

## GERMAN HYDROGEN AND FUEL CELL ASSOCIATION (DWV) CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION A TECHNOLOGY OF THE FUTURE BECOMES A TECHNOLOGY OF TODAY

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**On June 12 the German Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association celebrated the 15th anniversary of its foundation. Enormous progress has been made since then. Hydrogen and fuel cells have found their way into the energy politics of all great industry nations.**

15 years ago it was indeed daring and idealistic to create an association to promote hydrogen as energy carrier and the fuel cell as energy converter. A lot of vision was necessary to perceive that renewable sources would be the only really sustainable long term solution for the energy problem ahead, that these produce mainly electrical power which is difficult to store, and that hydrogen as chemical storage would be an important element of the solution. Ludwig Boelkow, DWV co-founder, was one of those who knew this. In 1996 climate change was already a topic, but by far not such an important one as today. Only a few geologists pondered about the availability of oil and gas. It had been shown that cars can run on hydrogen, but they can run on salad oil as well. Renewable power was marginal in the grid.

„Maybe we were a bit temerarious“, remembers Ulrich Schmidtchen, founder member and still active in the board: „Today and in the past you had to look at the matter through bifocal glasses: where are we now, where do we want to go, and which must be our next step. But at that time reality and vision were much farther apart from each other than today. Established energy business either did not notice you at all or gave you a friendly smile. And when I talked to friends about hydrogen fuel for cars they told me: ‚On your tombstone we will write: He used hydrogen fuel‘. But we felt that the time to do something was there. At the foundation we said: in one year from now the baby can either walk and speak, or we have simply learnt something.“

Meanwhile the baby walks and speaks excellently. Today DWV is the professional and competent address for media and politics in all matters around hydrogen and fuel cells. Hydrogen is no longer the fuel of the future – it is a reality of today, even though it is still at the beginning. Electric mobility without hydrogen and fuel cells would remain a niche market forever. And it becomes increasingly clearer that the energy storage demand which is caused by the growing market share of the renewables can not be met without hydrogen as system component. DWV is proud to have contributed to this development.

### 1.1 A LOT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, BUT WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Johannes Toepler, chairman of the association, has no doubt: „Only hydrogen offers the possibility to store large amounts of energy from renewable sources for several days and to make them available on demand. Its efficient use in fuel cells guarantees satisfactory ranges for electric

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vehicles and makes short filling times possible. Further options to use it for uninterrupted power supply, home energy, on-board energy or in portable use will make it a pivot element of future energy supply.“

The foundation of DWV by half a dozen of specialists in 1996 was a success story. Today the energy turnaround is in full swing. The technical and commercial use of hydrogen and fuel cells for the installation of a sustainable energy system is just beginning. It is not difficult to predict that the next 15 years will be at least as exciting as the last ones. This means more responsibility for DWV; the association will answer these challenges in the future as it did in the past.

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