

HYLIGHTS

Hydrogen for Transport in Europe

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Report on HyLights Regions Workshop - Executive Summary:

“Supporting the Regions to Integrate Hydrogen” in Consideration of the EC Workshop “The Role of the Regions in the Implementation Plan and the JTI”

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1 Introduction

This Workshop aimed to get a better insight into the hydrogen activities of European regions, to allow a better definition of the hydrogen research and demonstration agenda in the 7th Framework Programme and the JTI. First discussions have already been initiated during a European Commission Workshop on “The role of EU regions in the hydrogen and fuel cell Joint Technology Initiative (JTI)” in March 2006 in Torino . Furthermore this workshop provided a suitable “vehicle” to convey needs of the European regions and to exchange information about their activities and experiences. The expected outcome was a descriptive survey on regional frameworks (financial, technical and regulatory), problems, interactions between actors, acceptance and co-operations regarding the implementation of hydrogen. In parallel the workshop gave the regions the possibility to present their activities and strategies and to acquire information on the activities and experiences of other European regions.

The Workshop consisted of two parts: the first on October 4th laid the ground before the Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Technology Platform (HFP) General Assembly (October 5/6, 2006) discussion by giving an overview of existing demonstration projects and their frameworks. This part was organized by the two projects Hylights and Roads2HyCom jointly. In addition the HyLights Questionnaire on regional and national framework conditions for hydrogen demonstration projects was kicked off. The second part on October 6th wrapped up the discussions of the HFP GA with a focus on regional implementation plans. This was organised on behalf of the European Commission as a follow-up event to the JTI Regions Workshop in Torino and as an official part of the 3rd HFP GA. On October 4th there were 56 attendees and on October 6th 60 attendees consisting of representatives of regions and municipalities with commitments to hydrogen and fuel cell technology, Commission officials and project managers of the two organising projects HyLights and Roads2HyCom. The most numerous regional delegations came from Italy, Scandinavia, Spain, Germany and Great Britain.

The main result of the presentations and discussions was that the European regions want to be better informed about and integrated into the European hydrogen implementation process. They are willing to contribute to this process, but they have to secure their financial contribution and industrial participation. They are ready to align with EU and industry priorities, but they need to know these priorities and how to implement them.

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2 Results of Workshop Part 1, October 4th

All participating regions have on-going or planned activities on hydrogen and fuel cell technologies and they are very interested to co-operate in partnerships. They see themselves as the major playground for the deployment of hydrogen applications. Therefore they expect to get a more active role within the project development and the implementation process. They want to benefit from the development.

However the presentations and discussions at the two parts of the workshop revealed differences between regional H2&FC activities. Some attending regions are in early stages yet whilst others have to be seen as forerunners. Also there is a great difference in the kind of co-operation between regions on national or transnational level. Some regions show strong co-operations and in addition an overall collective involvement in national or transnational programmes or projects, others have less co-operation and act in a quite autonomous way. Even if they have comparable levels of competence and a basic interest in renewable energy, there are rather different industrial and economical backgrounds as well as different approaches to renewable energies in general and hydrogen energy in particular.

Coordination programmes at national level are also varying. Partially there is a strong national support and H2&FC specific funds are available at regional level. On the other hand there are active regions without overall coordination programmes, networks or platforms and funding for H2&FC activities is linked to general energy and environmental budgets. Especially these regions would welcome the introduction of coordinating instruments.

This spread of activities, co-operation, coordination backgrounds at national level and approaches to renewable energies causes great differences with respect to structural funds of the EU and call for special requirements to increase the effectiveness of funding programmes.

Certainly the regions are willing to participate in programmes and they see the importance of co-operation at national and transnational level and to share experiences. But this willingness is accompanied by concerns. The regions need more information on the placement of investments in terms of “how, where and when” to place them. This information they expect to get from the industry. The knowledge of development objectives of the industry are seen as basic requirement for further financing steps. To some extent regions stated that the investment budget is not the most crucial point. There appears to be a substantial amount of funding available at a regional level but insufficient information on what best to do with the budget. Therefore,

they require an extensive exchange of information between regions, industry and the EU and an adequate role in the implementation process of hydrogen technology. The attendees of the workshop agreed upon the importance of industry commitments in order to guarantee near or per-commercial development. Strong support of demonstration and deployment projects to get experiences and to raise public awareness is also required.

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3 Results of Workshop Part 2, October 6th

In general the regional statements gave a positive picture of the Implementation Plan (IP) and the Joint Technology Initiative (JTI). Both of these European initiatives are very welcome. The structure and content of the IP are regarded as being well defined and adequate to address the regional issues. The action at European level is a necessary precondition to achieve the commercialisation targets. Also the overall meaning of the importance of industry commitments to co-finance projects was reaffirmed.

Most of all the importance of the regions' integration to the implementation process was stressed. The regions see themselves as relevant drivers for the implementation of hydrogen technology. Therefore, they want to contribute, but they have to secure their financial contribution and industrial participation. They are ready and willing to align with EU and industry priorities, but they need to know these priorities and how best to implement.

The regions criticised that the 1st proposal of the JTI does not provide a specific reflection for the regional dimension. The regional interests are represented only indirectly via the national level and the EC represents just the member states within the JTI. That causes only EC reporting to the member states and not to the regions. The structure of the JTI is asked to become more specific and flexible and more sensitive to the aspirations of the regions. Regions demand their explicit inclusion into the process and they see the need for an adequate instrument for the communication between the regions and the "Governing Board".

For very active regions the budget allocation is questionable it has no transparency and the Implementation Plan gives no opportunity to compare present objectives and specified budget. The question how the governing board will collaborate with the active regions is still open. Furthermore there is no time frame for the suggested activities yet available and it should be worked out soon.

Beside these questions the regions underlined - as already done in the 1st part of the workshop - the importance of an effective exchange of information and experiences between industry and regions. They requested a dedicated forum for meetings between regions, for regions networking, exchange with industry and multinational co-operations.