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Subject: EC Statement on Hydrogen

Efficient and affordable energy carriers and systems are needed:

- to ensure security of energy supply,
- to avoid the negative consequences linked to present day energy consumption, most notably climate change due to the greenhouse effect, and also air pollution, and noise,
- to provide long term sustainable and affordable solutions that can be transferred to the developing world.

In June 2003 the Conference ⁽¹⁾

The Hydrogen economy – A bridge to sustainable energy.

Took place in which possible initiatives on transport, energy, environment and enterprise policies to foster a hydrogen economy were discussed.

In its Communication COM(2001)547 final “on alternative fuels for road transportation and on a set of measures to promote the use of bio-fuels”, the Commission foresees the use of 2% of hydrogen as a transport fuel in the year 2015 and 5% in the year 2020.

Essential attraction of hydrogen is that it can be produced from a wide range of primary sources and, like electricity, opens access to conventional, renewable energies (such as wind, solar, ocean, bio-mass), and nuclear. It is an energy carrier and therefore enables energy to be produced both centrally and locally, adapted to regional and local circumstances.

It is essential that EU acquires and maintains world class H₂ and fuel cell (FC) technology and develops international co-operation at all levels – political, industrial and commercial.

Co-operation in technical R&D is necessary to overcome fundamental technological barriers and provide the basis for technical standards and safety regulations.

A “European Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Technology Platform” (H2/FC TP) has been created in order to optimise European efforts towards the practical realisation of the potential of hydrogen. The official launching of the Platform will take place in a Conference to be held in Brussels on 20-21 January 2004.

In November 2003 the European Commission signed, in Washington, an agreement, known as the “International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy” (IPHE) in order to implement cooperative efforts to advance research, development, demonstration and commercial use in the fields of hydrogen and fuel cells, supporting common standards for hydrogen fuel utilisation and safety.

UN-WP29 is particularly seen as an appropriate forum for world-wide harmonisation.

(1) The proceedings of the conference, compiling presentation abstracts/ slides, with transcripts or notes of keynote speeches, workshops and discussions are available to the public on the Internet site:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/energy/index_en.html