

BATTERY OR HYDROGEN? THE ANSWER FOR A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FUTURE

In the energy industry, it is often overlooked that hydrogen can play a central role in renewable energy systems. GP Joule, a system provider for integrated energy solutions, wants to change this and is focusing on an integrated energy system with battery storage and hydrogen in its projects.



The current status of the energy transition shows that many key technologies – such as electrolysis, battery storage, district heating networks, or hydrogen applications – are still only in use to a very limited extent. And that is exactly what must change. "If we truly want to realize the energy transition, we fundamentally need storage. Storage systems are the backbone, without which a fully renewable energy supply cannot work. That's why we must not get lost in debates over whether batteries or hydrogen are the better storage solution. These technologies are not in competition with one another, but can complement each other in their different practical applications," emphasizes Johannes Brock, Storage & Hydrogen Promoter at GP Joule.

Project Example Fuhne: Solar, Wind, Battery and Hydrogen

The Fuhne project, named after the Fuhne River, has relied on solar and wind power, battery storage with a total capacity of around 100 megawatts, as well as hydrogen

production. The rural location provides ample space for renewable installations and is situated close to towns, industry, transport routes, the natural gas grid, and the future hydrogen network. The goal is to generate around 500 megawatts of renewable energy.

Part of the generated energy will be converted into heat and distributed via a district heating network to supply tens of thousands of residents, municipalities, and small industrial enterprises. Another part of the energy will be converted into hydrogen and transported through pipelines for industrial use. "This clearly shows the crucial role of infrastructure: without pipelines, such a project would hardly be feasible. That's why we closely coordinate with the planning of the future hydrogen network, which will deliver the produced hydrogen to large consumers in eastern Germany," adds Johannes Brock. The Fuhne Project is the first in which GP Joule is jointly developing battery and hydrogen storage.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY: THE SMARTER E EUROPE HAS THE STAGE SET FOR YOUR BIG DEBUT!

At The smarter E Europe 2026, around 150 promising start-ups will have the opportunity to connect with potential customers, partners, investors and like-minded innovators. Our sustainable booth design – available in three different sizes and including furniture – makes it easy for young companies to participate in the exhibition. Excellent networking opportunities and the chance to present your business idea to national and international

energy experts make the event especially worthwhile. Whether pitching an innovative idea or smart prototype, at The smarter E Europe, young companies can expect to take center stage in the Start-up Area, where big things begin!

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WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE SMARTER E EUROPE 2026

The Hydrogen Dialogue Forum & Expo, formerly the Green Hydrogen Forum & Expo, is a key part of ees Europe, Europe's largest and most international exhibition for batteries and energy storage systems. This platform allows exhibitors to present their innovative solutions and deliver expert presentations on green hydrogen and battery storage. This means that industry professionals gain a concise overview of the interaction between renewable energies, battery storage systems and the hydrogen economy.

Industry-leading exhibitors and cutting-edge topics demonstrate how green hydrogen and battery storage go hand in hand with the renewable energy world, jointly opening up new pathways toward a sustainable energy future. ees Europe and the Hydrogen Dialogue Expo are part of The smarter E Europe, Europe's largest alliance of exhibitions for the energy industry.

The smarter E Europe brings together key players – from international market leaders to start-ups – at ees Europe and the parallel events Intersolar Europe, Power2Drive Europe and EM-Power Europe. Next year, more than 100,000 industry professionals are expected to attend, all of whom want to actively shape a 24/7 renewable energy supply and are looking for solutions in the electricity, heat and transportation sectors.

Special exhibits, special focuses and new partner networks

The Hydrogen Dialogue is a new part of The smarter E Europe. Industry professionals can look forward to a program featuring expert presentations, exhibition tours, site visits in the surrounding area and the Hydrogen Dialogue Summit conference format from June 24–25, 2026 – in close collaboration with the Hydrogen Center Bavaria H2.B and the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs.

In 2026, the special focus of bidirectional charging will continue under the new name "The Bidirectional Zone". In this exhibition segment, industry professionals can attend exciting expert presentations, make valuable industry connections and learn about the latest projects and developments. Exhibits and live demos will show how vehicle-to-X technology works in practice.

