



Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart

Stuttgart Region's position on hydrogen

Description

Interview with Dr. Walter Rogg, head of the regional economic development corporation WRS

Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Rogg,

With combustion engines on the way out, why are you supporting fuel cell technology in Stuttgart Region?

Road transport is a critical factor not only for the industry, but also for the society as a whole. The challenge of decarbonisation therefore is great and serious. This is the more so, as a technology is usually not simply replaced by another one. Typically, there are several solutions for different uses. This is why we are open to a range of alternative technological solutions. In transportation, besides battery power we also go for fuel cell power. We assume that both technologies will cover different segments of mobility.

But new technologies always mean new players and a new deal. Will Stuttgart defend its position as a leading region in the auto and mobility industry?

In Stuttgart we are confident that the present changes will indeed strengthen the region's position in the mobility industry. Not only do we have leading car manufacturers in Stuttgart Region, but also one of the leading suppliers of auto electrics, now also involved in fuel cell production. Neighbouring regions host significant truck manufacturing industry. This results in a cluster that is unusually well suited for the transition of the industry. We do not have to reinvent the wheel like the newcomers, but we can concentrate on the new components.

However, the components are not only manufactured here. We also do central elements of research. In Stuttgart, we have the ZSW, a non-profit research organization, supported by the state of Baden-Württemberg and key Universities, as well as the relevant high-tech industry. One of their main branches, in the neighbouring region of Ulm, deals with fuel cell development. For us, it is very important that regional research covers the whole chain from hydrogen production to distribution and its various uses.

How do you as a regional development agency support the introduction of hydrogen technology?

We make sure that all stakeholders know about the chances of the technology and about the regional infrastructure. We also support the extension of hydrogen infrastructure, beyond mobility. And we base this on our own experience: The WRS was one of the first institutions to test a fuel cell vehicle in practice. It did normal service as a company car, used by our staff across the region, collecting valuable performance data for the industry already in an early stage of the development.

Do you think the industry is ready?

Yes. Of course, there are different opinions about the optimum speed and direction. But the automotive industry has done serious fuel cell research for decades. The transport industry knows that change will come and is prepared.

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