Promote and Demand

Dear Reader,

The German federal government is continuing to seek its salvation in electric vehicles, with the aim of reducing the CO₂ emissions from the transport sector. Rebates and tax incentives are intended to attract customers, subsidies are to speed up the development of the charging infrastructure. There are constant announcements about new records and about the dramatic growth of the electric car fleet. As things currently stand, this is indeed the case: While at the start of 2019 only around 53,000 electric vehicles were registered in Germany, a year later the figure was 136,600. Progress is also being made with regard to charging stations. The German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW) reported in March 2020 that there were 27,730 public and partially public charging points in Germany, an increase of more than 50 %. In percentage terms this sounds like success, but the absolute figures are more sobering. Even the BDEW estimates that 70,000 regular and a further 7000 fast charging stations will be needed in Germany for every one million electric cars, in order to provide full nationwide coverage. With a fleet of seven to ten million electric cars aimed for by 2030, it is perfectly obvious that the goals may be rather too ambitious. The 50,000 public charging point goal planned for by the end of 2022 would only be sufficient, according to BDEW figures, to supply a fleet of 650,000 electric cars. This means that the number of electric vehicles registered in the next two years must more than double simply to make use of the capacity.

In addition, the owners of electric cars are faced with a baffling array of different providers of charging services and pricing models. It is true that many combined offers are now available which allow the charging process to be started by an RFID chip or simply a credit card, but the prices

vary enormously. Although charging stations have to meet the requirements of German weights and measures legislation in terms of their design and charging method since April 2019, there are of course transition periods which allow operators, after they have submitted a conversion plan for the charging points, to apply session prices to each charging process and therefore to avoid accurate pricing per kWh. This puts so-called emergency chargers, in other words all those people who normally charge their cars at home and only use public charging stations only in an emergency, at a disadvantage because the prices on highways and at fast charging points in particular are often very high.

Disregarding for the moment the discussion about the life cycle CO₂ emissions of electric cars and the oft-cited range anxiety, we need a plan, because unachievable goals and over-complex cost structures will prevent electric mobility from taking off.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of MTZ.

Marc Ziegler
Deputy Editor in Chief

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