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German Minister Wissing and the TRATON GROUP discuss transportation of the future and charging infrastructure

Berlin, May 13, 2022 – Dr. Volker Wissing, Germany’s Federal Minister for Digital and Transport, and Bernd Osterloh, Chief Human Resources Officer of the TRATON GROUP, met during an event in Berlin to discuss transportation of the future and the need to build a charging infrastructure for commercial vehicles as soon as possible. Wissing and Osterloh agreed that building a Europe-wide charging network remains one of the European Union’s top priorities for reaching its climate protection goals. “Battery electric long-haul trucks offer a fantastic opportunity to achieve these goals in the transportation sector and make it independent from fossil fuels. The first 100,000 electric trucks alone could save around ten million tons of CO₂ every year,” Osterloh said as he spoke to the Minister.

Osterloh explained that the TRATON GROUP and its Scania, MAN Truck & Bus, Navistar, and Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus brands already have battery electric trucks, buses, and vans in series production around the world. The TRATON GROUP believes that as battery technology continues to evolve, charging a vehicle just once will already be enough for a range of up to 1,000 kilometers in the coming years. With the charging time way below one hour, drivers can combine charging their vehicle with the rest periods they have to take in Europe by law. “Ultimately, this makes electric vehicles the right fit for long-haul transportation and the mass market alike,” said Osterloh.

What battery electric long-haul commercial vehicles in Europe need and what they have been missing so far is charging infrastructure. To jump-start the establishment of this infrastructure, the TRATON GROUP is planning a joint venture together with the Volvo Group and Daimler Truck. The plan is to install and operate 1,700 high-performance green energy charging points on and close to highways as well as at logistic and destination points within five years of its establishment. The joint venture is still subject to antitrust approvals. “The hope is to get the go-ahead from the authorities in the near future so that our joint venture can finally gain momentum,” said Osterloh. The joint venture entails a €500 million investment, which the three commercial vehicle manufacturers consider a down payment of sorts on the establishment of the corresponding infrastructure.

Osterloh made it clear that the venture’s plans to build the network must go hand in hand with government support and a clear signal from policymakers, not least to gain the trust of other EU member states and freighters. According to Osterloh, an example would be the German government announcing the creation of a national charging network for trucks similar to the Deutschland-Netz network for passenger cars that has already been decided. “The state has a special role to play here. In order to build truck charging points, we need to repurpose certain areas along highways, something that cannot be done without government intervention,” said

the TRATON Board member, adding: "Right now, it is up to the policymakers to step up their game and drive forward the expansion of the charging infrastructure we need to make electric mobility a success story for heavy-duty trucks as well."

Wissing and Osterloh met ahead of an event on a former airfield of the Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. The event sees TRATON brand MAN Truck & Bus present its first near-production prototype of the MAN eTGX, a battery electric long-haul truck set to launch at the start of 2024.

During their discussion with Transport Minister Wissing and Kristin Kahl from Contargo, a freight forwarder with practical experience in the field of electric trucks, Alexander Vlaskamp, CEO of MAN Truck & Bus SE, and Frank Mühlön, President of ABB E-mobility, stressed that the industry was ready for the transition to e-trucks. Commercial vehicle manufacturer MAN and charging station provider ABB E-mobility have already made the decision to invest in battery electric vehicles and charging networks. What they need now is a guiding hand from policymakers.

MAN CEO Alexander Vlaskamp: "We are ready. But the transition to zero-emission technologies will only succeed if policymakers are willing to invest heavily in building a robust charging infrastructure network for heavy-duty commercial vehicles. Making this infrastructure a reality sooner rather than later is the only way to effect the transition to environmentally friendly transport and reach our climate goals."

The event clearly made an impression on Federal Minister Wissing: "If we want to achieve our climate goals, we need to decarbonize the way we transport goods by road. As part of this endeavor, our top priorities are getting the market for eco-friendly commercial vehicles up and running and building the corresponding high-performance charging infrastructure. The important thing now is putting more e-trucks on the road quickly. The work MAN and ABB are doing together shows that we are on the right track."

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