www.ehp-magazine.com III/2021

EURO HEAT & POWER

DISTRICT HEATING | DISTRICT COOLING | COGENERATION

EUROHEAT & POWER

ISSN 1613-0200 – 22698

Let's Decarbonise District Heating – for the World We Live in

Extreme heat waves and heavy rain in regions that previously have not known meteorological situations like this are increasing. The consequences of climate change are becoming more and more visible. Global warming is increasing faster than expected. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns of this in his new status report, in which it forecasts global warming of 1,5 °C as early as 2030. As a result, the sea level will arise. At the end of the century, it is expected to be around 62 cm higher than in 2014, even if we achieve the goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

Can we even stop climate change? At least we can avert a climate catastrophe, make sure that the sea level rises by "only" 62 cm and not significantly more. The European Commission has set an example with its "Fit for 55" programm: As an intermediate step on the way to climate neutrality, the EU has committed itself to reducing its emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and intends to revise all climate, energy and transport-related legislation to this end. That is ambitious, but basically correct.

District heating and cooling can make a significant contribution to reducing emissions. "Green" District heating and cooling is even a better lever for decarbonisation, as a "green" heating network can be used to supply immediatly a large number of buildings in a climate-friendly manner. There are many different sources available for "green" district heating, which the industry is already making increasing use of, depending on the individual local conditions. This includes also heat from waste and waste heat. The latter is not only a by-product of industrial processes, but also occurs primarily in data centers, the number of which is rising in the course of increasing digitalisation. This waste heat must be used.

For all of this, however, reliable framework conditions and constructive instruments are necessary, which politics must provide. With the "Fit for 55" package, the EU must release the appropriate impulses. In any case, the industry is ready!

Silke Laufkötter

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