

Press Release

IFAT Munich

Municipalities: core target group for the environmental industry

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- Tackling the consequences of climate change
- Maintaining quality and safety in water management
- Day of resilient municipalities on May 16

Municipalities are among the most important users of the products and processes presented at the IFAT Munich 2024 environmental technology trade fair. New challenges, opportunities and solutions also create a great need for information and discussion for cities and municipalities.

From May 13 to 17, 2024, IFAT Munich will bring the global environmental technology industry together again in one place. The exhibitors at the Munich exhibition center will then once again present their latest products, processes and services from the fields of water and wastewater, waste and raw materials management to the specialist audience. For many of them, cities and municipalities, with their wide range of environmentally relevant tasks, are part of their key customer base. Municipalities, for example, face the permanent challenge of ensuring the quantity and quality of the drinking water supply, maintaining infrastructural values, and averting potential risks to society and the environment – all at a reasonable cost. In line with that, the German Technical and Scientific Association for Gas and Water (DVGW) is offering three solution tours at the world's leading trade fair in Munich entitled "Innovative technologies for assessing the condition of buried pipelines," "Protection of critical infrastructure in drinking water supply," and "Increased water temperature in the distribution network." At the association's stand, keynote speeches will first explain the respective problem before guided tours lead participants to corresponding exhibitor solutions.

New PFAS limit values affect treatment requirements

The revised Drinking Water Ordinance came into force in Germany in June 2023. It implements significant elements of the EU Drinking Water Directive from 2020. Among the new and amended limit values, the toxicologically relevant per-

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and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFAS for short, clearly play the most important role. Water suppliers may have to filter out PFAS with considerable technical effort. “However, end-of-pipe approaches are not a solution. The production and use of PFAS must be limited to a few essential purposes. The aim must be to already avoid these substances at the pollution source. These substances must not be released into the environment in the first place,” says Wolf Merkel, DVGW Board Member for Water. The association is taking this as an opportunity to present new technological approaches to the treatment of water containing PFAS at IFAT Munich as part of its “TechLIFT” event format, and to discuss them with a panel of experts.

“The list of challenges facing local authorities in the wastewater sector is also long,” as Dr. Friedrich Hetzel stresses. As examples, the head of the Water and Waste Management Department at the German Association for Water, Wastewater and Waste (DWA) cites the separation of phosphorus from wastewater and sewage sludge, the lower limit values for nutrients such as phosphorus in the effluent of wastewater treatment plants expected as a result of the amendment to the EU Urban Wastewater Directive, the removal of trace substances from the water cycle, and combined sewer overflows.

For a water-conscious, resilient municipality

Driven by the consequences of climate change, he also believes that water-conscious urban development should be high up on the municipal agenda. “A central aspect here is the intelligent handling of rainwater, especially in the context of extreme events. What is needed are solutions that help deal with their consequences or minimize them in advance through appropriate technical measures,” says Hetzel. Specifically for the public sector, the DWA, in collaboration with the DVGW and the German Association of Local Utilities (VKU), is offering the Day of Resilient Municipalities on Thursday, May 16, as well as various solution tours at IFAT Munich.

Digitalization and protection of critical infrastructure

As with society as a whole, cities and municipalities are of course also called upon to address the opportunities and risks of the megatrend of digitalization. The VKU, for example, is organizing a panel discussion on the forum stage entitled “AI: Detection systems and reusable materials scanners – how much AI does the waste industry need?” It will examine the question of whether AI is really suitable for minimizing resource consumption and improving the quality of the individual categories of waste collected in the interests of a functioning circular economy.

The public utility and waste disposal industry is also a critical infrastructure (KRITIS). “The physical and virtual threat has been growing here for years. It is essential to

protect these services,” emphasizes VKU Vice President Patrick Hasenkamp. On the forum stage, the association will show which legal obligations KRITIS operators must already fulfill now and, more importantly, in the future.

The VKU solution tour “Waste Logistics 2035” also takes a look into the future. “Waste logistics will play a decisive role in resource management by minimizing waste, preserving valuable resources, and hence reducing the environmental impact,” Hasenkamp is convinced. After a presentation, the trade fair visitors will be guided to selected VKU member companies, where they will learn more about current developments.

Clean drives for municipal vehicles

“When it comes to municipal vehicles and equipment, the use of alternative drive systems, especially hydrogen and battery solutions, and the development of the required charging infrastructure are still key issues,” says Burkard Oppmann, President of the German Municipal Vehicles and Equipment Industry Association (VAK). The VAK will, for the first time, be holding a 45-minute panel discussion with industry experts on these and other topics on each day of IFAT Munich 2024. The discussion will deal, among other things, with an emission-free municipal vehicle industry and municipal economy, the promotion of CO₂-free waste disposal, and professional driver qualifications.

The future topic of hydrogen

What role can hydrogen play in the municipal circular economy? A Spotlight Area is dedicated to this question. According to the organizers, the DVGW and the Zentrum Wasserstoff.Bayern (H₂.B), it will show that there are interesting starting points both in the production and use of the climate-friendly energy source and its by-products. For example, the energy generated in waste-to-energy and biogas plants can be used for carbon-neutral hydrogen production. In addition to hydrogen, the electrolysis of water also produces oxygen, which can be used to effectively aerate clarifiers. Methane from sewage sludge treatment or also plastic waste can be processed into hydrogen and carbon that can be used in agriculture or industry. And the fact that the first waste collection vehicles are already running on hydrogen has already been mentioned above.

Details on these and other events at IFAT Munich can be found at <https://ifat.de/en/>

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About IFAT Munich

IFAT Munich is the world's largest and leading environmental technology trade fair. Every two years, the world-leading trade show presents solutions for water, sewage, waste and raw materials management as well as strategies to make maximum use of resources and to close raw material cycles. The next IFAT Munich will be held at the exhibition center in Munich from May 13 to 17, 2024.

IFAT worldwide

Messe München not only demonstrates its considerable expertise in organizing environmental technology trade shows with the world's leading trade fair IFAT Munich. Other international events include IE expo China in Shanghai, IE expo Chengdu in Chengdu, IE expo Guangzhou in Guangzhou, IE expo Shenzhen in Shenzhen, IFAT Africa in Johannesburg, IFAT Eurasia in Istanbul, IFAT India in Mumbai, IFAT Delhi in New Delhi, Singapore International Water Week (in cooperation with IFAT) in Singapore as well as IFAT Brasil in São Paulo from 2024 onwards. Together, the ten IFAT events form the world's largest network for environmental technologies.

Messe München

As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its more than 80 trade fairs worldwide. These include eleven of the world's leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT, electronica, and ISPO. Messe München's portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. Together with its subsidiaries, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the U.S. With a network of more than 15 affiliated companies and almost 70 representations worldwide, Messe München is active in more than 130 countries. The more than 150 events held annually attract around 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors in Germany and abroad.