

France : course of action to carry out "NGV future"

Vincent TISSOT-FAVRE
Secretary General of AFGNV

1. THE FRENCH NATURAL GAS VEHICLES ASSOCIATION AFGNV

AFGNV was created in May 1994, on the initiative of the French Ministry of Industry to build a federation of the main NGV players in France, who were Gaz de France and the vehicle manufacturers.

In 1999, the French Union of Petroleum Companies has joined the Association, to help the development of a network of NGV refueling stations.

AFGNV has been growing and now more than 75 members have joined the Association : natural gas suppliers, petroleum companies, equipment manufacturers, vehicle "customisers", local authorities, different public organizations, public transportation companies, laboratories, and research institutes, etc.

The Association is the partner for all those who are willing to discover this process and its applications, and to develop it.

The aims of AFGNV are primarily to help :

- The development of natural gas as an alternative fuel
- The diversity of energy supply
- Environmental protection ...

In order to ease and to develop the use of NGV in France, AFGNV :

- Works continuously to make information available on NGV and to push for wide usage through lobbying and client prospection.
- Aims to make the main players in the business work together.
- Plays a role in setting industry standards, regulation of the sector, tax elements and ongoing research.

2. ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The questions of pollution and health are considered as essential. The two main priorities for French city-dwellers are reducing air pollution and traffic noise levels.

NGV plays a role in fighting pollution, NGV is :

- Cleaner than other fuels
- Safer than other fuels
- Less noisy than other fuels
- More comfortable for passengers.

NGV possesses a significant potential for decreasing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

A recent French survey shows that NGV is widely favored by passengers, drivers, cyclists and shopkeepers.

They understand that NGV is a clear solution for improving the quality of air and, therefore, the quality of life.

All the players, public and local authorities, manufacturers, gas suppliers have taken a collective commitment to increase the use of NGV.

3. THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT OF NGV FUEL IN FRANCE

At the moment, the NGV use is mainly applied to public transportation, urban vehicles and private or public fleets.

The current protocol was signed in November 1999. It forecasted the development of NGV in all the different applications up to the year 2005 :

- The development in the urban transportation fleets,
- The penetration of the urban vehicles sector from 3,5 tons to heavy trucks,
- The development of high performance NGV motorization for small trucks and cars;

The objectives had been reached :

At the end of 2003, more than 1500 city buses have been coming into service in the principal cities. They now represent 30% of the replacement bus market each year.

In second position behind city bus fleets, 300 garbage trucks complete the current configuration.

Near 6000 small utility vehicles are used by companies, local authorities or public administration.

In 2004, the product offering of heavy-duty vehicles has been broadened in order to propose a large variety for town districts and companies. The current offer of light duty vehicles and cars has been improved. At the "Mondial de l'Automobile" exhibition in Paris in the beginning of October were presented 4 passenger cars with better integration of the fuel reservoirs and the establishment of suitable distribution modes.

For examples, the French car manufacturers had showed at this last exhibition :

- Citroen C3, Berlingo, Jumper,
- Peugeot Partner and Boxer,
- Renault Kangoo.

4. A NEW PROTOCOL TO INSTALL THE NGV SUCCESS

Prepared by founder members of French NGV Association (Ministry of Industry, Gaz de France, PSA Peugeot Citroen, Renault automotive, Renault Trucks and the French Union of Petroleum Companies), a new protocol of action is initiated.

This new protocol will draw up the key orientations to insure NGV development in France over the next six years.

Not only is this about continuing and intensifying the steps currently taken regarding markets of buses, urban vehicles and light fleet vehicles, this is also about developing – now and in a determined way – a second plan in order to reach the year 2010 with a wide offer for private individuals.

The objective for years 2005 to 2010 is to promote vehicles for private individuals with NGV dedicated engines for “the man-in-the-street” comprising :

- Of key importance the respect of urban pollution and greenhouse gases via use of NGV.
- To guarantee consumers that they will be provided high quality services of :
 - Security of use,
 - Interior space for passengers and luggage as in other basic vehicles,
 - Identical performance also compared with gasoline vehicles,
 - Attractive costs, for purchase as well as for running costs.
- To propose different ways of distribution for polyvalent usage :
 - enough refuelling stations for an efficient network,
 - 24 hour service on large highways,
 - Domestic compressors for refuelling at users' homes.

The main objectives will be the following :

- In 2010, 100 000 vehicles must run on NGV and 300 refuelling stations will distribute NGV.

The mission of AFGNV is to secure the growth of this alternative fuel source by a federation of all the study and research programs. AFGNV provides a platform of cooperation between the different players of the NGV project in France.

These players are responsible for their own activities, but in a coherent way :

- The public authorities will ensure an attractive tax system to give time to NGV to reach a strong level of development.
- The car manufacturers work to develop the most advanced technologies to offer optimized, then dedicated high performance motorization. The manufacturers will be able to use the best qualities of the natural gas to protect the environment and to reduce the manufacturing and the running costs.
- The providers of natural gas, and principally Gaz de France, will offer technical and economic storage solutions, and an original way of NGV distribution with domestic compressors for refuelling at users' homes.
- The petroleum companies will prepare a NGV network of refueling stations across France

CONCLUSION

The French NGV Association is behind the protocol which expresses a new willpower to develop the product.

This NGV growth requires a real effort on the part of all the players to give to the natural gas its own place in the market of car fuels.

The conditions have been satisfied to ensure that the main advantages of NGV give all their benefits.

Namely :

- Diversity of supply for energy.
- Environmental protection with low emissions
- Reduction of greenhouse gases
- Economical reality with cost reductions

The public authorities and the French industrial sector are acting with will and determination. They believe that the NGV business will be successful from the point of economics as well as the environment.

The new protocol will demonstrate the different players' strong willingness to move forward.

CONTACT :

Vincent TISSOT-FAVRE

Secretary General of AFGNV

AFGNV (French Natural Gas Vehicles Association)

10, rue Saint Florentin 75001 Paris - FRANCE

Tel : 33 1 42 97 97 99 - Fax : 33 1 42 97 40 60

E-mail : tissot-favre.afgnv@wanadoo.fr

www.afgnv.com