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# BASF Color Report 2018 for Automotive OEM Coatings Europe

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Color. It represents personality and sparks emotions.

Color is one of the most important decision criteria when buying a car. It is the first perception of observers and underlines the character of an automotive brand. Therefore, it supports and strengthens the brand image.

Social trends, such as the progressing digitalization or the wish for individualization, influence personal preferences. Hence, they impact the popularity of each single color and at the end, this is reflected on European roads.

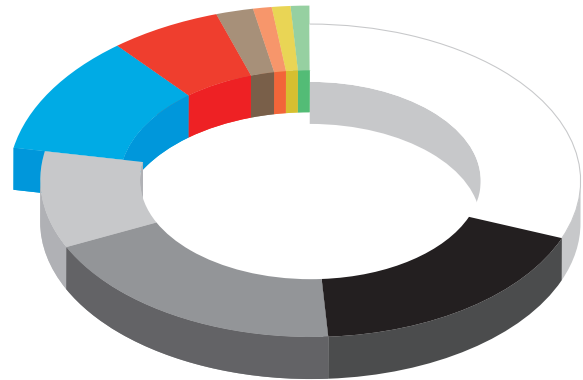
The BASF Color Report 2018 for Automotive OEM Coatings Europe analyzes in detail the most favorite colors of new cars in Europe. Despite the variety of colors and models, effects are in the focus of this report.

White remains the most popular color for European cars – it covers nearly every third vehicle. Interesting changes arise on the subsequent rankings.

## Blue and gray continue road of success

Gray gained popularity throughout the last years. This trend pursued in 2018 as anticipated by BASF Coatings' automotive color designers. For the first time, gray represents the second most preferred color in Europe. With a share of almost 20% it is even more popular than black.

The huge diversity of gray shades that is offered, highlights the intensified recognition of this color space. Gray automotive colors include a variety from light gray to mark metallic anthracites, resulting in more than 110 different OEM coatings.



White 31%	Blue 11%	Orange 1%
Black 18%	Red 6%	Yellow 1%
Gray 19%	Brown 2%	Green 1%
Silver 10%		

Besides gray, also blue cars are on vogue – like predicted in the Automotive Color Trends, a global color trend analysis of BASF. Blue even overtakes silver in the European popularity. With a share of 11%, this chromatic color steps up to the top 4 of the most wanted colors. After many years a chromatic color reaches this ranking. Silver's decline continues. In total, one out of ten cars is coated silver.

The majority of cars are still painted in an achromatic color, meaning white, black, gray and silver.

A deep dive into the chromatic color palette shows a rising importance of blue. Nearly half of the colorful cars are painted blue. Not just the absolute number, but also the variety of this color grows compared to the previous year. The car buyers can choose from approximately 140 different shades of blue, being the most diverse color. Red owns the second place, followed by brown, green and orange.

## Color popularity by automotive segments

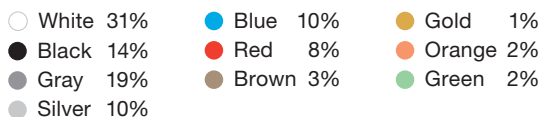
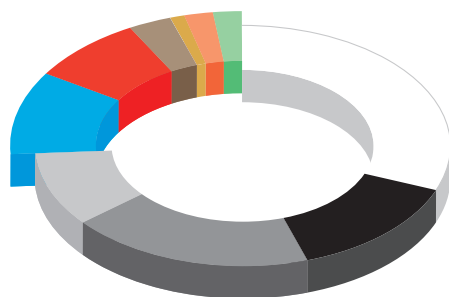
Depending on its size and type, each car can be assigned to a specific automotive segment. Between these segments color preferences vary. The five largest segments by production volumes are analyzed below.



Subcompact

With a share of one third, white is favorite for subcompacts. Gray increases its popularity in this segment and holds the second position. Black continues the downswing, resulting in a 15% share. This is the lowest portion of black in all segments.

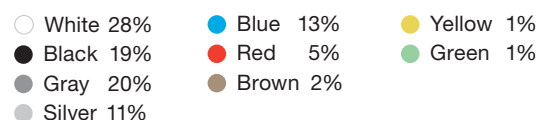
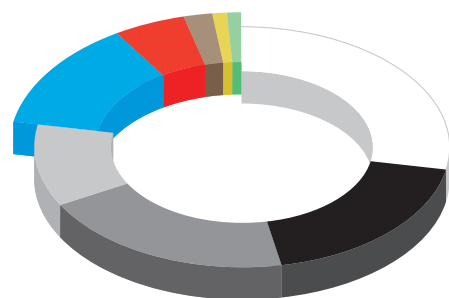
Car buyers of this segment have an above-average preference for color – especially in comparison to the larger automotive segments. Common statements like “the smaller the car, the more colorful and chromatic the coating” can be confirmed again. Blue takes the largest portion, but red and orange are also popular.



Compact + midsize

The compact and midsize class represents the second largest group of automotive segments. Six and a half million cars produced correspond to one quarter of all European light vehicles in 2018.

The color distribution of the compact and midsize class is comparable to the automotive market. Achromatic colors dominate this segment, accounting for nearly 80% of new vehicles. In the remaining part, blue further gains popularity whereas the percentage of brownish and beige colors slightly decrease.



