

Media Information

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Milestone for BMW Group transport logistics: Full speed ahead with the first hydrogen trucks

+++ Start of H2Haul pilot project at the BMW Group plant in Leipzig**+++ Head of BMW Group Logistics, Michael Nikolaides: "Our openness to technology in the BMW Group is also reflected in transport logistics" +++ Holistic approach of the BMW Group hydrogen strategy in production, product and logistics +++**

Munich, Leipzig. The BMW Group has acquired two zero-emission fuel cell trucks, as it launches a pilot operation as part of the European H2Haul project, which is aimed at promoting hydrogen mobility in freight transport. The two vehicles will run between Leipzig, Landsberg and Nuremberg, in order to trial the practicality of this technology. To allow serial operation, two state-of-the-art hydrogen fuelling stations are being built in Leipzig and Hormersdorf. They allow rapid refuelling with large quantities of hydrogen, which is crucial to the continuous use of fuel cell trucks in the logistics sector. The BMW Group is implementing the H2Haul project in cooperation with Iveco, DHL and TEAL Mobility.

"In global logistics, it is important to select the right means of transport, in order to operate in a future-oriented and efficient manner. To this end, the openness to technology in the BMW Group is also reflected in its transport logistics. For the first time, hydrogen-powered trucks will now be used in serial operation for German automobile production. We have been working with our partners for several years to implement this pilot fleet. This project is an important milestone as we gain experience in serial operation and continue to advance this important technology," says Michael Nikolaides, Head of Production Network and Logistics BMW Group.

Two of 16 trucks subsidised in Europe will drive for BMW Group Logistics

The aim of the H2Haul project is to test hydrogen trucks with fuel cell drivetrains under realistic conditions, and to investigate the important contribution they can make to decarbonising heavy traffic. Testing this technology will pave the way for the commercialisation of fuel cell trucks in Europe. Funded by the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, a total of 16 trucks will run in various European countries, including two IVECO S-eWay Fuel Cell trucks operated within Germany by BMW Group Logistics. The findings of the BMW Group when running the two trucks will help develop the technology to market maturity and pave the way for a wide-scale introduction in the road freight sector. Short refuelling times and longer ranges mean hydrogen trucks

can represent an important addition to E-trucks, which are also in use at the BMW Group, on long routes. Another attribute worth emphasising is the flexible logistical operation of H₂ trucks, without having to put a charging infrastructure in place or expand a network.

BMW Group Strategy for Reduced Logistics Emissions

Participation in the H2Haul project, with the practical use of hydrogen fuel cell trucks in long-distance and heavy transport, is part of the BMW Group Strategy for Reduced Logistics Emissions and an important step towards achieving the BMW Group's own climate goals on the road to zero-emission transport logistics. The cross-departmental "Reduced Logistics Emissions" team develops concepts to reduce CO₂ across all global BMW Group transport, whether by road, rail or ship. The team evaluates drive technologies, taking into consideration different future scenarios, with the goal being to make transport within the global production and distribution network zero-emission. Positive assessments lead to the implementation of pilot projects and the development of plant concepts, the emission data from which is then consolidated in order to allow a CO₂ report.

Additional use of H₂ combustion engine trucks within the HyCET project

As well as participating in the H2Haul project, the HyCET project to test trucks with H₂ combustion engines was also launched under the consortium leadership of the BMW Group. As part of the HyCET project, two 40-ton trucks and one 18-ton truck will be used in BMW Group Logistics in the future. The project is funded by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV). Affiliated partners in this project are DHL, Volvo Trucks, Deutz, KEYOU and TotalEnergies. By testing H₂ fuel cells and H₂ combustion engines at the same time, the BMW Group is also consistently following its approach to technological openness in the transport logistics sector. Compared to fuel cells, the combustion engine does have higher consumption. However, the similarity to the established diesel engine means it costs less to produce. The particularly low level of emissions produced by burning hydrogen means the H₂ combustion trucks are classed as zero-emission vehicles in accordance with EU regulations. Both H₂ fuel cell trucks and trucks with H₂ combustion engines are used on the same BMW Group Logistics route and will use the same fuel stations. Comparing the two drive technologies will determine the best possible areas of application for the respective technology within BMW Group Logistics.

Hydrogen vehicles also used in intralogistics in Leipzig

Within the BMW Group, the Leipzig plant has for years played a pioneering role in the use of hydrogen in logistics. In 2013, the first indoor hydrogen fuel station in Germany was built on the grounds of the plant in Leipzig. Forklifts and tugger trains for internal plant logistics can be refuelled there. Over ten years later, the Leipzig plant possesses one of the largest fleets in Europe, with over 200 fuel cell-powered industrial trucks. Nowadays, five hydrogen fuel stations are located on the grounds of the plant, the newest of which allows fully-automated refuelling for the first time.

Use of flexible hydrogen burners in the paintshop

BMW Group Plant Leipzig is the first automobile plant in the world to operate a newly developed burner technology, which can use both natural gas and hydrogen, in its paintshop. Five bivalent, hydrogen-capable burners are currently used when applying the contrast roof paint on the MINI Countryman. Other burners in the paintshop are gradually being converted, so that there will be no need to use natural gas at all in the long term. This makes the Leipzig plant a pioneer in the automobile industry and takes another step towards reducing CO₂ emissions. "Our vision for Leipzig is the extensive decarbonisation of production. Among other things, this can be achieved by replacing fossil fuels with hydrogen," says Petra Peterhänsel, Head of BMW Group Plant Leipzig, describing the long-term orientation of the plant.

First hydrogen-powered BMW production model in 2028

As part of its holistic approach and after the successful global testing of the pilot fleet of BMW iX5 Hydrogen vehicles, it is now preparing to start the series production of vehicles with hydrogen drivetrain in 2028. The series production models will be integrated into BMW's existing portfolio, i.e. BMW will offer an existing model in an additional hydrogen fuel cell drive system variant. As fuel cell technology is another electric vehicle technology, the BMW Group explicitly views it as complementing the drive technology used by battery electric vehicles (BEV) and next to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) and internal combustion engines (ICE).

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2024, the BMW Group sold over 2.45 million passenger vehicles and more than 210,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2023 was € 17.1 billion on revenues amounting to € 155.5 billion. As of 31 December 2023, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,950 employees.

The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and covers all products from the supply chain and production to the end of their useful life.

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