In addition, The smarter E Europe will place particular focus on the new special exhibit "Renewables 24/7". This exhibition segment will illustrate how an integrated, renewable, cost-effective and resilient energy supply can be achieved 365 days a year – making the key topics of all four The smarter E Europe exhibitions tangible and easy to understand.

ees Europe Quick Facts

Date	June 23–25, 2026
Venue	Messe München, Germany
Exhibition space	54,000 sqm (200,000 sqm in total at The smarter E Europe)
Exhibitors	1,100+ suppliers of energy storage technologies and 100+ suppliers of green hydrogen solutions (2,800 exhibitors in total at The smarter E Europe)

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JUNE
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MESSE MÜNCHEN, GERMANY

Europe's Largest and Most International Exhibition
for Batteries and Energy Storage Systems

NEW POWERFUL SYNERGIES: HYDROGEN DIALOGUE AS PART OF THE SMARTER E EUROPE IN MUNICH

At ees Europe, the hydrogen exhibition segment is being further developed: The former Green Hydrogen Forum & Expo has now become the Hydrogen Dialogue Forum & Expo. The well-established hydrogen event Hydrogen Dialogue will now be part of The smarter E Europe, Europe's largest alliance of exhibitions for the energy industry. With this step, The smarter E Europe highlights the importance of hydrogen in the renewable energy world both as an energy carrier and as a storage medium. Hydrogen is especially crucial in cases where renewable electricity cannot be used directly and where the use of fossil-derived hydrogen in industrial processes can be replaced by green hydrogen.

By integrating Hydrogen Dialogue into The smarter E Europe, exhibitors and visitors gain direct access to the key industries of renewable power generation and energy storage – opening up expanded collaboration opportunities, greater visibility and new contacts.

More integration, more solutions

The Hydrogen Dialogue Forum and the Hydrogen Dialogue Summit provide a stage for the key topics concerning the hydrogen industry. It is a place for experts to discuss core issues, such as the necessity of consistent framework and planning certainty in order to advance hydrogen integration in the German energy market and kick-start concrete pro-

jects. Numerous funding programs already exist, but they are often not coordinated across the entire value chain – from electrolysis and infrastructure to end-use. Complex approval processes, unclear certification standards and a lack of market incentives for long-term investments continue to slow down the sector's growth.

Austria as a hydrogen strategist

In 2025, Hydrogen Dialogue held its inaugural event at The smarter E Europe, featuring a well-attended panel discussion with experts from industry and politics. Together, they discussed the 3,300 km SouthH2 Corridor green hydrogen pipeline (see short interview p. 2), which plays a key role in Europe's hydrogen strategy.

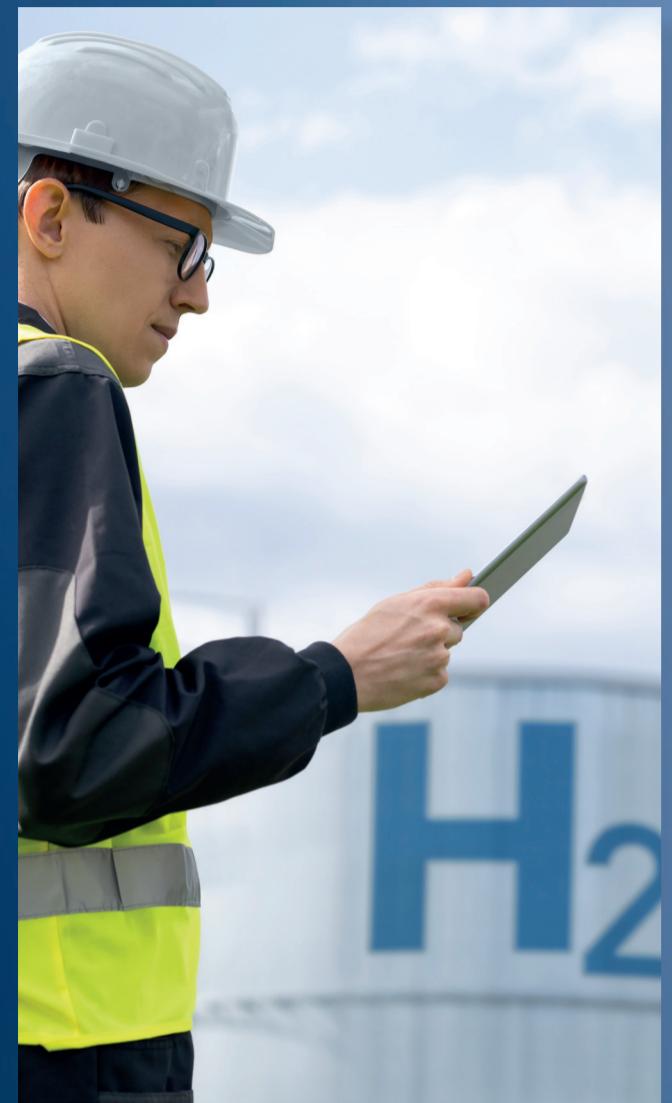
Austria, in particular, attaches great importance to this connection, as the country plans to import around two thirds of its hydrogen demand in the future. According to Wolfgang Anzengruber, Chief Executive of the Advisory Board of the platform Hydrogen Partnership Austria, demand is expected to rise to about 1.3 million metric tons per year by 2040. Currently, it stands at around 134,000 metric tons.

