

Colruyt Group opens first green public hydrogen filling station

Colruyt Group strongly believes in hydrogen as a lever for making mobility and energy supplies more sustainable

Halle, 8 October 2018 - Colruyt Group opens its first public hydrogen filling station.

From now on, customers can buy conventional and green fuels at the DATS 24 filling station in Halle (Dassenveld), as well as 100% green hydrogen that is produced using renewable electricity from energy specialist Eoly. The integration of a hydrogen pump in a 'traditional' filling station is unique in Europe. Colruyt Group believes that hydrogen can play an important role in making our mobility and energy supplies more sustainable. That is why it has been investing in this green energy carrier for years. Opening a filling station for hydrogen is an important next step and brings hydrogen one step closer to the consumer. Colruyt Group explicitly calls on other companies to also fully opt for an energy transition, with hydrogen as the important lever.

New milestone for investments in the hydrogen economy

Since 2004, Colruyt Group has invested 6 million euros in innovative hydrogen projects. For example, the group has been producing green hydrogen at the Dassenveld site for some years now. The distribution centre has 75 hydrogen forklift trucks. In addition, hydrogen is used for 13 passenger cars, which are used within the group. In France and Belgium, Colruyt Group also invests in hydrogen applications for heavy transport. Together with partners Fluxys and Parkwind, the group is also working on a power-to-gas installation to convert green electricity into green hydrogen on an industrial scale as a buffer for fluctuations in (offshore) wind energy.

“This first public hydrogen filling station is certainly not an isolated case”, says Jef Colruyt, CEO of Colruyt Group. “Over the next five years, Colruyt Group intends to invest an extra 35 million euros in the hydrogen economy, including four new hydrogen filling stations.”

Sustainable energy source for mobility

Hydrogen as fuel (*power-to-mobility*) offers many advantages. Its raw materials, namely water and electricity, are inexhaustible. Furthermore, hydrogen fuel can be produced using renewable energy, meaning that even the process itself is completely 'green'. Hydrogen-fuelled vehicles do not emit any harmful substances, only water vapour. A car can be fully refuelled in five minutes.

Nevertheless, Colruyt Group makes no claims for hydrogen being the only or best mobility solution. *“We believe that sustainable mobility cannot be achieved by following a single path, but requires a combination of solutions”, explains Jef Colruyt. “The mobility solution depends on many factors. Hydrogen and electricity are the future for zero-emission vehicles. However, CNG cars and plug-in hybrids will also continue to play their part during the transition period. The new hydrogen filling*

station is unique in Europe because it offers green hydrogen as well as all the other fuels, including electricity, CNG, petrol, diesel and AdBlue.”

DATS 24 will continue to systematically increase its network for alternative fuels. In the meantime, 59 filling stations are now equipped with a CNG pump and 61 shops and 2 central buildings have electric charging stations. In 2019, the fuel specialist plans to open a second hydrogen filling station in Wilrijk.

Lever for sustainable energy

Hydrogen can also be a lever for making the energy supply more sustainable. An oversupply of renewable energy from wind turbines or solar panels can be converted into hydrogen: an energy buffer. On less windy or sunny days, the locally stored hydrogen can be converted back to electricity (*power-to-power*). The green hydrogen can also be injected into the existing gas network, thereby offer solutions for domestic heating (*power-to-gas*) and industrial applications (*power-to-industry*).

Jef Colruyt is convinced of the potential: *“We strongly believe in hydrogen and want to boost the growing hydrogen economy. Of course, a stable investment climate is a necessity. At the same time, we hope that our innovation projects will have an inspiring effect and that other companies will also rise to the challenge posed by energy transition. Colruyt Group is always open to new partnerships. For us, pioneering with hydrogen as a sustainable solution means greater independence from fossil fuels in the long term and a first step towards zero-emission applications. As a retailer, Colruyt Group also has a major impact on its own production and distribution chain and hopes to inspire more than 4 million customers. It is therefore more than worth the effort.”*

Quotes by the experts and policymakers present – to be used freely

Geert Bourgeois, Minister-President of Flanders, fully supports the initiative: *“The opening of a public hydrogen filling station on the basis of locally produced wind and solar energy is a new step for Colruyt Group on its way to sustainable mobility. Flanders has ambitious goals for making the switch to sustainable energy and clean mobility. By 2020, we want twenty hydrogen filling stations. I have good hope that we will succeed. Partly thanks to investments by companies such as Colruyt Group. As one of the few end users in Flanders, Colruyt Group truly thinks about hydrogen and uses the technology in actual practice.”*

European climate expert Jos Delbeke also believes in the project: *“The climate goals established by Europe in the Paris Agreement will intensify the fundamental changes already affecting the energy sector today. New technologies are marketed sooner than expected, and hydrogen is one of them. That’s why this initiative by Colruyt Group is particularly commendable.”*

Flemish minister of Energy Bart Tommelein: *“The Flemish government strongly believes in the possibilities of hydrogen: for transport, for energy storage, for the economy as a whole. A filling station that offers all fuels, including conventional fuels, CNG, electricity and green hydrogen, familiarizes consumers with all the current possibilities. These integrated filling stations can persuade*

people to consider or buy a greener or even zero-emission car. Colruyt Group's efforts in this area are unique in Europe and help to accelerate the energy transition."

If you have any questions, please contact Colruyt Group's press office.

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About Colruyt Group

Colruyt Group is active in the distribution of food and non-food products in Belgium, France and Luxembourg, with around 550 of its own stores and more than 580 affiliated stores. In Belgium, it operates Colruyt, OKay, Bio-Planet, Cru, Dreamland, Dreambaby and the affiliated stores Spar and Spar Compact. In France, it operates Colruyt stores, as well as affiliated stores Coccinelle, Coccimarket and Panier Sympa. The group is also active in the food service business (delivering food to hospitals, company kitchens and catering companies) in Belgium (Solucious). Other activities include filling stations in Belgium (DATS 24), print and document management solutions (Symeta) and the production of green energy (Eoly). The Group has more than 29,300 employees and achieved a revenue of 9.0 billion euros in 2017/18. Colruyt is listed on Euronext Brussels (COLR) under ISIN no. BE0974256852.

About DATS24

DATS 24 is the fuel specialist of Colruyt Group and has a network of 122 filling stations throughout Belgium. Customers are able to fill up with traditional as well as alternative fuels: petrol and diesel, but also CNG (compressed natural gas or natural gas), electricity and hydrogen. DATS 24 is the leading supplier of natural gas for vehicles in Belgium. 59 filling stations are equipped with a CNG pump, and one station also allows customers to fill up with hydrogen. It also has electric charging stations at 63 locations. Thanks to its rigorous environmental policy, the fuel specialist has been complying with the strict ISO 14001 standard for years. DATS24 achieved a revenue of EUR 638 million in financial year 2017/2018.

About Eoly

Eoly is a subsidiary of Colruyt Group, specialising in the production and supply of sustainable energy. In addition to supplying energy to the various chains that make up the group, Eoly also supplies 100% green electricity to companies with a consumption of over 50 MWh per year. Eoly's key features are its simple product range, transparent communication and reliable cooperation. The energy it produces itself comes from 14 wind turbines (one owned by Eoly Cooperative), 54 solar installations and a cogeneration installation. On the wholesale market, Eoly only buys 100% green energy.
