

FCH JU Stakeholders General Assembly, 14th October 2008, Brussels

Session 1: official launch of the FCH JU

Gijs van Breda Vriesman, Chair of the FCH Joint Undertaking Governing Board

Good Morning Commissioner, Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen...welcome to the first Stakeholders General Assembly of the Joint Undertaking on Fuel Cells and Hydrogen!

Not a very succinct title, but then this industry is no minor player when it comes to Europe's future energy scene. On the contrary, the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan has identified fuel cells as a key technology for achieving a 20% reduction in GHG emissions; a 20% share of renewable energies; and a 20% reduction in primary energy use by 2020.

So this is a significant moment for the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen industry. And it's been a long time coming...the culmination of a 6 year effort, starting with the formation of the High Level Group in 2002, leading to the European Technology Platform in 2003...and so to the launch of this joint technology initiative.

It is a fantastic achievement and one of which we should all be very proud. Certainly, there is no better springboard for the acceleration of Fuel Cells and Hydrogen in Europe. And no greater proof of the commitment of *all* stakeholders to realising its huge potential – at home, on the road and in industry. Not in 50 years time, not in 30 years time, not even in 20 years time...in just a couple of years for early markets and a mere decade for the mass commercialisation of FCVs.

Nothing is guaranteed, of course. But we now have the support, the structure and the commitment to move forward decisively...with confidence... and a clear set of targets.

So it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all here today – from all over the world – and especially our speakers: high level representatives from the European

Commission, the European Parliament, the Council Presidency, the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy, the research community *and* industry.

Over the next couple of days, we will tackle this subject from every angle – from the aims and set-up of the joint undertaking; to the precise details of the research agenda; to the unique opportunities we now have to influence the future energy scene – not just in Europe, but globally.

At this official launch of the Joint Undertaking, I am therefore very pleased to introduce

- The European Commissioner for Research, Mr Janez Potocnik
- Dominique Goutte, French Minister for Higher Research and Education and a representative of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- Pia Locatelli, Member of the European Parliament and the ITRE Committee; and the Rapporteur on the proposal for the Regulation
- Mr Herbert Kohler, Vice President, Vehicle & Powertrain, Group Research & Advanced Engineering; and Chief Environmental Officer at Daimler
- John Loughhead, Co-Chair of the Implementation & Liaison Committee at the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy.

And I can think of no better place to start than by giving the floor to the European Commissioner for Research. Mr Potocnik...