Šiauliai is a city of Northern Lithuania with about 100 thousand inhabitants. It is often called the City of the Sun, dating back to the Battle of the Sun on 22 September 1236. However, for the most of townspeople, heat during the cold season is brought to the homes not by the sun, but by the municipal company Šiaulių energija AB, which will celebrate its centenary in a few years, having about 44 thousand users. Its main activity is the production of heat energy for centralized supply and hot water preparation as well as production of electricity. Šiauliai strives to preserve and develop its district heating network system as it is convinced that this is not only the best way to provide consumers with heat at the most attractive prices, but also the great opportunity to increase the use of renewable energy sources by eliminating fossil fuel combustion and in this way reducing greenhouse gas, the carbon dioxide emissions.

Experts warn that if the world burns fossil fuels at rates as they do now, temperature increases could reach dangerous levels. The district heating system allows large-scale and relatively rapid conversion from fossil fuels such as natural gas into renewable sources. Currently, 70 % of the heat supplied by Šiaulių energija AB to the customers is produced using local biofuel, the rest is produced from natural gas. This is thanks to timely and targeted investments in the heat sector, which allowed the transition from fossil fuel to biofuel. Already today, the company has achieved the optimum ratio of domestic and imported fuels for heat production, which is specified in the National Program for the Development of Heat Sector 2015-2021.

Šiauliai became a city that uses renewable fuel in 2012, when the Šiauliai CHP plant started operating. This project is the largest in the company’s history in terms of both volume and value. In the competition Lithuanian Product of the Year 2012 organized by the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, the project of Šiaulių energija AB was awarded a gold medal in the ecological and environmental industry group Production And Supply Of Heat And Electricity Using Cogeneration And Local Renewable Resources.

Šiauliai Cogeneration Plant produces heat and electricity. The company sells electricity to Lithuanian electricity networks (ESO), uses it for heat production and for own needs. Other power plants generate about 70,000 tonnes less carbon dioxide per year from electricity produced from renewable energy sources and from non-fossil fuels. During 2018, Šiauliai cogeneration plant produced about 62 thousand MWh of electricity.

Increasing the share of renewable fuels in heat production, in 2014 the company started operating a biofuel boiler house. After the implementation of the CHP and biofuel boiler projects, the heat price to consumers decreased by almost 27 %.

By 2012, before the introduction of biofuels, the company’s CO₂ emissions were about 100,000 tonnes per year, and after the abatement measures had been implemented, CO₂ emissions had fallen to 15,000 tonnes per year. Decrease in CO₂ emissions was also influenced by decreased production, increasing number of renovated houses, modernization of heat supply networks, installation of condensing economizer (for gas boilers) and others.

The company has 146 kilometres of underground heat transmission networks of different diameters, which makes their reliability extremely important. Currently, Šiaulių energija AB is investing in the reconstruction of heat transmission networks in order to prevent pipeline failures and accidents in the heat pipelines in the future. Worn-out pipelines are replaced with new polyurethane pre-insulated pipes which are durable and feature less heat loss.

The future vision of Šiaulių energija AB is: the most attractive service prices, maximum reliability, and minimum pollution.

The fact that we already produce most of the heat from biofuels is definitely an important achievement. The further aim of Šiauliai city is to diversify energy sources for district heating production, i.e. solar energy, heat pumps, waste energy. The clean energy package consists of energy consumption efficiency, renewable energy, legislative plans for the energy market model. This requires a strategic approach, political will and close cooperation between state institutions. The use of renewable biofuels for energy production is a very important but not the end goal, and the future belongs to ecologically clean energy sources. Because “We are all connected”.

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