



TEN-T Days 2015, Riga, LATVIA

Joint Workshop on Innovation Pipeline for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells.

Press Release, 23 June 2015

Spotlight on fuel cells and hydrogen technologies at the TEN-T days 2015

The European Programme for heavy infrastructure “Connecting Europe” (CEF), TEN-T, integrates Innovation as part of its main agenda with the “Innovation Pipeline” concept: from research over demonstrations, real-life trials to market roll-outs.

As a first showcase, the European Commission decided to put the spotlight on Fuel Cell and Hydrogen mobility and dedicates a full workshop, in the format of a “4 facet event”, to this technology.

With the aim of better coordinating actions on EU level, the new Joint Innovation Workshop model looks for solutions to bring forward an innovative subject which has the potential to strongly influence the future of European citizens and businesses. This innovative subject took shape with the fuel cell and hydrogen technology and a unique workshop of 3 hours on the Tuesday 23 June afternoon. The 4 facets of the event, proposed to facilitate the innovation flow, are: (1) policy & concept, (2) specific innovation topic, (3) financial instruments and (4) exhibition.

More than 30 stakeholders representatives gathered to celebrate declarations as well as to underline and discuss remaining bottlenecks: financial, legislative and entrepreneurial.

Mr Olivier Onidi, Director European Mobility Network, DG MOVE, EC, stated at the inauguration of the Joint Worksop that: *“Hydrogen and Fuel Cell is a topic which is expected to have a strategic impact on the future of transport and beyond, (for example: energy storage) in Europe, but also on other EC policies such as the environment/climate change/health, oil dependence and jobs.”*

Two large European programmes, Horizon 2020 and CEF, are equal partners in this innovation pipeline. Mr De Colvenaer, Executive Director of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU) emphasised that *“The strategic alignment and technical complementarity of two European Funding instruments (CEF and FCH JU) is not only a wish for financial resource efficiency but also a proof of the technical maturity and market credibility.”*

During the workshop, two major declarations took place.



The first one was from the side of **innovative first buyers**: representatives of 5 national clusters (Germany, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, and UK) have endorsed **the major commitment of about 30 cities to operate together several hundred hydrogen electric busses**. This declaration is an answer to the bus industry 2014 Letter of Understanding¹ signed by Mercedes, Van Hool, Solaris, VDL, MAN announcing their willingness to put on the market large number of hydrogen electric buses. Fuel cell electric buses hold a great promise in greening urban public transport: they offer all advantages of electric vehicles: zero tailpipe emissions, significantly reduced noise and vibration levels and, therefore, higher passenger comfort while presenting the same degree of operational flexibility as conventional diesel buses (due to comparatively long ranges and a low refuelling time)

The letter of Intent of bus operators has been welcomed by Commissioner for Transport, Ms Violeta Bulc, who stated: *“I am very pleased that today, on 23 June 2015 during the TEN-T Days, at the inauguration of the Joint Workshop on Hydrogen and Fuel Cells, we make a significant step forward.”*

The second declaration came from the **innovative producers** and highlighted the commitment of industrial players towards commercialisation of fuel cell electric vehicles, underlining the technology readiness, and also for the long distance along the TEN-T Corridors and Network. *“The main challenges for the FCH transport is no longer technical, it is commercial”* states the declaration letter. The declaration also demonstrates the technology potential for cities in terms of decarbonisation; reducing road noises, power production, reducing energy imports and optimisation of renewables usage.

Mr Pierre- Etienne Franc, Chairman of the NEW IG (Industry Grouping of the FCH JU) stated that: *“The fuel cells and hydrogen sector has unveiled today its vision on how to bring clean and efficient vehicles to the European market in the near future. The technology is ready to go to the next phase. We have built a strong foundation thanks to the strong support of European Programmes: FCH JU and TEN-T. In addition, the industry has publicly committed to significant investments to make Europe a leader with the largest hydrogen network and fleet of vehicles in the world.”*

These key symbolic announcements marked a crucial step forward:

“Culminating today with the 2 declarations, which are the two sides of the same medal: the declaration of the innovative first buyers and the declaration by the innovative producers. Both sides are key to a successful market introduction.”
(Commissioner Violeta Bulc,)

TEN-T 2015 website: http://www.tentdays.eu/2015_2/index.html

FCH JU website: <http://www.fch.europa.eu>

¹ <http://www.fch.europa.eu/news/european-bus-manufacturers-and-leading-mayors-step-fuel-cell-electric-buses>