



Press release

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Bundesnetzagentur launches market consultation on regulation of hydrogen networks

Jochen Homann: *"The Bundesnetzagentur is focusing on regulatory aspects of expanding the use of hydrogen"*

The Bundesnetzagentur has today launched a market consultation on the regulation of hydrogen networks. In a situation analysis, it shows the current regulatory framework for hydrogen networks and takes possible development pathways as the starting point for an analysis of whether these networks should be regulated in the future. An accompanying questionnaire provides structure for the consultation process.

The Bundesnetzagentur has laid the foundation for the new discussion with its situation analysis document. The consultation questions are directed at existing and potential market participants, network operators, consumers, scientists and other interested parties. *"We identified some key questions in the course of our situation analysis and we're now looking forward to the responses from the market,"* said Bundesnetzagentur President Jochen Homann.

Hydrogen is subject of lively debate

Hydrogen has become a central issue of energy policy in the Gas 2030 dialogue of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) and the related National Hydrogen Strategy. The Bundesnetzagentur has addressed various regulatory topics due to specific enquiries from the market about individual projects and the fact that "green gas" projects are included for the first time as input parameters for network modelling in the scenario framework for the gas network development plan 2020-2030.

Regulatory issues are thus of decisive importance from the point of view both of consumers and of investors counting on secure framework conditions for investments in hydrogen infrastructure.

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Regulation of hydrogen networks

The Bundesnetzagentur's role is to deal with the regulatory aspects of expanding the use of hydrogen. In the situation analysis, the authority shows the present regulatory framework for hydrogen networks from its own perspective and analyses possible development pathways and options of whether, when and to what extent these networks could be regulated in the future.

The Bundesnetzagentur takes the view that hydrogen networks do not generally come under regulation in accordance with the Energy Industry Act (EnWG) at the moment. There are only arrangements for injecting hydrogen as an addition into the natural gas networks (admixture). In the medium to long-term, it seems likely that regulation should take place if this energy source makes a substantial contribution to public supply beyond the existing, isolated networks and if the competitive situation is comparable to the network areas now regulated under the EnWG.

The publication gives the market the opportunity to state its views on the questions brought up and on the Bundesnetzagentur's evaluation. All responses received by 4 September 2020 will be taken into consideration.

The consultation questions, the situation analysis and an accompanying letter from the BMWi about the regulation of hydrogen networks are available on the Bundesnetzagentur's website www.bundesnetzagentur.de/wasserstoff.

The Bundesnetzagentur is an authority under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. Its core tasks include supervising the energy, telecommunications, postal and railway markets.

As part of its mandate, the Bundesnetzagentur ensures that as many undertakings as possible can use the infrastructure in these sectors so that consumers benefit from competition and favourable prices.

The authority employs over 2,900 people at its headquarters in Bonn and Mainz and its 46 regional offices.