

Wilhelmshaven can become a hub for the German and European hydrogen economy

- Lower Saxony's Energy Minister Olaf Lies and Member of the Bundestag Siemtje Möller bring companies together at "Hydrogen Round Table"
- The aim is to connect the import, production, storage, transportation and consumption of hydrogen in Wilhelmshaven with a link to Europe
- Key building blocks are the projects Green Wilhelmshaven (Uniper), WH2Connect (Nowega, OGE) and H2CAST Etzel / HYDRA (STORAG ETZEL)

7 July 2021 . Wilhelmshaven is ideally placed to become an important hub for hydrogen. Several large-scale projects are planned here for this promising energy source, which is set to become a mainstay of the energy transition. Olaf Lies, Lower Saxony's Minister for the Environment, Energy, Construction and Climate Protection, and Siemtje Möller, SPD Member of the Bundestag for Wilhelmshaven, brought the companies involved together at a "Hydrogen Round Table". Last Friday they discussed how Wilhelmshaven can be developed as an H2 hub within Europe for import, production, storage, transportation and consumption.

"Hydrogen and its derivatives are a fundamental building block on the road towards climate neutrality and offer tremendous possibilities for value creation and sustainable jobs. Here in Lower Saxony, we recognised this potential early on and are now working at full steam with a number of partners to create the necessary conditions for a strong hydrogen economy in the north," said Olaf Lies, adding that part of this involves creating the capacities needed to import hydrogen by ship, for example, in addition to the transnational hydrogen grid. "Wilhelmshaven has huge potential to become an important interface for hydrogen in Europe. We want to seize this opportunity together with the companies wanting to invest in the region," Siemtje Möller said.

As Germany's only deep-water port, Wilhelmshaven is ideally suited as a location for the new marine terminals and the use of existing port infrastructure. The terminals could also be easily connected to the planned German hydrogen starter network. By 2030, with around 1,100 kilometres of pipeline mainly in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia, the ground will have been laid for a nationwide hydrogen network and connection to the Netherlands. Designated corridors or existing transmission pipelines can be used primarily for this purpose. The close proximity to existing onshore wind farms in the region as well as other offshore wind farms planned in the German North Sea also make Wilhelmshaven and the surrounding area an ideal location for electrolysis plants for production of green hydrogen. In nearby Etzel, the hydrogen can also be stored temporarily on a scalable basis on an industrial scale. All in all, the region therefore offers the necessary conditions for the successful ramp-up of the hydrogen industry for the energy and mobility transition in Germany.

Notable hydrogen projects set to be realised in the near future include “Green Wilhelmshaven” by the energy group Uniper, which involves production of hydrogen using imported green ammonia as well as wind power. As part of the H2CAST Etzel research project and the HYDRA development project, meanwhile, storage operator STORAG ETZEL is aiming to convert the Etzel cavern field to the southwest of Wilhelmshaven into one of Europe’s leading hydrogen storage facilities, while the aim of the WH2Connect project operated by the gas transmission system operators Nowega and OGE is to connect Wilhelmshaven to the hydrogen starter grid. Other hydrogen projects within the catchment area of the Wilhelmshaven hub are planned by the companies H2 Green Power & Logistics, N-Ports, Nord-West Oelleitung GmbH, Vynova Wilhelmshaven and Wintershall Dea.

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