

Press release from the German Heat Pump Association (BWP)

Independence through electrification: large-scale heat pumps offer a wide range of possibilities that have so far been underutilised

Berlin, 11 June 2026. More than 350 representatives from industry, the energy sector and local authorities discussed the legal framework, economic viability and financing of large-scale heat pump projects at the German Large-Scale Heat Pump Congress organised by the German Heat Pump Association (BWP). The BWP stresses that further progress is needed, particularly on electricity prices and lengthy permitting procedures, as well as on establishing a reliable trajectory for carbon pricing to encourage further investment.

For Claus Fest, Chairman of the BWP Executive Board, the decarbonisation of the heating supply is necessary to make Germany less dependent on energy imports: “The past few weeks and months in particular have once again highlighted just how vulnerable our energy supply remains. The war in the Middle East, the ongoing Russian attacks on Ukraine and other geopolitical tensions are having a direct impact on energy prices, security of supply and economic stability.” The development of an infrastructure independent of fossil fuels is therefore also essential from a resilience perspective: “As long as our heating supply remains heavily dependent on gas and oil, our economy will remain vulnerable.”

According to Fest, the current draft of the Building Modernisation Act (GModG) lacks the crucial impetus: it falls short of restructuring the legal framework in such a way as to generate immense demand for renewable gases. These gases are not expected to be available in sufficient quantities or to be affordable in the foreseeable future. This could ultimately perpetuate dependence on fossil fuels rather than counteracting it.

Incentives for electrification are needed

Fest argues that this makes it all the more important to create strong incentives for electrification in other areas. This must be achieved through energy prices, a predictable CO₂ price and stable funding programmes such as the Federal Funding Scheme for Efficient Buildings (BEG) and the Federal Funding Scheme for Efficient Heating Networks (BEW): “It is essential to ensure that the federal funding scheme for efficient heating networks, which plays a particularly important role for large-scale heat pump projects, is stable and practical. Existing bureaucratic hurdles in the application process and in local approval procedures must be removed swiftly.”

Technology proven in numerous applications

On the day before the conference, participants were able to visit various large-scale heat pump projects in Berlin and see for themselves the wide range of possible applications. A large-scale heat pump system has already been connected to the network of Berlin's district heating network operator, BTB. The system uses water from the River Spree in Berlin-Schöneweide as its heat source.

In Berlin-Spandau, heat generation at the Reuter-West combined heat and power plant will in future be supplemented solely by the use of waste water heat via a 75-megawatt large-scale heat pump system. Construction work is already underway, and the Berlin district heating supplier BEW is due to commission the plant in 2027.

The Dockyard Berlin project demonstrates that even smaller networks can be supplied with heat using large-scale heat pumps: the office complex utilises an innovative energy concept comprising large-scale heat pumps, ice storage, PVT/PV systems, geothermal energy and ambient air. Heat is stored there seasonally and made available efficiently when required; in summer, the ice storage system supports resource-efficient cooling.

Large individual buildings can also be supplied with heating and cooling by large heat pumps: beneath Schlossplatz at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin, 115 geothermal probes and 91 energy piles have been installed, which supply the building with heating and cooling via heat pumps. Here, the ground acts as a seasonal storage medium. In Berlin-Lichtenberg, a large furniture store uses a heat pump to extract heat from waste water in winter, whilst in summer, excess heat from the building is discharged into it.

Flexible technology enables a wide range of applications

The conference programme then focused on practical applications: particular attention was paid to the cost-effectiveness of large-scale heat pumps and various financing and investment models for capital-intensive large-scale projects. For the first time, the roll-out of modular systems was also a key focus. These systems, complete with hydraulics and control systems, are assembled not on site but in the factory and delivered, for example, in container form, thereby enabling rapid connection to the buildings on site.

A look at the operation of a large-scale heat pump system in Gothenburg, Sweden, demonstrated that such systems can function reliably for many decades: built in 1984, it was recently upgraded through a comprehensive retrofit to ensure a further 15 years of operation.

Further information is available at

<https://www.waermepumpe.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/> .

About the German Heat Pump Association (BWP)

The German Heat Pump Association – Bundesverband Wärmepumpe (BWP) e. V. is an industry association based in Berlin that covers the entire value chain relating to heat pumps. The BWP brings together just under 1,400 companies from the heating industry, trades firms, planning and architectural practices, drilling companies and energy suppliers, all of which are committed to promoting the increased use of efficient heat pumps.

The German heat pump sector employs around 100,000 people and generates an annual turnover of around 3.5 billion euros. There are currently just under two million heat pumps in use in Germany. Around 95 per cent of the systems installed here are manufactured by BWP member companies.

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