

NAHV: Hydrogen Open Day in Cres Highlights Regional Progress Toward Clean Transport

Cres, 3rd July 2025

Institutional representatives of national and regional and local authorities, members of the academia, business partners, other interested industry leaders and the local community convened today in Cres at the Hydrogen Open Day and a presentation of the hydrogen testbed currently under development on the island under the **North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley initiative** (NAHV). The event hosted by the City of Cres and ECUBES, jointly the testbed leaders, brought together representatives of from Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy.

Vjekoslav Jukić from the Ministry of Economy and the Croatian representative in the NAHV Joint Working Group, a governance body of the transnational initiative covering the territory of Croatia, Italian Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia opened the programme jointly with the host, **Marin Gregorović**, the mayor of the City of Cres. Stephen Taylor, who is the Strategic Coordinator of the NAHV Joint Working Group, provided a broader context of the NAHV initiative.

Professor **Ankica Kovač** from the University of Zagreb introduced the role of hydrogen in the transition towards the renewable energy sources and connected the expected results from the NAHV testbed project located on Cres with the Croatian Hydrogen Strategy. **Aleksander Gerbec**, founder and managing director of ECUBES, provided an in-depth illustration on hydrogen utilisation for maritime and road transport together with the director of the Island Development Agency OTRA, **Ugo Toić**. Speakers underlined the strategic importance of the island's infrastructure for the region's clean energy transition.

The hydrogen testbed project in Cres includes a hydrogen-powered passenger catamaran and a refuelling station for the road transport, developed by ECUBES and the City of Cres. The project is co-financed by the European Union as part of the NAHV initiative. In parallel, ECUBES and Cres have secured additional funding for a large-scale hydrogen storage using a safe hydrogen carrier, bringing the total investment in hydrogen infrastructure on the island to €17.5 million. Toić touched upon a systematically governed stakeholder process centered on the well-being of the islands inhabitants and integrated into the ambition to soon become, together with Lošinj, a net zero archipelago.

Anita Tregner, Innovation Expert from META Circularity, joined Jukić, Gerbec and Toić at the roundtable together with **Mario Perić** of Končar and **Marino Valjak** of Elektroprojekt, the latter two involved in the implementation of the Cres pilot. Tregner emphasised that the success of the North Adriatic Hydrogen Ecosystem which has been evolving beyond the NAHV, thanks to other initiatives like NACHIP and NASCHA*, both co-financed by the EU is not a coincidence. It is a result of



Co-funded by
the European Union

The project is supported by the Clean Hydrogen Partnership and its members. It has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Grant Agreement No. 101111927.

thorough market analysis based on deep understanding of energy needs that represent a fundamental building block for the piloted solutions that engage a vast number of stakeholders. Perić expressed Končar's interest in supporting the development of integrated energy systems, such as the one evolving on the island of Cres. Sanjin Kuljanić of Jadrolinija, one of Europe's largest maritime carriers expressed that their company too, has been closely analysing the possibilities to engage with clean hydrogen as a plausible energy vector.

The Hydrogen Open Day concluded with a visit to the demonstration site.

The event demonstrated strong local support for the clean energy transition and reinforced the role of Cres in advancing the hydrogen economy across the North Adriatic region.

* NACHIP: North Adriatic Clean Hydrogen Investment Platform

NASCHA: North Adriatic Smart Clean Hydrogen Associations



Co-funded by
the European Union

The project is supported by the Clean Hydrogen Partnership and its members. It has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Grant Agreement No. 101111927.

About the NAHV - North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley

The main goal of the NAHV is the creation of a hydrogen-based economic, social and industrial ecosystem based on the capacity of the quadruple helix actors. This will drive economic growth, generating new job opportunities within the framework of both the green and digital transitions and, by creating the conditions for wider EU replicability, it will contribute to the creation of a European Hydrogen Economy.

To fulfil these objectives, the NAHV project involves a well-rooted partnership of 37 organisations (of which two are in Hydrogen Europe, and three in Hydrogen Europe Research), covering the transnational Central European area of three territories – **Croatia, Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (Italy), and Slovenia** demonstrating cross-border integration of hydrogen production, distribution and consumption, and building up capacities for an annual hydrogen production of over 5000 tons of which over 20% is expected to be exchanged within the area of the NAHV.

The project is structured around 17 testbed applications in their related ecosystems, clustered in three main pillars – hard-to-abate industries and the energy and transport sectors. These act as real-life cases for piloting global hydrogen markets, moving from Technology Readiness level (TRL) 6 at the beginning to TRL 8 by the end of the project.

Four fuel cell applications in the energy and transport sectors will be demonstrated. Testbeds will then be scaled up to the industrial level as a replicable model, contributing to the decarbonisation of the three territories by harnessing renewables to improve system resilience, security of supply, and energy independence.

Replicability will be ensured for the whole NAHV model, with the uptake of at least five additional hydrogen valleys in Europe, particularly in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Please, read more about the NAHV at: www.nahv.eu.

Contact

Tanami Pirnat Kopač, META Circularity, NAHV C&D Manager
(www.tanami.pirnat.kopac@meta-circularity.eu)

Jurij Giacomelli, NAHV C&D Manager (jurij.giacomelli@meta-circularity.eu)
Or write to: communication@nahv.eu .

You are welcome to visit the NAHV home page for more info: www.nahv.eu.