

STEAG ensures secure energy

Due to the current situation on the electricity markets, the conversion of the Herne 4 power plant unit will not take place until spring 2023

Herne/Essen. STEAG is reacting to the tense situation on the energy markets and is postponing the planned conversion of the Herne 4 hard coal fired power plant unit, prospectively until spring 2023. Until then, the plant will remain on the grid and thus make a contribution to ensuring price stability and security of supply, especially beyond the winter of 2022/23.

STEAG has already notified the transmission system operator Amprion and the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) of the planned short-term extension to the service life of the Herne 4 power plant unit and the waiver of early closure of the power plants in Bergkamen and Völklingen-Fenne. Information has also been sent to the transparency unit of the EEX power exchange.

“Security of supply and price stability are two integral cornerstones of the energy industry’s target triangle. By keeping our Herne 4 unit in operation until spring 2023, STEAG is making an important contribution to stabilizing the already highly volatile situation on the energy markets this winter, which now, after the unforeseen geopolitical events of recent days have become even more unpredictable,” Dr. Andreas Reichel, Chairman of the STEAG Board of Management, says under the impression of Russia’s attack on Ukraine.

STEAG’s decision has been taken knowing, that supply of controllable energy will decrease further in the coming winter of 2022/23 because the last nuclear power plants in Germany shall be shut down then. In addition, STEAG will not exercise its option to shut down the plants in Bergkamen and Völklingen as early as the summer. All three units will remain on line until the end of October 2022.

Retrofitting Herne 4 is postponed, not cancelled

This decision, guided by overriding market conditions and the unpredictable developments in world politics, does not mean that the previously announced conversion of the Herne 4 power plant unit will be cancelled. “The situation remains the same: Herne 4 will be converted to a natural gas fired boiler, which will in future back up the district heating supply for the highly efficient combined cycle gas turbine power plant currently nearing completion at the same site,” clarifies Dr. Ralf Schiele, who is responsible on the STEAG board for the Market and Technology divisions. Only the date of the conversion will prospectively be postponed.

Unchanged: STEAG prospectively free of hard coal

If German federal government should take into consideration to reschedule the otherwise already fixed dates for permanent decommission of hard coal fired powerplants due to the war in Ukraine and it's indirect impacts on energy production and supply in Germany, STEAG will examine in how far such a term extension is possible both technically and from human resources management's perspective. "Right now, this is nothing but a theoretical option, we have not had talks about that with federal government, yet," Andreas Reichel ascertains.

STEAG focuses on natural gas and hydrogen

For the near future, STEAG is relying on natural gas as a bridging technology and on hydrogen as an energy source in the long term. "Both in the Ruhr and on the Saar, at the Duisburg-Walsum and Völklingen-Fenne power plant sites, we are developing hydrogen projects that will contribute to decarbonization, especially of the steel industry," says Andreas Reichel. The combined cycle power plant soon to come on stream in Herne is emblematic of this strategy: it can already co-fire up to 15 per cent hydrogen. In the future, after a successful ramp-up of the hydrogen economy in Germany and Europe, there will be the option of upgrading it so that it can be completely converted to the emission-free energy source.

About STEAG

For over 80 years, STEAG has stood for efficient and reliable power generation, both in Germany and abroad. As an experienced partner, we support our customers comprehensively in all phases of power supply. We design, develop, implement, operate and market highly efficient energy solutions – from distributed generation facilities and those based on renewable sources to large central power plants. Together with customized solutions in the field of electricity and heat supply, we also provide a wide range of energy services – increasingly on the basis of renewables. Successfully so: Since 1990, STEAG has permanently reduced its own CO₂ emissions in Germany by approximately 85 percent.

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