

National Association Action Meeting: Summary of Presentations 22 June 2010

EHA held its Annual National Association Action Meeting on June 22 2010, during the afternoon session on the Annual General Meeting. This event proved very successful as during the meeting EHA members had the privilege to not only meet some of EHAs new members, Macedonian Association for Hydrogen, Bulgarian Hydrogen Society, and Hungarian Energy Association, but also to get an insight on the activities currently progressing within a few of our new and old members.

Presentations were given concerning the German Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Association (DWV), the hydrogen and FC developments in the Flemish Region of Belgium, activities of the hydrogen section of the Hungarian Energy Association, the Dutch-Flanders Hydrogen Project, the Bulgarian Hydrogen Society profile, Scandinavian Hydrogen Highway Partnership, Spanish national government initiatives, and Macedonian Association for Hydrogen. Members of the European Commission were also present; from DG MOVE a presentation was given regarding Sustainable Transport for Europe and The Urban Mobility Action Plan, and from DG Research, The Strategic Energy Technology Plan was presented and discussed.

DWV

The German Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Associations perspectives gave the attendants a glance into the future of hydrogen. For example, employing wind energy directly into electricity grid and utilising the capacities hydrogen storage facilitates to build an integrated, efficient grid without energy losses. The practicalities of hydrogen use were also brought forth, highlighting the need to a necessary fuelling infrastructure build-up concurrent to the growth in hydrogen vehicle deployment. The German Road Map illustrates rapid expansion; beginning in 2010 there are approximately 10 fuelling stations and less than 1,000 hydrogen vehicles on the road, however by 2050 12,388 refuelling stations are predicted to be established and vehicles will reach 22 to 38 million cars and 1.56 to 2.71 million trucks travelling on German roads. Not underestimating the potential of stationary hydrogen applications, Mr. Töpler also gave a brief description of the Callux-Project which aims to launch gas-driven fuel cell heating appliance. (<http://www.dwv-info.de/>)

Norwegian Hydrogen Forum

The Norwegian Hydrogen Forum gave a brief overview on hydrogen developments in Norway informing the group on demonstration projects, events, and other activities. The most prominent among them is the Utsira Project which applies a wind-hydrogen system supplying 10 homes with electricity exclusively from wind generated electricity and hydrogen. Following the Utsira, the FellowSHIP is a demonstration of fuel cell systems for auxiliary ship power. HyNor, a joint public-private partnership demonstrating real life implementation of hydrogen energy infrastructure along a 580 kilometre road stretch from Oslo, currently has facilitated 4 hydrogen refuelling stations which are presently installed and in plans are another 3 stations located in

Lillestrøm and Oslo. HyNor has ambitions to obtain vehicle fleet of around 40 vehicles, and 5 fuel cell buses. The next hydrogen event held in Norway this year is the ZeroRally, which will be held at the end of August this year. (<http://www.hydrogen.no/>)

Flanders Region of Belgium

Ms. Lut Bollen presented the ambitions, in relation to energy, of the Flanders region of Belgium. Early 2009 the Flemish government launched the 2020 future plan, establishing the goal to be among best performing European regions, despite serious societal challenges. Within the presentation Ms. Bollen successfully emphasised the achievements of the region, for example within the Interreg IV project of building of 1 MW fuel cell power plant with a contract signed by Solvay and Nedstack, in effect the largest PEM fuel cell installation in the world. Additionally, the group received an inside peek on the Belgian Presidency's ambitions where the Green Economy is placed on the top of the 5 cooperation axes during the six month reign beginning 1st July 2010. Taking note of the important two-day event on the 15th and 16th of November 2010 organised by the Presidency, stakeholders will receive communication on the progress of the implementation of all SET-Plan action lines. (<http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/>)

WaterstofNet

The Dutch-Flanders region of Belgium gave insight on the WaterstofNet project, discussed by Mr. Adwin Martens. The project was approved within the European Interreg Program with aims to reach two main goals (among others): producing sustainable hydrogen and taking advantage of early markets. By focusing on a small level of infrastructure the region can accelerate market introduction to as early as 3 years. With a total of 14.1 million euros the collaboration will prove to have ample results. (<http://www.waterstofnet.eu/>)

Hungarian Hydrogen Association

Prof. Josef L. Margitfalvi from the hydrogen section of the Hungarian Energy Association presented the ambitious Hungarian objectives for preparation, learning from existing technologies, demonstration projects, and dissemination of information to be applied in time for the Hungarian European Council Presidency in the first half of 2011. They have achieved a number of objectives, including mobilizing a number of domestic industrial partners, however they hope to progress within their new collaboration with the EHA by learning how to convince policy makers. With the support from policy makers, the gap between countries with highly developed hydrogen technologies and those without will get smaller. Prof. Margitfalvi emphasised, there is much room for development in Hungary, "It is very important to organise events, to invite different leading scientists in the field of research to demonstrate that we are ready to decrease the distance between countries that are leading in the field."