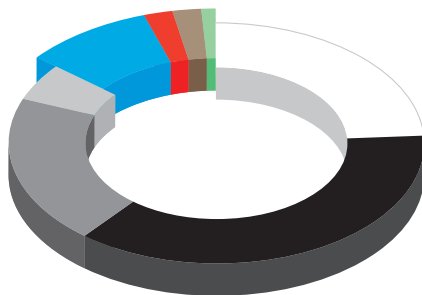
**Please note:** Colors with a popularity of less than 1% are not shown in the graphs.



### Large + large plus

While the share of black vehicles is reduced in the smaller segments, it is still the highest ranked color in the group of large cars. With a share of approximately 40%, the portion of black is even higher than before.

Overall, achromatic colors in this segment are enormously well-liked. Automotive OEMs coat about 90% of these vehicles either black, white, gray or silver. In case the car buyer decides differently, he picks either blue or red.



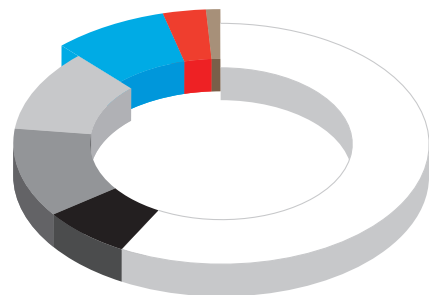
- White 24%
- Black 37%
- Gray 20%
- Silver 5%
- Blue 9%
- Red 2%
- Brown 2%
- Green 1%



### Van

Vans are composed by transporters, mini buses and mini vans. Those vehicles are not only used for private, but also for commercial purposes. More than half of all vans are painted white – in no other segment the proportion of white was as dominant.

The following colors are gray and silver – with a share of 10% each. Blue and black account for less than 10% each.



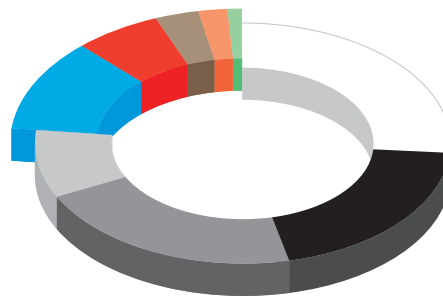
- White 58%
- Black 7%
- Gray 12%
- Silver 11%
- Blue 8%
- Red 3%
- Brown 1%



## SUV

The popularity of SUVs significantly increased during the last year. As a result, SUVs represent the leading segment in Europe for the first time. The market share rose to 30% and in parallel, the variety of models developed as well. About 150 different SUVs have been produced in Europe in 2018. The variants doubled within the last 8 years.

Based on its proportion, little deviations to the overall color popularity are observed. Gray, blue, red and orange gain shares, whereas brown and beige loose importance.



○ White 26%	● Blue 11%	● Orange 2%
● Black 20%	● Red 6%	● Green 1%
● Gray 21%	● Brown 3%	
● Silver 9%		

### Trend competence and innovative color concepts

BASF's Coatings division has an excellent understanding of what is trending in materials and colors, and uses this to predict, which colors will play a key role in the future automotive market. Every year, the Coatings division's designers create Automotive Color Trends, an innovating

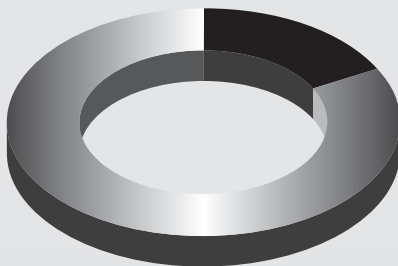
collection of new colors based off extensive research and in-depth analysis of global trends and cultural shifts that will influence automotive colors 3 to 5 years into the future. Together with experienced colleagues in the color lab, the Coatings division's know-how comprises not only the art of designing innovative and creative colors, but also the knowledge required to translate them into applicable paints.

## Effects

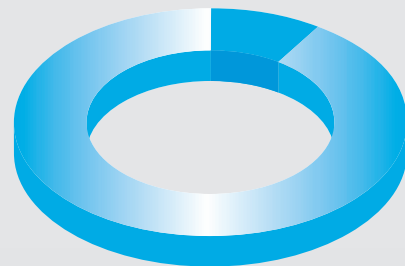
Not just the color, but also effects contribute to the individualization of a vehicle. The combination of both underlines the shape of a car and consequently, effects are an important design instrument. Since the 1980s the importance of effects steadily rose. In 2018, two thirds of all vehicles were finished with an effect coating.

The larger the car, the more often it is painted with an effect. That is a general principle amongst the segments. Approximately 70% of all subcompacts and about 80% of the large and large plus cars are covered with effect coating.

Depending on the color, the share of effects differs as well. Dark colors like black and gray are mostly combined with an effect, lighter colors primarily come along as solid shades. Only two out of ten white cars have a metallic coating.



● Solid 17 %  
● Effect 83 %



● Solid 9 %  
● Effect 91 %



“The landscape of automotive coatings’ effects evolves continuously and is shaped by new and inspiring ideas.”

Mark Gutjahr, head of Design Europe at BASF



● Solid 77 %  
● Effect 23 %