PRESS RELEASE

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EWE and GASCADE are joining forces to develop a hydrogen infrastructure

EWE joins hydrogen project "Flow – making hydrogen happen". Partnership between EWE and GASCADE agreed. EWE storage site in Rüdersdorf set to play a crucial role in the hydrogen infrastructure in the East of Germany.

Oldenburg/Kassel. The „Flow – making hydrogen happen" project is developing a high-performance pipeline system for CO_2-neutral hydrogen that extends from the Baltic Sea to the south-west of Germany. EWE, an energy service provider and storage operator, has joined the collaborative initiative of gas transport network operators GASCADE, ONTRAS and terranets bw as an associated partner with experience in hydrogen storage. EWE and gas transmission network operator and project initiator GASCADE have now signed a formal agreement, with the aim of coordinating their activities more closely and driving the growth of a hydrogen-based economy together.

"The federal government's national hydrogen strategy emphasises the importance of hydrogen as an energy source. Now it's just a matter of staying the course and making our strategy a reality to make the future of energy carbon-neutral. To collectively advance activities related to hydrogen, we need a coordinated approach from the relevant stakeholders and a broad industry network. That is why projects like 'Flow – making hydrogen happen' are so important," said Peter Schmidt, Managing Director of EWE GASSPEICHER GmbH.

Hydrogen storage: a key role to play as the market ramps up

According to Schmidt, establishing infrastructure is a fundamental prerequisite for the successful expansion of the hydrogen market. In addition to the core network, hydrogen storage systems play a central role, making a significant contribution to security of supply for customers and overall system stability, especially in a future energy supply system heavily reliant on renewable energies. Recognised studies that consider long-term scenarios are predicting a very high level of demand for storage, requiring a well-thought-out conversion of existing underground caverns and the construction of new ones. "We are prepared, but we need a reliable regulatory and financial framework to implement these projects," emphasised Peter Schmidt. According to Schmidt, the announced national storage strategy therefore has a crucial role to play in the creation of this reliable framework.

Hydrogen: the basis for renewable energy storage

EWE is actively involved in various projects along the hydrogen value chain, including one in Rüdersdorf near Berlin. The company is currently testing an underground storage cavern at this location to demonstrate that hydrogen can be safely stored in salt caverns. For this purpose, EWE has constructed the first small-scale underground hydrogen storage facility and confirmed the system's integrity. The house-sized hydrogen cavern has gone through a battery of extensive tests since late 2023, a key step in rolling this approach out to large-

scale storage caverns with 1,000 times the volume. “In essence, this provides the basis for storing large volumes of hydrogen generated from renewable sources and using it as needed for a sustainable and secure energy supply,” said Peter Schmidt.

Rüdersdorf: the EWE gas storage site has the potential to integrate into “Flow – making hydrogen happen”

The EWE gas storage site in Rüdersdorf has a strategically advantageous location within the future hydrogen system. “It is both close to the planned core network and the Berlin metropolitan region, making it the nearest storage facility for hydrogen import and generation projects around Lubmin. This is one of the main reasons why we are joining the 'Flow - making hydrogen happen' initiative, which covers the corresponding transport corridor from Lubmin to Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg via Berlin,” explained Peter Schmidt.

Ulrich Benterbusch, Managing Director of the gas transport network operator GASCADE, added the following: “In our view, the hydrogen core network is fundamental to building a hydrogen infrastructure. Hydrogen storage is an indispensable part of the future hydrogen infrastructure, ensuring the highest level of security of supply and system stability. We need appropriate frameworks to ensure that we have sufficient hydrogen storage capacity as we develop the core network. It is important to join forces and advance the politically desired societal goal of decarbonisation. For this reason, we are collaborating with project partners along the entire value chain of the hydrogen economy in the ‘Flow – making hydrogen happen’ project.”

Further afield: linking to international hydrogen markets

The aim of the “Flow – making hydrogen happen” partner alliance is to link Germany to international hydrogen markets via the infrastructure, opening up opportunities for large volumes of hydrogen to be procured. “The switch from natural gas pipelines to hydrogen transport is a priority for us, as this will allow us to offer the transport capacities we need to the market as early as next year, starting from 2025. Around 90 per cent of the approximately 1,100 kilometre long 'Flow - making hydrogen happen' pipeline system are converted pipelines,” said GASCADE Managing Director Ulrich Benterbusch.

Expanding international import routes, constructing and integrating hydrogen storage facilities, implementing further large-scale hydrogen transportation projects and connecting to the European hydrogen core network (European Hydrogen Backbone) can create additional security of supply. “Flow – making hydrogen happen” will become a central driving force as the European hydrogen market ramps up and will play a key role in shaping it.

For EWE, the partnership represents another milestone on the way to a carbon-neutral energy future. Peter Schmidt: “We are delighted to be able to support the planned north-south transport route and the ambitious objectives of the “Flow – making hydrogen happen” project as an associated partner and will make an essential contribution with our insights as a hydrogen storage operator.”

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About EWE

EWE is an innovative service provider active in the business areas of energy, telecommunications and information technology. With over 10,100 employees and sales of EUR 8.6 billion in 2022, EWE is one of the largest utility companies in Germany. The company, based in Oldenburg, Lower Saxony, is primarily owned by the local government. It provides electricity to around 1.4 million customers in northwest Germany, Brandenburg and on the island of Rügen, as well as parts of Poland, and supplies natural gas to almost 0.7 million customers. It also provides approximately 0.7 million customers with telecommunications services. EWE plays a pioneering role in the areas of climate protection and digital participation. To this end, the Group will invest over one billion euros in the expansion of the fibre-optic infrastructure in the coming years and four billion euros in the erection of new wind turbines. It is also a leader in the development of hydrogen infrastructure. More information on EWE can be found at www.ewe.com

About GASCADE

GASCADE Gastransport GmbH operates a gas pipeline network throughout Germany. The Kassel-based transmission system operator offers its customers modern and competitive transport services for natural gas and, in future, other gases in the heart of Europe via its own high-pressure pipeline network, which is around 3,700 kilometres long. GASCADE is pursuing the goal of converting its pipeline network to the transport of hydrogen and is therefore actively involved in a number of onshore and offshore hydrogen projects. More information on GASCADE can be found at www.gascade.de

About “Flow – making hydrogen happen”

“Flow – making hydrogen happen” is developing a pipeline system for green hydrogen that extends from the Baltic Sea to south-west Germany. The system aims to tap into the hydrogen potential of the Baltic Sea region and act quickly to become a central hub for hydrogen transportation. Initial transport capacities are expected to be available from 2025. In the long term, this transport corridor will connect five neighbouring European countries and accelerate national and international hydrogen expansion. A number of well-established partners are contributing to this and are ready to go with their projects. More information available at: www.flow-hydrogen.com