

Electromobility - Broader than Electrobuses

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It is well, when the reflections of experienced people extend the point of view. It happens frequently as the result of narrowing, specifying the terms. It is much rarer, when the definition is rightly broadened. In such situations it turns out that the term associated with novelty in actual fact comprises things that already exist. Then the possibilities can increase in a simple way. In this way the already former president of Tramwaje Śląskie (Silesian Trams) was talking about the electromobility, the man who successfully carried out the first, worth a few hundred million, project of tram infrastructure modernisation in the Katowice conurbation.

During this year Public Transport Fair Silesia Transport in Sosnowiec Mr Tadeusz Freisler reminded that this term includes not only slowly developing electric buses, still rare electric cars, but even less popular idea of car-sharing, or prototype autonomous vehicles. Mr Freisler was talking about the company he leaves, referring among other things to the first orders for electric buses, which are under implementation or preparation by transport companies from Jaworzno, Sosnowiec, and Katowice. He emphasised, that electric trams known for more than a century or trolleybuses of similarly long history are also consistent with the idea of electromobility.

These words of Mr Freisler correspond to opinions of experts, who were talking about electromobility during the European Economic Congress in Katowice. Among other things the context of small funds, which Polish power corporations had available to feed the company Electromobility Poland (PLN 10 million), appeared in the background. This company main objective

is to develop the concept of a Polish electric car. A member of Electromobility Poland Supervisory Board, co-founder and chairman of the US-Polish Trade Council, Prof Piotr Moncarz, emphasised during the Congress, that the electromobility development on a wide scale requires the involvement of private capital. Public funds would be sufficient to create proper conditions. The point is primarily

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to create and develop the infrastructure, which in a way will continue to be self-driven; or possibly to inspire the market e.g. to manufacture specific components. – Because producers, who for example will start manufacturing inverters, will be driving e.g. start-ups – to deliver them sub-

assemblies. In turn, these should encourage investors. This is the money that will be slowly getting Polish electromobility going – told Prof. Moncarz.

Tramwaje Śląskie already indirectly faced both challenges. Because Mr Freisler during the Sosnowiec fair suggested to use more than thirty tram substations of the company to charge electric city buses and also other vehicles with such drives.

Tramwaje Śląskie already declared that in a relatively simple way they can increase the amount of power ordered to substations and also at small expenditures – to adapt them to install there electricity meters. It is the law that is now the main issue, e.g. because the company does not hold a licence to trade electricity.

The willingness to apply a similar solution was previously notified also by the Municipal Transport Enterprise (MPK) in Krakow. That company would cope with this problem – because as an operator it provides both the tram and bus transport. The Krakow MPK signalled however that the proposal does not comply with other regulations and indicated other difficulties, related e.g. to the construction of charging stations.

So the move is on the state's side. The companies interested in electromobility – not only private, but already also municipal – indicate specific problems and declare the willingness to invest. The Tramwaje Śląskie itself plan inter alia to build – with the EU support – three new substations. If they would have to supply also vehicles other than trams, it would be good to adapt them to that from the beginning.

At the end of April the Ministry of Energy presented assumptions and sent for consultation a bill of the Act on Electromobility and Alternative Fuels. The ministry would like it to take effect from January 2018. ■

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