For exchanging experiences and finding national as well as international project partners, the Hydrogen Dialogue Expo as part of The smarter E Europe in Munich offers the ideal setting – with over 100 exhibitors presenting market-ready hydrogen solutions.



GREEN HYDROGEN: PROFITABLE ENERGY SOURCE FOR SMES

Small and medium enterprises make up 99 percent of all companies in Germany. Yet, when it comes to the energy transition, hesitancy often prevails even in this sector. At the Green Hydrogen Forum 2025, Béatrice Angleys, Head of Hydrogen Platform, and Philipp Kampmann, Manager H2 Ecosystems at Thüga AG, spoke about regional hydrogen projects to prepare SMEs for hydrogen.



"Many of our customers view the future with uncertainty when it comes to an economically viable energy supply. This is exactly where we see green hydrogen as the solution – not only for large-scale industry, but also for SMEs," says Béatrice Angleys.

Thüga AG is implementing numerous projects to tap into this potential along the entire value chain, from generation to distribution to specific applications. A good example is the H2Direkt project, which, in collaboration with other project partners, involved the switchover of an existing gas distribution system to a 100-percent green hydrogen operation. This has resulted in ten households and one business being heated without interruption for over eighteen months. "We often find that local utilities are perceived as lacking in innovation. But projects like these prove quite the opposite," notes Angleys.

Challenges, opportunities and demand for SMEs
Thüga AG aims to better convey the usability and benefits of hydrogen to SMEs via projects like these. They hope this will lead to less reluctance among SMEs, which stems from not only economic pressure from competitors, but also political frameworks that direct subsidies first and foremost to large companies. "In principle, there is a demand for hydrogen in these companies. One of our studies found that two thirds of industrial companies

surveyed indicated a desire to use hydrogen in the future. In the case of larger companies with an energy consumption of over ten gigawatt hours per year, the figure was even higher at over 80 percent. But the critical question is how this demand can actually be met," says Philipp Kampmann.

"In one of our current projects, we are identifying suitable customers who can serve as the output point for local hydrogen networks. As part of this, we have collaborated with the Fraunhofer Institute for Energy Economics and Energy System Technology (IIE) to develop the HyPotentials tool, which identifies companies with high hydrogen potential at postcode level. In future, we want to make this analytical approach accessible to other industries and operations to enter into genuine partnerships with local businesses. So far, our response shows that companies that obtain specific figures and outlooks also have more serious discussions about their strategies to reduce emissions," according to Béatrice Angleys.

"Even if political hurdles slow down the expansion of green hydrogen, we're convinced that it can be a fundamental part of the energy transition in Germany. But the key to success lies in close dialogue with our customers to shape this transformation together in a targeted way," summarizes Philipp Kampmann.

GET AHEAD IN THREE EXHIBITION DAYS: THE HYDROGEN DIALOGUE FORUM

The future needs solutions for a 24/7 renewable energy supply – and green hydrogen, fuel cells, electrolyzers and power-to-gas technologies will play a key role. To move the market forward, it is essential to regularly discuss the latest developments in technology and markets. The Hydrogen Dialogue Forum is the ideal platform for this. Industry professionals can look forward to a series of expert presentations by renowned industry experts on the following topics:

- **Key System Components for Hydrogen Production:** Electrolyser, Fuel Cells, Hydrogen Processing, Storage and Transport, Interfaces to Renewables: From Water Purification to Grid-Ready Electricity
- **Resilient Energy Supply**
- **Widening Applications**
- **Scalable Solutions for Project Developers and Utilities:** Transport, Buildings, Industry, Communities and Regions. From Planning, Fabrication, Supply to Handover, Operation and Surveillance
- **Business:** Business Models, Bankability & Commercialization
- **Technological Innovations & Markets:** Power-to-X, -Mobility or -Heat, Fuels: Hydrogen and its Derivatives, CCUS
- **Regulatory Requirements and Strategic Planning:** Roadmaps, Skills & Training, Expert Networks

The Hydrogen Dialogue Forum is part of ees Europe and will be located in hall B2. Visitors and exhibitors of The smarter E Europe can attend the presentations free of charge on all three exhibition days.

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Secure your booth now: Hydrogen Dialogue Expo exhibition segment

Do you want to present your solutions in the new Hydrogen Dialogue Expo exhibition segment in hall B2 and make valuable contacts with international project developers from the energy and hydrogen industry? Seize this opportunity and register with us as an exhibitor! The exhibition topics cover a wide spectrum of hydrogen and storage technologies, including electrolyzers, hydrogen storage, components, hydrogen production technologies and software for storage systems.

As an alternative to an individual booth, you can also exhibit at the Hydrogen joint booth. Secure an efficient, convenient and cost-effective exhibition space with a comprehensive service package.