Bulgarian Hydrogen Society

Founded in 2003, the Bulgarian Hydrogen Society introduce themselves for the first time, and put in the picture their partners, activities, and projects. The projects discussed were the “Green Hydrogen House Project” featuring a complete off-grid solution also implementing hydrogen cycle for energy storage, a proposed initiative to build the first hydrogen fuelling station in Sofia (a necessity for the future of hydrogen in Bulgaria), and the Balkan Hydrogen Demonstration Centre utilising international cooperation of other Balkan states. (<http://www.bgh2society.org/en/index.html>)

SHHP

The presentation regarding the Scandinavian Hydrogen Highway Partnership was instrumental in instilling in the attendants the added value of international collaboration. Sharing a unified strategy, the Danish Hydrogen Link, Norwegian HyNor, and Hydrogen Sweden together have obtained 26 hydrogen vehicles in 2010 and will expand to reach 43 in 2011. The collaboration seems on schedule to be among the first regions where hydrogen cars are introduced in the market. Overall the clustering of fuelling stations approach minimizes the distance between stations and is key to optimising use at the present time. (<http://www.scandinavianhydrogen.org/>)

Spanish Hydrogen Association

The Spanish presentation, by Mr. Antonio Gonzalez Garcia Conde, outlined six government initiatives currently taking place. Epico, focused on the development of fuel cells. Hércules project goals include building of a solar H₂ production facility, adding to filling station grid, and the development of a fuel cell hybrid vehicle. Peixe Verde, centers on reducing diesel-oil consumption of fishing ships. Deimos, is based on the advancement of new technologies for the manufacture of PEM and solid oxide fuel cells. The Sphera project attempts to find solutions to production and re-conversion. The project, ConSOLIDA, is coordinated by Hynergreen to execute solar hydrogen production, hydrogen use in turbine, ICE and FC, and integration production-storage-utilization systems. Additionally, he explained that the funding for hydrogen fuel cells is not separate from other alternative energy technologies and thus hydrogen must compete with all other alternatives to obtain funding. There is no Spanish national action plan for hydrogen. Additionally, the range of projects also currently in progress do not include residential application, now an ambition for the following years. Also noted by Mr. Conde was the location of the Spanish National Center for Hydrogen Fuel Cells, in Peurto Llano. (www.aeh2.org)

Macedonian Association for Hydrogen

The Macedonian Association for Hydrogen outlined their structure and activities; their presentation also gave an understanding of the international project “Green Hydrogen House.” As a new member of EHA, association looks forward to getting an inside view the European Direction in energy. Macedonia is not as far as other member states in the field of hydrogen fuel cell development. The association will focus on absorbing current developments and making a future contribution to the field. (www.tmf.ukim.edu.mk)

The European Commission Presentations

DG MOVE

Dr William Borthwick representing DG MOVE, Clean Transport, Urban Transport, and ITS, gave a detailed insight on the state of play of the Future White Paper on Transport, The Action Plan for Urban Mobility, and the Civitas Initiative. The White Paper is scheduled for adoption at the end of 2010. The strategy will focus on using cleaner energy, exploiting infrastructure more efficiently, and using less energy. The overall perspectives for alternative fuels are to substitute oil in the long run. To do so, 3 main alternatives will be in play: Biofuel, Hydrogen, and Electricity. Hydrogen will progress with research and development and continued demonstration projects. In 2012 the review of the Action Plan on Urban Mobility will be launched. Also of importance is the Sustainable Transport Technology Plan which will be developed following the SET- Plan. (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/transport/index_en.htm)

DG Research

The member of DG Research present at the meeting graciously explained the definitions of the SET-Plan. The Steering Group monitors the European Industrial Initiatives (EII) to steer their implementation. At the executive level are the EIIs and the European Research Alliance. The first EIIs have been launched from June 3 2010, while the Smart Cities Initiative will need further time and be launched in 2011. Overall the presenter emphasized the strong support for the SET-Plan at the European Level and by industry; however, there shared effort from the EU, Member States, Industry and the Financial Community to implement all initiatives is necessary. (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/>)

Concluding Discussion

The meeting was concluded with a productive discussion where all participants brought perspectives and constructive comments on a number of concerns and topics, including the ambitions new members hope to gain as a new part of the EHA network, the benefit of increased interaction with other associations, creating more links for cross border cooperation,

The new members of EHA would like to see the European direction and get an inside view on what is going on at EU level. Learning from the other associations, they aspire to jump start and innovate to make new contributions to the European hydrogen community by firstly sharing best practices, and receiving up to date information on technologies already developed. Bridging efforts, the possibility to gain in collaboration commercially with companies or with other associations was introduced. The new members established their membership is part of the effort to close the gap between countries with developed hydrogen technologies and industry and those which are currently lagging. As policy makers may be behind in some nations, the newest members hope to gain assistance on how to convince policy makers within their nations and thus provide a strong impetus for the domestic hydrogen movement.

Networking between members was an integral part of the discussion. Numerous methods to allow better networking included holding workshops to bring together associations and local members, and changing meeting locations by hosting local events thus stimulating attendance of smaller members. Other solutions such as creating a digital community, Trade Delegation Meetings to companies within national associations allowing showcasing of developments, and taking advantage of activities already on schedule to organise a separate networking event consecutively thus saving time and travel expense for participants were mentioned.

Many presentations brought into the spotlight cross border collaboration. The obvious success from the Scandinavian H2 highway, Flanders/Southern Holland project, and Bulgarian/Macedonian project, gave way to discussion on pursuing a networking strategy which would stimulate amplified cross-border and cross-regional cooperation between members. Many smaller members of each national association may be eager to consider the opportunities associated with widened network communication. The EHA can be the medium in the future to facilitate these links, thus promoting information exchange, and overall cooperation between all members.