support for low-resource languages within mainstream LLMs.

Despite the rapid evolution of LLMs, many minority languages remain critically overlooked.

A core issue is data scarcity: building LLMs requires massive corpora as training data, yet those for low-resource languages are starkly insufficient. Even when available, such linguistic data is often intentionally deprioritized during LLMs training, leading directly to LLMs' consistent underperformance.

Delić pointed out the imbalance: Serbian language data represents less than 0.1 percent of tokens (the basic linguistic units in LLMs) within major LLMs. Such marginalization poses

serious risks, such as mistranslation in critical fields like medicine or law could lead to incorrect decisions. This stark reality, he argued, necessitates building LLMs based on local linguistic patterns and cultural frameworks.

Every minor language needs its own data ecosystems to grow LLMs. Gábor Prószéky, director general of the Hungarian Research Center for Linguistics, explained that while Hungary is in Europe, its language doesn't belong to the Indo-European language family. Linguistically speaking, Hungarian is an agglutinative language with complex affix combinations and free word order. This poses unique challenges in tokenization and modeling in LLMs. Consequently, LLMs trained in other languages often falter, making it necessary to customize and adjust their algorithm specifically for Hungarian.

Nations with unique linguistic heritage have a responsibility to build specialized data corpus. Tamás Váradi, senior advisor at the Hungarian Research Center for Linguistics, stressed that this includes providing not only raw data, but professionally annotated datasets for enabling LLMs to perform effectively.

International collaboration is proving vital to narrow the disparity and bridge the digital gap. Both Prószéky's and Delić's team are partnering with Chinese companies.

From page 1

In the first seven months of 2025, imports and exports transported by the China-Laos Railway surpassed 3.43 million tonnes with a value of 15.4 billion RMB, increasing by six and 41 percent year on year respectively.

Part of the railway's prosperity can be attributed to the vocational educa-

tion cooperation between China and Mekong countries. In 2019, Guiyang Vocational and Technical College and Kunming Bureau of China Railway signed an agreement to jointly establish a course that cultivated highly skilled professionals for the opening and operation of the China-Laos Railway. A batch of Chinese and Lao graduates from this course have