

STEAG to supply hydrogen

Agreements with public transport company Saarbahn in place

Saarbrücken/Völklingen. When the “HydroHub Fenne”, the hydrogen project of energy company STEAG in Völklingen-Fenne, produces green, climate-neutral hydrogen from 2026 onwards, a regional customer, the public transport company Saarbahn, will already be ready to use it for the benefit of the climate. With an annual production of up to 8,700 metric tons of hydrogen, STEAG can then provide important support for the gradual decarbonization of public transport in the Saarbrücken metropolitan region.

Because of its versatility, hydrogen is considered a key component in making the energy transition a success in the coming years and in making the German economy and society climate-neutral. “Particularly in the early phase of a developing hydrogen economy, it will be important to produce hydrogen from renewables in a climate-neutral way and at a point close to consumption, because a transport infrastructure for hydrogen that extends far into the countryside will not be available any time soon,” says Dr. Ralf Schiele, the STEAG Director responsible for the Market and Technology divisions.

Nucleus of a regional hydrogen economy

In the form of the “HydroHub Fenne”, a plant for water electrolysis, operated with green, i.e. climate-neutral, electricity, is being built at the long-established STEAG power plant site in Völklingen-Fenne. With a capacity of around 53 megawatts (MW), the “HydroHub Fenne” will be able to produce up to 8,700 metric tons of hydrogen (H₂) per year, depending on technical specifications and regulatory requirements. From 2026 onwards, part of this hydrogen is to be supplied to Saarbrücken’s local public transport system in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) now concluded by Saarbahn and STEAG.

Emission-free local transport

Saarbahn plans to implement the first part of its “TraficHdeux” project by 2025, aiming to build up the infrastructure for operating cross-border public transport with fuel cell trains and buses. The priority is the step-by-step conversion of bus services to zero-emission propulsion. To this end, 85 articulated and non-articulated buses are to be procured by the end of this decade, most of which will be powered by a fuel cell and use hydrogen as fuel. “In order to put these plans into practice, we will initially need around 255 metric tons of hydrogen per year – with an upward trend in subsequent years,” says Torsten Burgardt, who is responsible for the “TraficHdeux” project at Saarbahn. In 2030, the Saarbahn’s hydrogen demand will eventually be around 775 tonnes per year.

In the future, the required supply of hydrogen will come from STEAG at Völklingen-Fenne, as the partners have now agreed.

“As the production and consumption locations for the hydrogen are very close together here, the constellation offers almost ideal conditions for serving as the nucleus of a developing hydrogen economy not only on the Saar, but also in a cross-border economic area,” says Anke Langner, member of the management board of STEAG New Energies GmbH. The Saarbrücken-based STEAG subsidiary is responsible for developing the important hydrogen project at the Völklingen site.

“Grande Region Hydrogen” project network

For this reason, several partners from France, Luxembourg and Germany joined forces some time ago to form a kind of project network under the name of “Grande Region Hydrogen” (GRH). The aim of the participating companies – Creos Deutschland, ENCEVO S.A., GazelEnergie, GRTgaz, H2V, HDF, SHS-Stahl-Holding-Saar and STEAG – is to stimulate the successful market ramp-up of a cross-border hydrogen economy.

“The agreement now reached is an important milestone on the way to the successful implementation of the ‘HydroHub Fenne’ because it creates reliable prospects in the crucial issue of sales of the hydrogen produced in Völklingen-Fenne,” Patrick Grünewald, HydroHub Fenne project manager explains.

In this respect, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concluded with Saarbahn also represents an important success for the establishment of a cross-border hydrogen economy in Saarland, and ultimately also in association with the European neighbors and partners France and Luxembourg.

About STEAG

For 85 years, STEAG has stood for efficient and reliable power generation, both in Germany and abroad. As an experienced partner, we support our customers comprehensively in all phases of power supply. We design, develop, implement, operate and market highly efficient energy solutions – from distributed generation facilities and those based on renewable sources to large central power plants. Together with customized solutions in the field of electricity and heat supply, we also provide a wide range of energy services – increasingly on the basis of renewables. Successfully so: From 1990 to the end of 2021, STEAG permanently reduced its own CO₂ emissions in Germany by more than 80 percent.

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