

Good afternoon,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to open this workshop dedicated to fuel cells and hydrogen. As many of you will already know, the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (-the FCH JU) - is a unique private public partnership supporting research, technological development and demonstration activities in fuel cell and hydrogen technologies.

This is a field that I have been actively engaged with over the last several years. I followed these questions as an academic, as a member of the Portuguese government, as a

Commission Official for five years and since 2009, I have been directly involved these matters as a Member of Parliament.

As an academic, I coordinated large research programmes - in which hydrogen related matters were of course central - in both the FP 5 and the FP 6. As an engineer, I gain particular satisfaction from having been responsible for the first hydrogen run bus in Portugal - (in fact one of the first in Europe) - in 2003.

As a member of the Portuguese government, I was fortunate enough in January 2004 to have been invited by President Commissioner Prodi - as a representative of the member states - to launch the hydrogen and fuel cell technology platform. Since then, much has been achieved but there still exists a

number of barriers to the full commercial exploitation of the available technologies.

Today, a central core of our discussions will be how best to overcome these barriers alongside the discussion of the contribution that Horizon 2020 can make in this respect. Let me concentrate, for the moment, on how Parliament in particular sees Horizon 2020. We have recently voted in - in Plenary - a report on a Green Paper that lays down the key principles of the programme.

As I see it, there are 5 key principles. The programme should involve:

~ Firstly, a trust based funding system.

~ Secondly, a chain from frontier research, to technological development, demonstration, valorisation of results and innovation.

~ Thirdly, a simpler FP with fewer instruments alongside a radical overhaul of the administration of the FP.

~ Fourthly, excellence based criteria for the FP in co-ordination with the structural funds for research capacity building.

~ And finally, enhanced international cooperation.

A key concern in all of this remains the constant desire to simplify, simplify. At the moment, there is a whole mass of programmes,

sub-programmes and instruments. These should be drastically restructured. In fact, there should be three main pillars:

~ Firstly, a science driven pillar - ERC including research support activities (Marie Curie and European research infrastructures)

~ Secondly, an industry driven pillar - JTIs, SMEs etc.

~ Thirdly, a policy driven pillar – cooperative research projects addressing the great societal challenges

Finally, let me say a few words about the budget. At the moment, we in the European Parliament are struggling to achieve a doubling of the Budget for

the next European Programme for Research and Innovation as compared with the present programme. Hopefully, this will represent an increase from €50 billion to €100 billion. This figure was included in an amendment that I introduced and has recently been adopted by the European Parliament.

Since then, the European Commission has advanced an alternative figure of €80 billion as part of the post- 2013 7-year budget package. The next step will involve tough negotiations between the main three European Institutions, Parliament, Council and the Commission. A number of European countries, with Germany to the fore, support a figure at the higher end of this spectrum. It is to be hoped that other Governments will

follow this lead especially those countries with a reputation for academic excellence.

Before handing over to our first speaker - who is Mr Bert de Colvenaer, the executive director of the JTI on fuel cells and hydrogen - let me finish by expressing my warm gratitude to all of our speakers today.