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Pulsed plasmas for two environmental applications: Power-to-Methane and pollution control

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Nanosecond pulsed plasmas at ambient conditions can be tailored to energize chemical processes that help to cure environmental problems. We report here two application areas: industrial emission control and fuel synthesis.

A short review will be presented of the development and industrial performance of a pilot size installation for on-site emission abatement [1]. The pilot installation has been built around a pulsed power driven streamer-corona reactor. The power source is a high-efficiency spark-gap based device which can operate autonomously for long periods of time. It is a self-controlled system operating at up to 10 kW average power, and at pulse parameters of 100 MW peak power, 1 kHz pulse repetition rate and 100 ns pulse width.

Next, we present the development of a plasma-catalytic reactor for methane synthesis. The feedstock is CO₂, water vapor and renewable power. This research originates from first ideas and results that we presented in a recent paper [2]. The paper showed that 400 ppm of Methane was synthesized by a pulsed corona discharge around a Nicrothal 80 wire in CO₂ above a water surface. A new device is in development to optimize this process. It combines a dedicated catalyst, a corona reactor, humid CO₂ gas and nanosecond pulsed power. First results will be presented. Technology developments in this direction are needed to be able to convert the surplus renewable power of the near future.

[1] F.J.C.M. Beckers, Pulsed Power Driven Industrial Processing, Thesis Eindhoven University of Technology, ISBN 978-90-386-3982-6.

[2] W.F.L.M. Hoeben, E.J.M. van Heesch, F.J.C.M. Beckers, W. Boekhoven, and A.J.M. Pemen, Plasma-Driven Water Assisted CO₂ Methanation, IEEE Transactions On Plasma Science, Vol. 43, No. 6, June 2015

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