

Press information
30 September 2026

Hydrogen pipeline construction begins: BMW Group to integrate Plant Leipzig into core hydrogen grid

+++ First vehicle plant worldwide to connect to a hydrogen grid +++
Milestone in energy resilience and further decarbonisation +++ Driving
industry transformation with policymakers and energy partners +++

Leipzig. BMW Group Plant Leipzig has today marked the official start of construction of a hydrogen pipeline that will connect the plant directly to the hydrogen grid. The roughly two-kilometre-long link is scheduled to be completed and commissioned in the first half of 2028, making Plant Leipzig the first vehicle plant worldwide with a direct connection to a hydrogen grid.

Among those attending today's milestone event were Prime Minister of the Free State of Saxony Michael Kretschmer and Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Transport, Christian Hirte. The involvement of both the Free State of Saxony and the German government highlights the importance of the project, which sees industry, energy partners and policymakers working closely to establish a high-performance hydrogen infrastructure that will be key to safeguarding Germany's long-term competitiveness as an industrial base. *The pipeline project is co-financed by the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRE) and the Free State of Saxony and will play a fundamental role in the development a resilient and sustainable hydrogen infrastructure in the federal state.*

"BMW has been demonstrating for years how hydrogen can be used in industrial production. The new pipeline will establish Leipzig as a key hub for the hydrogen economy and make it one of the first industrial sites in Saxony to be connected to the core hydrogen network. This will strengthen the competitiveness of our industry and lay the foundations for delivering hydrogen where it is needed for production", says Prime Minister Kretschmer.

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BMW Group advances innovative use of hydrogen in Leipzig

Plant Leipzig has been leveraging hydrogen in intralogistics since 2013 and today operates Europe's largest hydrogen fuel-cell-powered intralogistics fleet, comprising more than 230 forklifts and tug trains. Since 2022, the plant has also been using hydrogen in its paint shop, which now operates eleven dual-fuel paint furnaces that can switch flexibly between natural gas and hydrogen.

"This pipeline will enable us to power our paint shop with hydrogen to a far greater extent than ever before. It marks an important milestone and lays the foundation for greater energy resilience. It also offers significant potential to further decarbonise production," said Petra Peterhänsel, Plant Director at BMW Group Plant Leipzig.

Once connected to the grid, Plant Leipzig will be able to power high-temperature, energy-intensive processes such as paint-drying purely with hydrogen rather than natural gas. The use of dual-fuel gas and hydrogen burners in the paint shop is already providing valuable insights into the technical and commercial aspects of commissioning a hydrogen core network while ensuring optimal operational performance.

Local solutions for effective energy management

The forthcoming pipeline in Leipzig is just one element in the BMW Group's broader global energy management. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, the company pursues a technology-neutral pathway, developing the best possible solution for each individual location. At Leipzig, years of experience with hydrogen and its industrial applications, along with the direct connection to the emerging hydrogen infrastructure, lay the foundation for a resilient, long-term energy supply.

Think global, act local

The BMW Group implements site-specific energy solutions across its locations. Crucially, these take into account the local infrastructure, costs and available energy sources, ensuring secure and competitive supplies, and supporting decarbonisation. Going forward, BMW Group locations will evolve into what is known as "prosumers", not only consuming energy but also generating and storing it for flexible use.

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Complementing this approach, the BMW Group is advancing digital energy management. Here, virtual power plants enable the data-driven optimisation of energy flows by connecting producers, consumers and storage facilities. This way, sites can manage loads more flexibly and support grid stability while reducing their dependence on market and price fluctuations.

Successful transformation depends on reliable framework conditions

For industry to transition to hydrogen-based energy, collaboration with energy providers and policymakers is essential. Accelerated energy infrastructure development is also required, along with internationally competitive energy costs and robust quality certification standards. For molecular fuels, this means rapidly establishing a core hydrogen grid along with the associated distribution infrastructure. In addition, grid charges must be competitive, and low-cost, climate-friendly fuels must be accessible. Investment and planning certainty are also crucial, along with practical certifications that are recognised across Europe.

Strong partners for a resilient energy supply

Connecting BMW Group Plant Leipzig to the core hydrogen network of the future is a joint undertaking between industry and energy partners. The BMW Group has signed a capacity reservation contract with ONTRAS Gastransport GmbH, the company responsible for developing the region's core hydrogen grid. Construction of the pipeline link itself, along with the associated gas pressure regulation and metering station, will be carried out by MITNETZ GAS GmbH. Together, the project partners are advancing the use of hydrogen as an energy source in industry and laying the foundation for a more resilient long-term energy supply at Plant Leipzig.

Resilient energy supply is not purely a matter for industry, energy and policymakers, however. It also involves the wider community. When it comes to establishing acceptance and planning certainty, the BMW Group sees transparency, reliability and early community involvement as vital. Projects such as the hydrogen pipeline in Leipzig support industrial competitiveness, decarbonisation and value creation in the region.



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