



Press information

Volvo Buses to focus more on hybrids and electric buses

Electromobility key to sustainable cities

Interest in energy-efficient vehicles that can operate completely or partly on electricity is growing rapidly worldwide. For Volvo Buses, which is the leader in the field, electromobility is the road to the future.

“By expanding the use of hybrids and electric vehicles, we will be able to reduce energy consumption, air pollution, climate impact and noise. Accordingly, we will be able to meet several of the biggest challenges facing large cities worldwide,” says Håkan Agnevall, President of Volvo Bus Corporation.

Volvo Buses’ single-minded effort has made the company market leader in hybrid buses. Since the introduction of the Volvo 7900 Hybrid in 2010, nearly 1,200 units have been sold to customers in 21 countries, while the model has been gradually developed. The current version has up to 39% lower diesel consumption and climate impact than a corresponding diesel-driven bus. This is not only suitable for inner-city traffic, but it also has the flexibility required for transport in the suburbs or to and from city centers.

“The Volvo 7900 Hybrid has proved that the hybrid technology lives up to all expectations, particularly with respect to operational safety and cost efficiency. The bus is a commercial success and has paved the way for continued technology development and new applications,” says Håkan Agnevall.

One example of this is the three plug-in hybrids that have been tested in service since May in Volvo Buses’ hometown of Gothenburg. The plug-in hybrids are initially intended to be used in scheduled service, with the possibility to charge the batteries via the electricity network. The plug-in hybrids are based on the same tested technology as the Volvo 7900 Hybrid, but features include a larger battery pack and a current collector on the roof.

The plug-in hybrid can operate on electricity alone more than two-thirds of the time. Silent and completely emission-free. Diesel consumption and carbon-dioxide emissions are 70-80% lower than comparable diesel buses. The saving is considerable even after taking into account the electricity required to operate the plug-in hybrid. The total energy consumption will decrease by approximately 60%. If a decision is made to replace the fossil-diesel fuel with biodiesel, as in Gothenburg, the climate impact will decrease by a full 90%.



During 2014, an additional eight plug-in hybrids will be tested in Stockholm. A number of large European cities are also already planning to test Volvo Buses' plug-in hybrid. The commercial launch is scheduled for 2015.

“The plug-in hybrids in Gothenburg are functioning very well. Our measurement data shows that emissions and fuel consumption match the levels we anticipated. The response from drivers and passengers is also clearly positive,” says Håkan Agnevall.

The way from plug-in hybrids to fully electric buses is not long. Within the framework of the ElectriCity cooperation project, the Volvo Group and a number of other players are focusing on developing Gothenburg's first electric-bus line, scheduled to commence mid-2015. The new electric-bus line will be served by extremely energy efficient and quiet buses that operate on renewable electricity completely free from emissions. At least one of the bus-stops will be indoors.

“We want to demonstrate how fully electric vehicles can contribute to a better city environment and sustainable public transport. It is a vision that we are now beginning to realize.”

In parallel, the Volvo Group is collaborating with a number of other cities worldwide to create business models and system solutions for sustainable city traffic of the future, based on electromobility. In addition to hybrid and electric buses, Volvo is able to provide garbage trucks and distribution trucks that operate completely or partly on electricity.

“Within the Volvo Group, not only is there major technical expertise but also extensive experience in developing efficient, safe and environmentally adapted transportation systems in cities. A breakthrough for electric vehicles will generate completely new opportunities for traffic and city planners to seriously take a step into the future and this is something that we want and can contribute to,” says Håkan Agnevall.

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