



Press Release No. 2/97
2. December 1997



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Statement of the German Hydrogen Association on The United Nations world climate summit at Kyoto

In the long run only sun, wind, and water can provide the energy which is necessary for the continuance of the human civilization. To be used they must be available in a form suitable to our needs. This is the place which hydrogen fills optimally; it can be transported and stored easily and it is environmentally benign.

Humanity must manage its future under the aspect of energy consciously, actively, and, above all, in time; the climate problem does not permit to lose time. The German Hydrogen Association (DWV) brings the parties working on this together. Our appeal to the economy is to develop with a sense of urgency the technologies which will make a life which is worthy to humans possible even tomorrow. Our appeal to politics is to create reliable boundary conditions for those acting.

The world climate summit of the United Nations at Kyoto will discuss measures to dampen the greenhouse effect by means of less CO₂ emissions. The principal way to this end is a fundamental turn away from fossil fuels to renewable energies. We will not succeed if we just leave things to the way they run automatically or if we rely on the insight of economy. The states taking part must draw the consequences in terms of legislation and shape the boundary conditions such that competition handicaps are avoided.

This, however, must include a turn towards low-carbon or better carbon-free fuels and energy carriers. Hydrogen is the optimum candidate for this role. Its liquid phase has a high energy density, it can be stored as liquid or gas, it is non-toxic, and its transformation to electricity or heat leaves in principle nothing but water behind. Generating it from water is recycling in the meaning of the word!

Demonstration projects (buses, cars, heating units) show the technical feasibility and safety of this concept. In particular with the high efficiency of the fuel cell the technology of tomorrow becomes apparent. The decisions for the transition of our energy supply and transportation must be made now. Future-oriented and innovative products additionally create new jobs.

The Kyoto conference must set binding targets for the reduction of the CO₂ emissions and for the removal of the economical disadvantages of alternative fuels. The German Hydrogen Association appeals to all responsible parties in politics and economy to make energy and environment a central topic, also after Kyoto, to ensure our future. The concepts and technologies for this are available.

DWV Press Release 2/97 of 2. December 1997
Published by German Hydrogen Association, Berlin
Editor: Ulrich Schmidtchen, Berlin

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