

Global Auto Sales Poised for Record, No Thanks to North America

By **Jamie Butters**

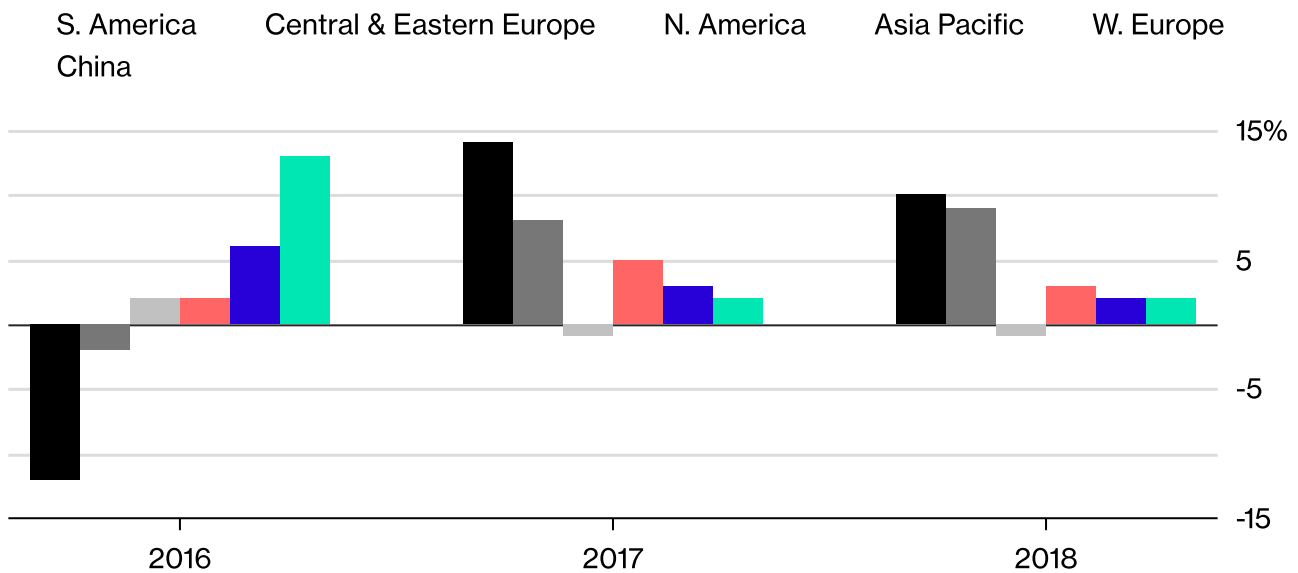
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Light-vehicle sales are on track to rise to a record 97.3 million units this year, despite a second straight annual decline in North America, according to an LMC Automotive forecast.

LMC projects sales of cars and light trucks will grow in every other region, resulting in a 2.1 percent increase in global demand. The biggest percentage gains are expected in South America and Central and Eastern Europe, while larger markets -- China, the rest of Asia and Western Europe -- are projected to show more modest gains.

Worldwide Wheels

Light-vehicle sales forecast to rise 2.1% globally this year even as North America lags



Source: LMC Automotive

Note: Asia Pacific data excludes China

The projected 1 percent decline in North American sales could shift for the better or the worse, said Pete Kelly, an LMC managing director. A [breakdown](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-18/how-trump-getting-his-way-on-nafta-would-reshape-the-auto-sector) of the North American Free Trade Agreement would probably raise vehicle prices and reduce demand, while accelerating economic growth could spur a surprise sales increase.

“That could go either way,” Kelly said during a webinar presenting the forecast. “Perhaps if we did see a bit more strength in the economy, that negative 1 percent could disappear, and it could be flat or slightly up. But at the moment, we’re assuming it will be down a little.”

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