MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Dear Reader,

It is a fact that the spread of electric powertrains is inevitable. It also makes sense that pure electric drives will be the solution of the future for certain applications, alongside hybrid systems. In development terms, the industry has done its homework and designed high-performance powertrains which are already available on the market or will shortly be launched. So far – so good. But are the basic conditions which are required for long-term market penetration already in place?

It seems clear that hybrid drives at least will represent a significant proportion of vehicle powertrains in a few years' time. What is the situation when it comes to pure electric drives? In countries such as China, France, the USA, Great Britain and the Netherlands customers are granted tax credits, in some cases amounting to over 6000 Euros, when they buy an electric car, with the aim of helping electric vehicles to make a breakthrough. However, in the country where the car was born there are hardly any government incentives to purchase electric vehicles. How this will help the rapid spread of electric cars and the reduction of CO₂ emissions remains a mystery. The prediction of one million vehicles on the roads by 2020 is a fairytale.

In order to achieve a targeted and strategic roll-out of clean electric cars, it is essential to promote the generation of "clean" electricity from renewable sources and to make it widely available. This is also not happening in Germany to the extent necessary for rapid development. On the contrary, the most recent cuts in this area make the German government's ambitious plans look ridiculous. As a result, we are more or less

committed to the continuing use of fossil fuels at current levels. In concrete terms, this means that, depending on the electricity mix, an electric car could in future be producing emissions of up to 128 g of CO₂ per kilometre, for example if the electricity being used is generated by a coal-fired power station. A compact car with a modern turbo-charged combustion engine is much more carbon-neutral and less expensive to buy!

From a strategic perspective, all of this makes no sense at all and the government has missed its opportunity to promote future developments. Only one option remains: the targeted ongoing improvement of the classic combustion engine. Both petrol and diesel engines still have a great deal of potential and will form the majority of vehicle powertrains over the next 20 years. This is something that we can all look forward to!

With best regards

DR. ALEXANDER HEINTZEL, Editor in Chief
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