Dear [ ],

Ladies and gentlemen,

Many thanks for those warm introductory words.

To be standing here today is both energising and moving.

Last year, I spent many hours and late nights in meeting rooms with European Energy Ministers.

Together, we put in place emergency measures to shield us from the energy crisis.

We successfully re-routed flows of natural gas away from Russia.

We changed the traditional direction of flows in the Union from east-to-west to mainly west-to-east.
Today, I am here to see how all these hours of negotiations are actually translated into action.

Here, you are boosting transmission capacity from the well-supplied Zeebrugge gas hub.

You are helping to secure our supply in Belgium and other Member States.

But even more importantly, you are taking a big step forward towards a cleaner and more prosperous future for Europe.

Because at Fluxys, you’ll be able to transport hydrogen, whether it’s imported hydrogen arriving in Zeebrugge, or hydrogen from future production sites in the North Sea.

This is important for two reasons.

First, this hydrogen-ready pipeline will be part of new EU-wide hydrogen corridors.

These corridors will not only connect industrial hubs across the EU. They will also help to decarbonise refineries, chemical sites, fertiliser production, steel production – and much more.
As EU Energy Commissioner, I’m playing my part to assist this transition.

Soon, we’ll be finalising new laws on gas and hydrogen decarbonisation.

This will give us market rules for hydrogen and renewable gases and put in place a legal framework for operating and owning hydrogen infrastructure.

It’s a solid foundation on which Fluxys can continue to build and prosper. And I’ve no doubt that it will also help us attract many more cutting-edge hydrogen infrastructure projects.

I will do my utmost to see these rules finalised by year-end.

Second, this hydrogen pipeline is just what we need for importing renewable hydrogen into the EU.

We already know our hydrogen needs will far surpass what we can produce in the EU by 2030.

Which is why we have ambitious hydrogen import targets, and projects like this one will be key to creating the first hydrogen market in the world.

We’re positioning the EU to lead the global charge in the energy transition.

This is about sustainability but also European competitiveness.
I’m also excited to combine today’s visit at Fluxys with a visit to the Port of Antwerp-Bruges later this afternoon.

There I’ll see a number of industrial sites where they are shifting towards clean hydrogen.

I’ll also go to the future site of a new hydrogen import terminal.

This is just a small snapshot of the huge potential of port of Antwerp-Bruges, which, as you may know, will also be a hub for CO2 capture and transport infrastructure in Europe.

Dear friends,

It’s clear that our energy transition will require cooperation across the full supply chain. Both within countries – like here in Belgium – but also across European borders.

Last year, we set aside many differences when it came to addressing the energy crisis.

Tirelessly, we worked day-in, day-out on solutions to protect our citizens and industry.

And while we’re in a much better position now, we are far from complacent:
There is still a war raging on our borders, and the energy crisis is not over yet.

For years to come, the pathway towards a climate neutral economy will require a sustained sense of urgency.

And this sense of urgency will need to be coupled with equal amounts of vision and good old fashioned hard work.

But I don’t need to tell this to you, Pascal, or your hard-working colleagues here at Fluxys.

All of this starts with visionary projects like yours, here, this morning, and the projects I will visit this afternoon.

That’s why, it is with urgency and energy, that I am here with you today to start building Europe’s cleaner, greener, more prosperous future.

Now let’s show me those shovels!