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Developing New Energy for the future: Europe launches a 1 billion Euro project to get into pole position for the Fuel cells and Hydrogen race

On 14th October, the European Union and European Industry announce plans to make fuel cells and hydrogen one of Europe's leading new strategic energy technologies of the future. Fuel cells, as an efficient conversion technology, and hydrogen, as a clean energy carrier, have a great potential to help address energy challenges facing Europe. The European Commission, the European Industry and the European Research Community, which compose this public-private Joint Technology Initiative (JTI), will invest together nearly 1 billion Euros over six years in fuel cells and hydrogen research, technological development and demonstration. The goal is to achieve mass-market roll-out of these promising technologies before 2020.

The EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, said: " *By investing in such a results-oriented scientific project, we are putting our money where our mouth is: the development of new energy technologies is crucial if we are to meet EU objectives to address climate change and energy challenges. This requires the commitment of all actors. Gathering together more than 60 private companies, from multinationals to SMEs, an equal number of universities and research institutes are therefore a great success. This JTI brings together the most significant players to put Europe ahead of the game in new energy technologies. I hope this will have a snowball effect in other strategic research areas.*"

The Chairman of the Governing Board of the Joint Undertaking, Gijs van Breda Vriesman, adds: "*The Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Technology Initiative is the best possible vehicle to accelerate the development of technologies and bring the commercialisation of hydrogen and fuel cells forward. The JTI provides us with the unique opportunity to implement our plans on a large European scale. To prepare the market for these strategic technologies it is necessary to ensure the cooperation of all stakeholders: it is not only needed for the relevant industrial sectors to develop the supply chain but it is also critical to ensure the cooperation between Research, Industry and Government, at regional, national and European level.*"

The first Stakeholders General Assembly will mark the official launch of the Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) on Fuel Cells and Hydrogen (FCH). The main goal of the JTI is to speed up the development of fuel cells and hydrogen technologies in Europe and enable their commercialisation between 2010 and 2020. It is estimated that the activities of the JTI will reduce time to market for hydrogen and fuel cell technologies by between 2 and 5 years.

The partnership will implement an integrated and efficient programme of basic and applied research and technology development, demonstration and support activities, focused on the most promising applications. This JTI can be also seen as a first working example of future European Industrial Initiatives, as foreseen by the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-plan) which is to play a vital role in accelerating the development and implementation of low carbon technologies.

The **first call for proposals** with an indicative budget of 28.1 million Euros was published in October 2008. It covers areas such as transportation and refuelling infrastructures and the production, storage and distribution of hydrogen.

The legal entity, the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking, will be led by a Governing Board. Daily management and operations will be the responsibility of an Executive Director supported by the Programme Office seated in Brussels. A Scientific Committee will advise the Governing Board. The Member States will closely follow the activities via the States Representatives Group. The Stakeholders' General Assembly will be held on an annual basis.

Background

On 30 May 2008, the Council of Ministers adopted the regulation setting up the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking. It is the result of 6 years' effort, involving the main stakeholders in the sector and the Commission to prepare this new type of public-private partnership.

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