

Press Release

Transmission and distribution system operators develop "Zukunft RuH2r" project to build an efficient hydrogen infrastructure

- ⇒ **Pipeline companies plan to create hydrogen infrastructure in the key region between the Ruhr area and southern Westphalia**
- ⇒ **Climate-neutral energy supply for interested consumers in industry, transport and the buildings sector**
- ⇒ **Further project partners are welcome**

(Essen/Hagen/Dortmund, 1 June 2021)

The transmission system operator OGE and the distribution system operators ENERVIE Vernetzt and Westnetz are planning to establish a regional hydrogen cluster in the southeast of the Ruhr area and the neighbouring Sauerland region. The idea is to help industrial consumers to decarbonise and prepare their manufacturing processes for hydrogen, the energy carrier of the future. In addition, hydrogen can also contribute to the climate-neutral transformation of the transport and buildings sectors. In the future, OGE's pipeline system will link the "Zukunft RuH2r" hydrogen cluster to the German and European hydrogen networks and to other regional hydrogen clusters.

The aim of the of the "Zukunft RuH2r" project is to develop a regional hydrogen cluster in what is a key region between the Ruhr area and the Sauerland. In a second step this cluster will be connected to Germany's nationwide hydrogen network. The selected region offers a favourable environment for a hydrogen cluster, including power plant sites with highly efficient connections to water and gas pipeline systems and to the electricity transmission grid. Numerous forward-looking (industrial) companies located in the region, such as the BILSTEIN GROUP, the Waelzholz Group, H2 Green Power & Logistics, Kabel Premium Pulp & Paper and thyssenkrupp Hohenlimburg, are looking to use hydrogen to decarbonise their business activities.

To this end, OGE, ENERVIE Vernetzt and Westnetz will join forces to set up a regional hydrogen infrastructure in southern Westphalia with a view to making this sustainable energy source available to medium-sized industrial enterprises and other sectors of consumption such as transport and buildings. What is special about this cluster are complementary skills and competences the project partners bring to the table. OGE, for example, will contribute its expertise in hydrogen transport while the distribution system operators ENERVIE Vernetzt and Westnetz have extensive knowledge about the needs of local businesses and consumers.

"In order to achieve the ambitious climate change mitigation targets, gas as an energy source must become greener. Hydrogen is key here because it can use the existing, highly efficient gas infrastructure. With their RuH2r project, OGE and its partners in this diverse region are paving the way for hydrogen to become a sustainable energy source," said OGE's CEO Jörg Bergmann, who is also a member of the National Hydrogen Council, describing the project idea.

"Our existing infrastructure in Germany only requires minor adjustments to allow hydrogen transportation, so we have to make the most of this benefit. 31.5 million people in Germany are connected to the gas distribution grid, which also supplies 1.6 million commercial and industrial enterprises. In the future, millions of households and businesses will have direct access to the hydrogen grid. As Germany's largest conurbation, the Ruhr region is predestined to play a pioneering

role here," explained Katherina Reiche, CEO of the Westnetz parent company Westenergie and Chair of the National Hydrogen Council.

Erik Höhne, CEO of the ENERVIE Group, pointed out: "As a regional energy supplier, the ENERVIE Group ensures that trade and industry can be supplied with the energy they need, and hydrogen is a great opportunity for many businesses to decarbonise their production. We want to support our customers on this journey, and being able to connect to a hydrogen grid is an essential step along the way. Thanks to its high industrial density and the favourable location of the Hagen-Kabel power plant in the grid, our home town of Hagen offers the best starting conditions for a regional H2 cluster."

To realise such a cluster, OGE, ENERVIE Vernetzt and Westnetz are looking to contribute their technical and regulatory expertise in the transmission and distribution sector to ensure that consumers can be supplied with hydrogen in the most efficient and cost-effective way. The network operators are therefore happy to work with other partners in the region over the coming months to further develop existing ideas and plans for a hydrogen infrastructure to help secure the future economic viability of the region. Based on economic as well as regulatory considerations, the partners will draw up timelines for the "Zukunft RuH2r" hydrogen cluster and apply for funding from programmes launched to ramp-up the hydrogen economy.

In this context, the project partners would like to point out that all interested parties are welcome to join in the development of the regional hydrogen cluster. There are plans to expand the cluster towards the Ruhr area and the Sauerland region, including the Ennepe-Ruhr, Märkische, Hochsauerland, Olpe and Unna districts and the city of Dortmund.

Open Grid Europe GmbH:

OGE is one of the leading transmission system operators in Europe. With a pipeline network measuring around 12,000 kilometres, the company transports gas throughout Germany. Due to its geographical position, OGE connects the gas flows in the European internal market. The company's 1,450 staff stand for security of supplies. OGE makes its network available to all market players in a non-discriminatory and transparent way, and in line with market requirements. The company shapes energy supplies, both today and within the energy mix of the future. For more information about OGE, go to www.OGE.net.

Contact

Open Grid Europe GmbH

Carolin Kielhorn
Press Spokeswoman
Open Grid Europe GmbH
Kallenbergstraße 5
45141 Essen
Tel.: +49 (0)201 3642-12562
carolin.kielhorn@oge.net

ENERVIE Vernetzt GmbH:

ENERVIE Vernetzt GmbH is the network operator of the ENERVIE Group. The company's electricity, gas and water grids serve around 400,000 customers in Hagen and southern Westphalia. ENERVIE Vernetzt is wholly owned by the ENERVIE Group and is a subsidiary of Mark-E Aktiengesellschaft. ENERVIE Vernetzt is a predominantly municipal company and is highly committed to the businesses and citizens in the region. As a regional infrastructure service provider for energy and water, ENERVIE Vernetzt works closely with the municipalities it supplies.

For more information, go to www.enervie-vernetzt.de

Contact

ENERVIE Vernetzt GmbH

Uwe Reuter
Press Spokesman
ENERVIE Gruppe
Platz der Impulse 1
58093 Hagen
Tel.: +49 (0)2331 123-22720
presse@enervie-gruppe.de

Westnetz GmbH:

Dortmund-based Westnetz GmbH is the electricity and gas distribution network operator in the west of Germany and a wholly owned subsidiary of Westenergie AG. With its 5,800 employees, Westnetz operates a large number of grids owned by different companies throughout the west of Germany. As an independent distribution system operator, it offers its gas and electricity infrastructure to all market participants on a non-discriminatory basis. Within the Westenergie AG group, Westnetz is responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance and operation of 175,000 kilometres of electricity grid and 24,000 kilometres of gas grid in the regulated area. Westnetz supports the energy transition in Germany with forward-looking expansion and conversion of its grids as well as numerous innovation projects.

Contact**Westnetz GmbH**

Dr Thomas Breuer
Press Spokesman
Westnetz GmbH
Florianstraße 15-21
44139 Dortmund
Tel.: +49 (0)201 12-15251
presse@westnetz.de