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Partners of the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley attune their actions as the implementation of key projects is in full swing

Rijeka, 23th September 2024

Partners of the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley (NAHV) have gathered in Rijeka at the annual Consortium meeting to review the implementation of key projects, assess risks along the way and focus on integration into their respective social and industrial environments.

NAHV is a transnational initiative funded through the Horizon Europe Programme comprising close to 100 delegates representing 37 project partners from three countries: Croatia, Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region of Italy, and Slovenia, who have gathered at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Rijeka at their annual Consortium meeting.

Prof. dr. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Rector, University of Rijeka hosting the event and **dr. Jerneja Sedlar**, NAHV Coordinator, Head of the Development and Investment Department of HSE opened the press conference moderated by **Jurij Giacomelli** of META Circularity, NAHV's Communication and Dissemination Manager.
Alessia Rosolen Regional Councillor for Education of Friuli-Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region of Italy, **Marin Gregorović**, Mayor of the Municipality of Cres and **Stephen Taylor**, Strategic Coordinator of the NAHV Joint Working Group were other speakers at the press conference.

NAHV's new partner: Municipality of Cres

The NAHV Consortium has welcomed a new partner at the meeting in Rijeka, the Municipality of Cres, committed to undertake the obligations from the outgoing partner ACI Marine, what will ensure the continuity of the NAHV actions without any frictions or delays.

"The Municipality of Cres joins the NAHV Consortium on the development of hydrogen infrastructure on the Cres-Lošinj archipelago, in partnership with ECUBES," emphasized **Jerneja Sedlar**, NAHV Coordinator and the representative of the Lead partner, HSE. "This collaboration represents a significant step forward for our region."

Industrial testbed projects creating possibilities for decarbonisation and renewable hydrogen uptake

Altogether, **17 industrial "testbed" projects** are being developed in different locations in all three partner countries, supported by a number of cross-cutting actions. The implementation of this ambitious initiative aims to facilitate the uptake of hydrogen-related solutions and enable the actors of the emerging hydrogen ecosystem of the North Adriatic for autonomous production, transmission, storage and use of renewable hydrogen as well as for their further uptake in the future.

A smooth and synchronised implementation of the industrial testbeds along with other support initiatives is paramount to the overall success of the NAHV initiative. The Consortium presents for the first time a complete overview of 17 industrial pilot projects in a **Testbeds Catalogue**.

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.

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Education related activities address training of future professionals and experts in the field of hydrogen technologies

A number of education-related activities are being addressed to promote the training of future professionals and experts in the field of hydrogen technologies. These activities are coordinated by the University of Rijeka with the participation, respectively, of the Universities of Ljubljana and Trieste, and industrial partners **GITONE ECUBES**, **META Group** and **META Circularity**.
"Ensuring interdisciplinary education covering science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as financial, and societal aspects of hydrogen technologies is in our scope, underlined **Snježana Prijić-Samaržija**, Rector of the **University of Rijeka**.

The Consortium has initiated the preparation of **vocational training programmes** with support from the Region FVG and the Slovenian and Croatian ministries, and other partners. It aims for the funding through the European Social Fund. The **development of micro-credentials** for reskilling and upskilling industry professionals is underway in collaboration among the involved universities.

Furthermore, in the area of education, the NAHV Consortium aims to establish a **Macro-Regional Competence Centre for Hydrogen Research and Education** led by GITONE and to enhance the Training and educational mentoring programme **H2STUDENT** led by ECUBES. The universities are engaged in the development of interdisciplinary and international prototypes for Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees. Special attention is dedicated to the alignment of education with gender equality policies. And to opening to professionals and universities beyond the NAHV target territories, especially in South-Eastern and Central European regions.

Hydrogen Ecosystem of the North Adriatic has been expanding thanks to a newly launched initiative **North Adriatic Clean Hydrogen Investment Platform (NACHIP)**. A grant of 7.6 million euro has been awarded to the consortium of 12 partners from the three participating countries led by **Jozef Stefan Institute** from Ljubljana. The initiative represents an opportunity for up to 18 SMEs who will be selected to receive a grant of up to 60.000 euro each and join the two-tier NACHIP acceleration programme through which they be integrated in the value chains evolving around the **five industrial pilot projects** centred on hydrogen-related technologies.

"Preparatory activities for the launch of the NAHV SPV, a non-profit association to be founded in under the Belgian law, are in progress and are led by **Area Science Park**," reported by **Stephen Taylor**, Strategic Coordinator of the **NAHV Joint Working Group**, a governance body of the NAHV.

The aim of the NAHV SPV is to ensure long-term sustainability of the project results and their impacts beyond the life of the NAHV Horizon Europe initiative. Not less importantly, this structure which is going to include the NAHV partners as well as other interested stakeholders, can integrate other initiatives as well. One such initiative is already active, namely, the NACHIP. The project goals foresee an integration with the NAHV SPV at the end of its life.

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

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NAHV: A flagship initiative for the implementation of the EU Hydrogen Strategy creating a transnational hydrogen ecosystem

The NAHV was awarded a grant of €25 million by Clean Hydrogen Partnership and started in September 2023 and has a duration of 72 months. The project received the Seal of Excellence, which is awarded under Horizon Europe to projects that have been highly rated. Among 37 organisations that make part of the Consortium, there are: companies, universities, institutes and other public entities from the three participating countries. The partnership is led by HSE, Slovenia's largest electricity producer and trader and the largest producer of electricity from renewable sources. As the first transnational hydrogen Valley in the EU, the NAHV represents one of its flagship initiatives in the context of the EU Hydrogen Strategy realisation, which is an important component contributing to reach the decarbonisation of the EU industry and reduce the CO2 emissions to reach the targets of the EU Green Deal.

Industrial testbed projects aiming for decarbonisation and renewable hydrogen uptake

The project design covers the **entire value chain of renewable hydrogen use**, from production, through storage and distribution, to its end use in various sectors, notably industry and land and maritime transport, creating leverage to accelerate the transition to renewables on **three target pillars**: hard-to-abate industries, and the energy and transport sectors.

The key aim of the initiative is to create a market for green hydrogen on both the demand and supply sides, making it a competitive energy source for the future. Key industry players from all three countries will develop pilot projects to produce up to **5,000 tonnes of renewable hydrogen** per year from renewable energy sources, destined for energy storage, distribution and use. It is expected that some 20% of the produced renewable hydrogen will be exchanged between the participating countries, thus creating a primary regional market for hydrogen. By introducing advanced hydrogen technologies and developing skills and infrastructure, the partnership also pursues other key objectives of the European Green Deal. In particular, the NAHV testbed projects address the decarbonisation of important industrial sectors such as steel, cement and glass production, and provide sustainable land and maritime transport solutions linked to reducing the carbon footprint.

It is expected that the implementation of the planned mature stage innovation activities will unleash further investments in renewable hydrogen-related technologies destined to increase the capacity of hydrogen production, storage, transmission and use. An estimated sum of around **€800 million of funding is projected as one of the expected impacts of the NAHV**, during the course of the project implementation and afterwards, deriving from private and public sources in the form of follow-on investments in the successfully implemented pilots in 17 testbed locations across the three participating countries, as well as through new initiatives which will contribute to the evolution of a social and economic ecosystem based on renewable hydrogen. The foreseen development creates the need for **new competencies and skills**, which makes the universities and research institutions which are partners in the initiative important protagonists in designing and disseminating new educational programmes, as the NAHV is destined to become a vehicle for **job creation.**

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