



[Backlash Against Tesla Amid Growing Anti-Musk Sentiment](#)

Tesla is facing major backlash in much of Europe and the United States, which has manifested itself in declining sales, anti-Tesla ads and protests, a record high level of trade-ins, and acts of vandalism against the car manufacturer. This is largely attributable to a notable rise in public sentiment that is critical of Tesla CEO Elon Musk. In the time since Musk has been appointed as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) by President Donald Trump, he has received growing disapproval for various recent actions and many have lashed out at the company through numerous methods to voice their objection. With his role as de facto head of DOGE, Musk has been empowered by Trump to make broad cuts to federal agencies and lay off government workers without proper transparency and oversight, fueling the retaliation towards him and Tesla.

The backlash against Tesla has become evident both here in the United States and across Europe. In the latter, Tesla car sales in countries like Germany have dropped rapidly by over 50% last month alone, despite the demand for electric vehicles remaining high. Many have been quick to point to some key factors that are propelling this phenomenon, particularly in a place like Germany. One of these appears to be Musk's controversial double salute while speaking at an inauguration event for President Trump back in late January, a move that received criticism from German political figures and journalists for its resemblance to a Nazi salute. The consumer pushback also follows Musk's vocal public support of Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany party, commonly known as the AfD, which has been ostracized by the German political establishment for its extremist views and for promoting candidates who have used Nazi mantras. All of this has resulted in a [recent survey](#) in Germany finding that a whopping 94% of respondents refuse to buy a Tesla due to Musk's political antics.

On average, throughout the entire continent as a whole, Europe saw a 44% decrease in Tesla sales last month across 25 different countries. Companies like BYD and Polestar have filled the demand for electric cars with impressive sales increases in Europe. The United Kingdom also saw a sizable decrease in Tesla sales but the form of protest getting the most attention there is a series of anti-Tesla bus ads run by a group called "Everyone Hates Elon." In east London, the group put up an ad last month that reads, "Goes from 0 to 1939 in 3 seconds" and "TESLA The Swasticar." The advertisement also includes a picture of a Tesla Model X with Musk popping out of the sunroof doing the Nazi salute. The "0 to 1939" is a reference to one of the marketing strategies that Tesla has used where they reveal how fast their cars can go from 0mph to 60mph. This ad likens Musk to the rise of Hitler and start of World War II. "Everyone Hates Elon" has stated their reasoning for the ads as "we can't let the richest man in the world poison our politics. While nurses use food banks, his wealth grew by \$200 billion last year."

Here in the United States, Americans have been attacking Musk's wealth directly over the last few months. Since its peak of \$479.86 on December 17th, 2024, Tesla's stock has seen a 48% decline, closing at \$248.71 on March 21st, 2025. The advocacy against Tesla and Musk in the U.S. has been largely pushed by the "Tesla Takedown" movement. Last week, nearly 90 Tesla showrooms were met with protestors demanding Musk's removal from government and condemning the Trump administration's actions. The movement, started by Alex Winter and Joan Donovan, calls for citizens to sell their Teslas and dump their stock. During the recent fifth week of the movement, "Sell Your Swasticar," "Truth Trumps Trump," and "Honk if You Hate Elon" were all popular signs conveying the public's disapproval of Musk and Trump's conduct over the preceding two months. While a vast majority of the

protests have been peaceful demonstrations, there have been a few isolated incidents of individuals vandalizing Tesla dealerships and charging stations across the country. This has prompted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to create a taskforce to target the small group of perpetrators. Kash Patel, the FBI Director, did not give any details about the taskforce when it was announced, but the FBI's public affairs assistant director confirmed a joint taskforce with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

The "Tesla Takedown" movement in the United States is mainly a critical response to the contentious sweeping cuts being made to the federal government and workforce by DOGE. Musk has fired tens of thousands of people since he was made head of DOGE, with a mark of approval from President Trump at every step of the way. As the individuals behind the anti-Tesla movement in the U.S. have put it, "There's no walk of life that DOGE doesn't touch [and] that's reflected in the diversity of people that come to these protests." In principle, there are many that agree the aims of DOGE have merit, as there is no doubt regarding the abundance of unnecessary bureaucracy and government waste in the United States. However, the manner in which this has been carried out, through the absence of independent oversight and transparency of DOGE's massive cuts and indiscriminate firings, has drawn understandable criticism and confusion. Thus, expectedly, people are making their opposition known via the various forms of backlash against Tesla – a brand that has become synonymous with Elon Musk.