

IMPORTANT IMPULSES FROM WORLD CONFERENCE ON HYDROGEN ENERGY 18TH WHEC CLOSED TODAY IN ESSEN

Today in Essen (Germany) the 18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference (WHEC) came to its end. Organizers and participants were fully satisfied and commented positively on the high level of the event. The state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Research Centre Juelich supported WHEC 2010; the NRW Energy Agency did the organization. Another co-organizer was the German Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association.

The conference opening on Monday had already given the positive note of the whole event. Both politicians (federal transport Minister Peter Ramsauer, state prime minister Juergen Ruettgens, China's research minister Gang Wan) and also CEOs of important companies (Daimler, Linde, Solvay) together with representatives of the scientific community underlined the important role of hydrogen and fuel cells on the basis of renewable primary energies in facing the problem of sustainable and reliable energy supply in the future.

In spite of the difficult economical conditions prevailing at this time it had not been difficult to bring the participants to Essen, according to the conference chairman Prof. Dr. Detlef Stolten (FZ Juelich). It had been much more difficult to fit the many contributed papers, many of them of high quality, into three and a half days. During 49 sessions 342 oral presentations were given and 240 posters presented.

Parallel to the conference a trade fair was held which was unique in size, at least as part of this conference (140 exhibitors from 13 countries on 1800 m²). Another particular feature this time were the attempts to interest the public for the matter. There were special days for the general public, school students and teachers as well as for university students. Since February a media campaign had directed the attention to the state of the art.

The scientific conference had 1200 participants from 50 countries. About half of them were from Germany, the rest in more or less equal parts from other European countries and from the other continents. Including the participants in the fair and the side events the grand total is about 2300 persons.

The state of North Rhine-Westphalia is really a good place to demonstrate hydrogen and fuel cells in real life, and a good starting point for using them. About 260000 cars of almost 6000 buses could be run on the excess hydrogen from the chemical industry in the state alone, without producing a single additional molecule, according to the words of state minister of economy Christa Thoben during the opening.

During the closing press conference Prof. Stolten made clear that this conference had shown the field in a status much different from that a few years ago. Minister Thoben also underlined that

Press Release No. 5/2010

the work will proceed; even foreseeable changes in the state government would probably not have grave effects.

The conference contents, the political and industrial support, and the general organization were applauded by the participants. We may expect that many of the visitors from abroad took important impulses for the work in their home countries with them.

The next conferences of this series under the auspices of the International Association for Hydrogen Energy (IAHE) are planned for 2012 in Toronto (Canada), 2014 in Gwangju (South Korea) and 2016 in Saragossa (Spain).

Published by the German Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association (DWV), Berlin
Editor: Dr. Ulrich Schmidtchen, Berlin