Elon Musk Promises Tesla in Russia 'At Some Point'

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The tech billionaire made an appearance at a Russian government-run innovation forum after being invited by Putin's spokesman. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Tech billionaire Elon Musk on Friday promised that production of his Tesla electric cars would come to Russia sometime in the future.

"I think we're close to establishing a Tesla presence in Russia [and] more broadly in Kazakhstan and neighboring regions," Musk told a Russian innovation forum via videolink.

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"Over time, we will look to have factories in other parts of the world, potentially Russia at some point," he added after listing the electric vehicle maker's factories in Shanghai, several U.S. states and one being built outside Berlin.

He predicted all transport, with the exception of space rockets that use combustion, would

become electric in the future.

Approximately 200 Teslas are estimated to be currently driving on Russia's streets despite no official sales or charging and maintenance stations in the country. Billionaire Roman Abramovich was reported in 2017 to have bought around 20 Teslas and handed them out to his Russian friends and business partners.

Tesla's website lists five yet-to-open charging stations in European Russia and two operating stations in Kazakhstan.

This is Musk's second appearance at a Russian government-run forum, which he said he "gladly" accepted when President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov invited him.

In 2019, Musk made a short appearance at a business forum in southern Russia via videolink after its organizers placed a tongue-in-cheek invitational billboard outside his company headquarters in Hawthorne, California.

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