Become an Exhibitor



HYDROGEN DIALOGUE TABLES: WHERE YOUR QUESTIONS BECOME CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

Receive quality consultation instead of calling cards: Quality consulting instead of collecting business cards: At the Hydrogen Dialogue Tables, you take home concrete answers for your H₂ project. Visitors and exhibitors work together with selected hydrogen experts to develop individual solution paths. After the successful launch of the format in 2025, the Hydrogen Networking will continue it in 2026 in Hall B2. You can choose between an intensive one-on-one session or an exchange with up to two other participants at the expert tables – always in direct conversation with an H₂ professional.

In the 1:1 discussions, specific project financing options, for example, can be examined in detail. In the 45-minute, practice-oriented discussion rounds, you can address your hydrogen-related topics in a small group – regardless of whether it concerns decentralized energy production, system integration, legislation, concrete application areas, or market access. You will walk away with clear impulses and to-dos for your projects!

The discussions, held in German or English, are consistently tailored to your projects and implementation requirements, ensuring that you leave the appointment with concrete recommendations and solution approaches. Participation is included in the exhibition admission and is organized in cooperation with Hydrogen Moves.

Starting spring 2026, you can secure your slot. All further information can be found on our website.



SOUTH₂ CORRIDOR: ON THE FAST LANE OR THE HIGHWAY?

In 2030, a 3,300-kilometer pipeline is expected to transport up to 163 terawatt hours of green hydrogen annually from North Africa to southern Germany. This would enable the SoutH₂ Corridor to cover up to 40 percent of the EU's hydrogen targets. At ees Europe 2025, experts from infrastructure and industry discussed the key factors for successful implementation.

Why is the SoutH₂ Corridor considered the most promising route for bringing green hydrogen to Central Europe?

**DR. STEFAN KAUFMANN,
SENIOR ADVISOR AT HORVÁTH & PARTNER**

Currently, pipelines are the most efficient and competitive way to transport hydrogen – especially from regions with lower production costs, like North Africa. This would also enable green hydrogen to start flowing from Germany to Central Europe within five to seven years. It would not only strengthen energy logistics, but would also ensure the competitiveness of European industry by providing it with the stable and affordable hydrogen supply it needs.

Should Europe follow the strategy of prioritizing domestic hydrogen production rather than importing it?

TIMO BOLLERHEY, DEVELOPER AND CO-FOUNDER OF H2GLOBAL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HINTCO GMBH

The reality is that we currently have a shortfall of millions of tons of green hydrogen, both from domestic and external output. Hydrogen presents an opportunity to establish new, diversified partnerships with countries like Canada, Australia, or India. This kind of international diversification is key to energy security.

Do EU laws help or hinder the rollout of hydrogen?

TIMO BOLLERHEY, DEVELOPER AND CO-FOUNDER OF H2GLOBAL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HINTCO GMBH

At our recent 'H2Global Roadshow', where we asked potential suppliers of hydrogen and its derivatives outside Europe about the biggest obstacles to exporting to Europe, the clear answer was: European regulation. The delegated

acts under RED II/III are very Eurocentric, create complexity and uncertainty of interpretation, and consequently deter international partners.

For non-European suppliers, the requirements are often difficult to meet, which means that Europe's regulations threaten its position in the global hydrogen market. Without a pragmatic interpretation of the regulations and careful adaptation, we risk becoming mere spectators. Unless adjustments are made, we risk remaining mere spectators. At the same time, the regulatory framework must provide a stable and predictable environment – so this is definitely a dilemma that we in Europe have unnecessarily created for ourselves.

What role can Austria and VERBUND Green Hydrogen play in Europe's hydrogen future?

FRANZ HELM, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF VERBUND GREEN HYDROGEN GMBH

Austria is in a strong position to play a central role in the distribution of hydrogen across Europe. Our internationally well-connected gas transmission network gives us the opportunity to participate in the development of the European Hydrogen Backbone.

VERBUND is currently developing a diversified production portfolio for hydrogen generation. In Austria and Germany, local projects are being implemented to meet short-term demand. In these countries, our focus lies primarily on on-site and near-site projects that guarantee a direct and reliable supply to our project partners. To drive this

transformation, we plan to invest €5.9 billion in the green transition over the next three years. This year alone, nearly €2 billion will go into renewable energy, grid flexibility, and green hydrogen.

How can we build a functioning hydrogen market amid so much uncertainty?

**DR. STEFAN KAUFMANN,
SENIOR ADVISOR AT HORVÁTH & PARTNER**

A functioning hydrogen market needs to make use of all available options – production in Europe, a pipeline import infrastructure and ammonia solutions. The South₂ Corridor is part of the solution, but is far from the only stable hydrogen infrastructure in Europe.



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