

Hydrogen Europe General Assembly

virtual meeting

15/12/2020 15:00

- It is a real pleasure to speak to you today at the Hydrogen Europe General Assembly. These are extraordinary times in many ways, with the situation of the Covid-19 crisis, but also the Brexit, the new MFF coming soon into play and with our new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy being adopted last week! So it is excellent to be here with you in this way.
- First of all, let me congratulate you on all the good work of your association up until now.
- I strongly believe that hydrogen is a key solution for the future mobility and transport across all modes. Hydrogen is getting a lot of momentum now, and rightfully so!
- The new Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy is a major milestone for the further development of the transport policy at European level. It sends a clear message: Greening mobility must be the new licence for the transport sector to grow.
- The strategy sets out an ambitious pathway with appropriate milestones for the sector. It comes together with an action plan that sets out 82 concrete initiatives.
- A number of these initiatives articulate further measures that we are going to take to **accelerate the overall market uptake of clean hydrogen, fuel-cell vehicles and infrastructure**:
 - As regards **buses**, the numbers are still limited, but we see that more and more cities and regions are deploying them. The revised Clean Vehicles Directive is a key push here. I am glad to see that we have a good pipeline of projects prepared under the Connecting Europe Facility.
 - When it comes to **trucks**, I am excited about the action of manufacturers. In a few years' time, we shall see long-distance fuel-cell hydrogen trucks enter the market in series production. Now we need to accelerate our effort to make hydrogen fuel cells a widely available option for trucks, but also for **coaches**. Continued joint research efforts via the Clean Hydrogen Europe Joint Undertaking will be essential for reaching this goal, in combination with the other partnerships under Horizon Europe and later deployment in CEF, ESIF, InvestEU and RRF.

- As regards **rail**, hydrogen trains are a perfect solution to replace diesel engines on that part of the network, which could not be electrified. It is good to see the first larger fleet projects here.
- We also need to watch **Hydrogen-derived fuels** - synthetic fuels that are mainly produced from hydrogen. They provide a key solution for emission reduction in aviation and shipping.
- But it is not only about fuels in those modes. In our strategy we set the ambitious milestone of having **zero-emission vessels** by 2030 and **zero-emission aircraft** by 2035 ready for the market.
- So, what are the key actions?
 1. DG MOVE is actively working on the RefuelEU Aviation and FuelEU Maritime initiatives to scale up the market demand and (directly or indirectly) the market supply for sustainable alternative fuels, including synthetic fuels, by the end of quarter 1 of 2021. These initiatives will complement the review of the Renewable Energy Directive (Q2 2021).
 2. The review of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive with the rollout of a sufficiently dense infrastructure for hydrogen refuelling (Q2 2021).
 3. The revision of the TEN-T Regulation to ensure full connectivity of the TEN-T network with alternative fuels infrastructure.
 4. Recovery and Resilience Facility: we are pushing Member States to prioritise investment into clean hydrogen as one of the essential areas to address in the context of the energy transition.
 5. Connecting Europe Facility and InvestEU – for CEF, we propose a large investment into alternative fuels infrastructure, frontloaded through a blending facility for the first years. InvestEU provides a real opportunity now to support fleet renewal and market take up of hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles. Let us make use of it!
 6. Horizon Europe, and the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking, will continue to play its key support role for R&I.
- A last word on the important point of full industrial value chain organisation:
- The Commission has launched earlier this year the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance - building on the success of the Battery Alliance.
- You are fully involved in the organisation of the mobility roundtable under this Alliance. For us, it is also a priority to contribute to making this roundtable a success.
- We will also consider in the months to come the needs and benefits of a complementary Low-Carbon and Renewable Fuels initiative to ensure that the

ramp up of the production and distribution of such fuels gets the highest level of attention and action it deserves.

- Ladies and gentlemen, you understand our ambition and the challenges that lie ahead of us all. I hope that we can realise many of them in 2021 and I am looking forward to continue our cooperation. On that very positive note I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a good start of the New Year!