



A Green Island

Dear Reader,

“An island!” – “Oh, now, yes!” Many people will be familiar with these joyful exclamations made by little Jim Button and Luke the engine driver in the book of the same name. In the story, the boy is the first to discover their destination and Luke sees the island after a while and says by way of confirmation: “Oh, now, yes, oh, now, yes!” Their exchange does not refer to the famous island of Morrowland which is their home. Instead, they have spotted on the horizon the so-called floating island which our heroes will take with them on their journey back to Morrowland. This New-Morrowland will solve the problems of living space on Old-Morrowland caused by increasing demographic change. A fairytale solution to the destruction of the environment and overpopulation that is more relevant now and sustainable than ever before.

Managers at Volkswagen must have had this story in their minds as they searched for an island that they could completely convert to electric transport. They hit on the Greek island of Astypalea. This Mediterranean island, which is roughly the same size as the German island of Sylt, but with only one tenth the number of residents, is where Volkswagen and the Greek government plan to set up a pioneering mobility system. Konstantinos Fragogiannis, the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, speaking about the agreement in November 2020, said that they are launching the first smart green island project in Greece, which represents a major milestone in the future of the country. The Greek version of Morrowland currently has a public transport system consisting of two diesel buses which can only serve a small part of the island.

Within the next two to three years, this situation will change dramatically. At the heart of the project is a modern

transport system with smart mobility services and an electric ride sharing scheme that will operate all year round. Together with local partners, Volkswagen will transform part of the traditional car hire service into a car sharing system with electric scooters and bikes in addition to electric cars. This measure alone will significantly reduce the number of vehicles on the island. The plan is to replace around 1500 combustion-engine vehicles with around 1000 electric equivalents.

In the long term, Astypalea will become a model island for climate-neutral mobility. We must hope that this project, which will act as the blueprint for Volkswagen’s decarbonization strategy, does not remain a stand-alone solution but is adopted by many other areas in the world.

Happy New Year and best wishes for the next 365 days!

Dipl.-Ing. Michael Reichenbach
Deputy Editor in Chief



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