

Newsletter IEA Bioenergy Task 37: 06/2018

Biomethane is leading the pace

Major ship engine producer invests in biomethane

The technology group Wärtsilä has reached an agreement to acquire Puregas Solutions, the Sweden-based provider of turnkey biogas upgrading solutions. Puregas is a leading player in its field with subsidiary companies in Germany, Denmark, the U.K., and the USA. More recently they are also developing LNG systems. The company utilizes a chemical absorption process to convert raw biogas to biomethane and renewable natural gas. The transaction is valued EUR 29 million with an additional maximum sum of SEK 70 million (EUR 7.3 million) to be paid based on the performance of the business in the coming year. The acquisition will provide Wärtsilä with added equipment and expertise in biogas upgrading and will complement well the company's existing position in the biogas liquefaction market.

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World's largest liquid biomethane plant completed

The plant in Skogn, Norway built by Biokraft in collaboration with Norske Skog Skogn AS produces at full capacity 25M m3 of biogas per year that will be upgraded and liquified to be used in buses, trucks, vans, and possibly also on rail as fuel. The raw materials for the biogas production are waste and by-products from industry, including fish farming. The amount of CO2 equivalents replaced equates 60,000 tonnes per year. The liquid biomethane replaces 25 million liters of diesel in the transport sector.

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Map of over 500 European biomethane facilities

The European Biogas Association (EBA) and Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) have collaborated on a comprehensive map of all known biomethane installations currently running in Europe. 'European Biomethane Map 2018' lists over 500 units on the continent, and according to its creators is the first of its kind. It's been produced with information taken from biogas associations, energy agencies and companies.

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Gas for Climate

If Europe is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by the middle of the century, renewable gas used in existing gas infrastructure could play an important role, according to a newly published study by the Gas for Climate initiative. According to the study, it is possible to scale up renewable gas production between now and 2050 to more than 120 million cubic meters annually. This capacity would include both renewable hydrogen and biomethane. Using this renewable gas in existing gas infrastructure for the heating of buildings to produce 'dispatchable' electricity as a complement to wind and solar, and to fuel heavy transport, could save about €140 billion annually by 2050, compared to a future energy system without gas.

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The European Commission has approved an Italian support scheme for the production and distribution of advanced biomethane

The Italian scheme supports the production and distribution of advanced biofuels and advanced biomethane for use in the transport sector. The long-attended scheme will give a major kick to the biomethane development in Italy. It has an indicative budget of €4.7 billion and will run from 2018 until 2022. The producers of advanced biomethane and biofuels receive a premium which allows them to compensate for the higher costs and compete with fossil fuels in the transport sector. The premium can be increased if producers invest in liquefaction of advanced biomethane. The premium will be adjusted each year in relation to the production costs to avoid overcompensation. The scheme will also incentivize farmers to produce biofuel and biomethane from manure and other residues originating from their farming activities and use them in turn to power their agricultural machines and vehicles. The scheme will be financed by transport fuel retailers who are obliged by law to include a certain percentage of advanced biofuels and biomethane in their fuel blends.

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Biomethane injection surges in France

The amount of biomethane injected into French gas networks almost doubled between 2017 and 2016, according to a new overview of France's renewable gas sector. The 44 upgrading plants injected 406 million kWh of gas into the gas grid. This, apparently, is equivalent to the consumption of nearly 34,000 homes. Around 100 new biomethane projects were declared in 2017, increasing the biomethane production capacity by 3 billion kWh/year. With a total of 361 biomethane projects now registered in France, the country's total capacity now stands at 8 billion kWh/year. The target is quite ambitious with 60 TWh (thereof 10 TWh P2G) by 2018 and 90 TWh (thereof 30 TWh P2G) by 2030. Report in French only.

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