

Press Release

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LNG or Hydrogen in the Trucks?

Logistics and renewable energy industries discuss sustainable heavy traffic

The Federal Ministry of Transport is promoting alternative propulsion systems in freight transport in the shape of exemption from toll charges and an investment subsidy from 8,000 to 40,000 euros for trucks with a weight in excess of 7.5 tonnes. This includes compressed natural gas (CNG), liquid natural gas (LNG), battery or fuel cell electric propulsion systems that use hydrogen as energy source. Which of these propulsion technologies offer the greatest benefits in terms of efficiency, regional value creation and climate protection? In order to answer these questions and to network logistics with the renewable energy sector, the Schleswig-Holstein Renewable Energy Network Agency (EE.SH) invited participants from both sectors to a renewable energy workshop on “LNG or Hydrogen – Options for Action for the Logistics Sector” at the Neumünster Business Development Agency’s LOG-IN start-up centre. The mayor of Neumünster Dr. Olaf Tauras welcomed the 80 participants. Event partners and sponsors were the Logistics Initiative Schleswig-Holstein, Schleswig-Holstein Logistics Business Association, MBA Neumünster GmbH, Herbert Voigt GmbH & Co. KG and the Mittelholstein Business Association.

“I believe that both energy sources complement each other well”, said Kurt-Christoph von Knobelsdorff from the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Economic Affairs on the issue of “LNG or Hydrogen”. As Andreas Lischke from the Berlin-based DLR Institute for Transport Research explained in his opening talk, while LNG is a fossil fuel and thus does not make much of a contribution to improving the carbon footprint, but its combustions does generate 50 % less nitrogen oxide and hardly any particulate matter. “Using LNG as fuel is more interesting for climate protection when you add synthetic fuels”, explained von Knobelsdorff. Hydrogen produced with the aid of wind or solar power – so-called “green hydrogen” – could be the raw material for such synthetic fuels or for the chemical industry or itself serve as fuel and energy source. With the planned LNG terminal in Brunsbüttel and its high levels of renewable energy production, Schleswig-Holstein is an ideal base for both technologies. “With the federal government’s RealLab programme we can take a great step towards setting up industrial production structures for green hydrogen”, added von Knobelsdorff.

Various makes of trucks with LNG propulsion are already on the market. CNG technology has already been tried and tested for decades, explained the representatives of truck manufacturers Iveco Magirus and Volvo Trucks, Manfred Kuchlmayr and Michael Scheuern. Fuel cell electric drive systems for cars are ready to go into series production, but for trucks they are still in the demonstration stage. The problem is that there is as yet no nationwide filling station network for either LNG or hydrogen. Here

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Press Release

things are however going to change: Adem Ates presented the services offered by LIQVIS GmbH, which has currently installed eight new filling stations in Germany and is ready to build more as soon as there are more than 30 LNG trucks in one location. The H2-Mobility consortium will be providing hydrogen filling stations. It has already built 60 filling stations in Germany and is planning 40 more. Speaker Nikolas Iwan pointed out that the Swiss Coop Association has ordered 1,000 fuel cell electric trucks for supplying its markets.

Dr. Felix Weise from certification company DNV GL advises relying more on interim technology than discussing one big future solution. He referred to the lower pollutant emission of LNG and recommended coupling tenders with emission savings.

Silke Rittgerott from the federal ministry of transport explained the government's mobility and fuel strategy (MKS), which is dedicated to the implementation of the Paris climate goals – a 40 % reduction of CO₂ emissions by 2030. It relies on a mix of electrification, LNG, CNG, fuel cells and hybrid catenary vehicles and strategy framework plans for setting up an adequate filling and charging infrastructure. Rittgerott explained the funding incentives for CNG/ LNG and hydrogen in the shape of energy tax reduction, toll charge exemption and investment subsidies through to subsidy programmes like the National Innovation Programme for Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology (NIP).

Dr. Thomas Rackow from the Schleswig-Holstein Logistics Business Association called for understanding of his industry's reservation to date with regard to investment in new propulsion systems: "It is not good when the framework conditions change too quickly. We need planning security." On the other hand, Holger Matzen from the Schleswig-Holstein Logistics Initiative appealed to his colleagues that "we have to act faster and with greater innovation, and simply try things out."

"We want to show possible paths towards an energy transition in the transport sector", summed up Axel Wiese from the EE.SH Network Agency. "The fundamental knowledge about alternative propulsion systems and the contacts that have been established at this event can contribute to a convergence and cooperation between logistics firms and the renewable energy sector in Schleswig-Holstein."

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