Genuinely Green or Greenwashing?

Dear Reader,

Advertising slogans like “fairly traded” or “climate-neutral delivery” have been around for quite a while. It is mainly the large suppliers that make these claims about the alleged climate friendliness of their products, and they are generally intended to give the impression that the products are carbon neutral. However, the claims are not backed up by actual environmental concerns, but by trading in CO₂ certificates. Emissions are not being reduced, but moved elsewhere.

Similar things have been happening for years in the automotive industry. Technologies that only in theory produce low levels of emissions are receiving huge subsidies in order to bring about a transformation that is likely to have a noticeable impact only after several decades and that until then will generate emissions on an enormous scale. At the same time, other technologies are being ignored. In the worst-case scenario, the CO₂ emissions of diesel that contains no biofuel are 341 g/kWh. For gasoline the figure is 269 g/kWh and for electricity, taking into account the growing proportion of renewable energy and the falling share of nuclear power, it is currently 401 g/kWh, on the basis of the German energy mix. I won't even mention the emissions from infrastructure development, the building of additional (coal-fired) power plants to safeguard the electricity supply and the disturbingly large “CO₂ rucksack” carried by every electric car. As the cars' emissions are measured on a tank-to-wheel basis, valid comparisons are impossible. I prefer to talk about the actual cost, which is the killer argument. If you cover long distances in a car, a BEV is only cheaper because of the lower maintenance costs. In order not to have to wait several hours

to recharge an electric car during long journeys, most drivers will opt to use fast charging stations which make full use of the car's charging capacity. In a test carried out by Springer Professional, a stop to charge a VW ID.3 from 10 to 80 % total capacity lasted almost 40 min. Depending on the contract and the service provider the costs vary significantly. In this case, the cost was 39 cents per kWh, but as much as 74 cents are common. In the test, the energy costs were comparable with a vehicle with SI engine.

The picture is becoming ever clearer. Deliberately hindering technology neutrality and providing massive subsidies for one technology in order to achieve an ideal situation that in reality does not exist is not a green policy, but greenwashing. In advertising and in reality, this has one thing in common: deceiving the consumers.

I hope you enjoy this issue of MTZ.

Marc Ziegler
Deputy Editor in Chief

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