

“Nobody Can do it Alone”

13/06/2025 Bosch EVP Fedra Ribeiro calls for a united European automotive industry.

Fedra Ribeiro was brought up in Portugal and lived in Germany, France and Switzerland. As a true European, she calls for more collaboration instead of competition within the continent. For her, that's the way to keep an edge in a globalized but increasingly fragmented automotive world.

After holding responsible positions at different manufacturers and suppliers, she is now enabling the deployment and scaling of Software Defined Vehicles (SDV), Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), and all the compute layers that go with it as an Executive Vice President at Bosch. Ribeiro says starting her career in the automotive industry was a coincidence, but staying for over 25 years was, of course, a choice. What drives her is the ability to provide freedom and autonomy to people through mobility.

Ms. Ribeiro, you are working at the heart of the automotive transformation. What impact do Advanced Driver Assistance Systems have on the industry?

Fedra Ribeiro:ADAS and enhanced computing are poised to make the industry better with solutions

around increasing safety and personalization of driving. Reducing accidents on the streets, for example, is a major driver for us. However, ADAS functions not only provide more safety but also more pleasure in driving. I, for instance, tend to drive slowly, but everyone is different, and each driver should be able to drive in a way that suits their personal style. So, all of those things feed my desire to make a contribution to the global industry, but of course especially to the European industry – which we all have to transform and ensure that it still exists in fifty or a hundred years.

That sounds like an existential risk. How can we cope with that?

Ribeiro: Europe is in a leading position when it comes to advanced driver assistance and enhanced computing – partly driven by regulation because we have to have really top-notch safety systems to ensure that we comply with our laws. Moreover, we have deep engineering expertise and a mature ecosystem of suppliers, so we should not undersell ourselves. The European industry has a lot of ingredients that ensure it will remain a very relevant player in the future. Of course, we are facing competition from Chinese emerging Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) on one hand, and different customer expectations for example in the US on the other. We need to balance that edge in quality and regulatory advancement with innovation, agility, speed and pragmatism.

How can we catch up to the so called "China Speed"?

Ribeiro:I believe that the industry really should focus on partnering more than competing within Europe. Everybody reinventing the wheel is not going to drive our sustainability as a whole. Of course, it is important for us to differentiate ourselves in the different areas of our USPs and advantages, but inventing full stack 25 times is not necessary. I think each OEM should maintain and emphasize their core differentiation in the eyes of the user. What we need within the European industry is a deep conversation about what differentiates us versus where we can share and collaborate.

Do you think there is an openness for such partnerships?

Ribeiro:I think there is. Actually, I see more openness now than before. In the last five to eight years, we went through this kind of reckoning in the industry that software is becoming the beating heart of mobility and that therefore every player needed to become a software company. So, we have seen this mushrooming of internal spinoffs that were developing software and spending billions. I think with the emergence of artificial intelligence, people understand that nobody can do it alone because of the costs and the speed required. It's just not possible that one company will take all of this by themselves and still achieve speed and nimbleness to address the market. So, I see more openness to collaborate today than what I have seen in at least 10 years.

However, part of what slows us down are our own complex systems. Our oftentimes bureaucratic regulatory environment does not foster speed and competitiveness. So, I think we sometimes stand in our own way when it comes to scaling the many good ideas and great entrepreneurs that we have in Europe.

At the same time, you argue that automotive players need to differentiate more, and global standards no longer work. How come?

Ribeiro: First, there is a growing divergence in regulatory landscapes. Above that, users have different priorities in Asia than they do, for example, in Europe or in North America. So, there is a regionalization of the economy, and we are seeing a decoupling of the global supply chains. The question is, how granular do we as Europeans want this regionalization to be? We need economies of scale, right? Therefore, we should avoid a decoupling of Europe and act as a continent instead. We have similar values, we are in the European Union, we have one monetary union – there is no question that what brings us together is much more than what tears us apart. And as a European industry, the idea that we have a seat at the table is possible.

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Jan Boris Wintzenburg

Director Communications and Marketing
Porsche Consulting GmbH
+49 (0) 152 3911 8663
jan_boris.wintzenburg@porsche-consulting.com

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