



The big European production winner in October was Opel/Vauxhall. Led by a strong increase in Astra output, Opel/Vauxhall's production rose 77 percent to 87,246 units, according to J.D. Power Automotive Forecasting.

The gain by the General Motors Co. subsidiaries helped to continue the stabilisation of production in Europe. Last month's output was down by its smallest margin this year, off 2 percent to 1,511,612 units compared with the same period last year, J.D. Power figures show.

Astra production jumped 47 percent to 27,584 units last month as Opel/Vauxhall raced to meet orders that started in late September. Deliveries begin in December. Opel has received 35,000 orders for its new sixth-generation compact, the company said in a release last week.

Meanwhile, Skoda's October production was up 45 percent to 60,384 units largely due to high demand for the Fabia. Volkswagen's Czech subsidiary made 24,969 units of the subcompact last month, a gain of 63.8 percent compared with the same period last year.

Fiat brand, Hyundai, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Volkswagen brand, Renault, Nissan, Mini, Ford, Citroen and Volvo also increased output in October. (See chart, right)

Meanwhile, Jaguar, Honda and Kia each had a production decline of 34 percent or more last month.

Through 10 months, overall output is down 22.8 percent to 12,660,986 units in western and eastern Europe including Russia and Turkey—an improvement from the 24 percent overall decline for three consecutive quarters.