

(Press Release, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.)

## **The United Kingdom Supports Regional Cooperation aimed at Establishing the Hydrogen Economy in Central Europe**

**With the support of the British Government, the first major regional workshop was held in Budapest to discuss the joint development opportunities of hydrogen-based energy and transport. The event was organised by the Ányos Jedlik Hungarian E-Mobility Cluster and the Hungarian Hydrogen Fuel Cell Association, in partnership with the Visegrad Fund. Representatives of seven Central European countries (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bulgaria) and the EU-wide „Hydrogen Europe” organisation shared their knowledge and expertise with the British partners.**

The workshop, held in Budapest on September 26, 2019, provided the first opportunity for a detailed discussion on policy and technology cooperation between the experts of the UK, considered to be one of the global centres of the hydrogen industry and those of seven Central European countries.

Iain Lindsay, the British ambassador to Hungary said in his opening speech: „This event emphasises not only the importance of a promising clean energy initiative like hydrogen energy, but it is also evidence of the UK’s growing engagement across Central Europe.”

The ambassador outlined his government's strategy to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. In order to create a cleaner and greener transport sector the UK aims to achieve that ultra-low emission vehicles should make up for at least 50 percent of new car sales, and up to 40 percent of new van sales by 2030.

To achieve the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement, the UK is ready to increase its research and development resources - which will reach 2.4 percent of its gross domestic product by 2027 - and to launch a GBP 250 million program to boost domestic battery innovation. Meanwhile, London also wants to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against climate change.

“ E-mobility is high on the agenda of all our countries, but hydrogen has recently come to the forefront and is enjoying growing attention across Europe as evidenced by EU initiatives in hydrogen.” – Iain Lindsay emphasized.

In Hungary the transport sector – within that mostly road transport - accounts for approximately 20 percent of all emissions, which is a very high proportion. Therefore, the government takes into account the results expected from the use of hydrogen in its new national energy strategy, which requires a reduction of emissions at least 40 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

“In the alternative fuels segment we are monitoring the opportunities offered by hydrogen to make transport greener. We are also convinced that hydrogen from renewable sources can play an important role not only in decarbonisation but also in enhancing the security of supply in the

energy sector, "said Péter Kaderják, State Secretary for Energy and Climate Policy, who was also patron of the workshop.

Central European economies rely heavily on natural gas imported from outside the European Union. The Hungarian government aims to reduce the import share of gas supply from the current 80 percent to below 70 percent between 2030 and 2040, with renewable hydrogen as an alternative to natural gas. Hungary already announced in 2016 to the European Commission that it would start deploying hydrogen fuel infrastructure together with 13 EU Member States; and a year ago, in September 2018, Hungary also joined the Linz Hydrogen [Initiative](#) of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union. The purpose of the latter is to jointly investigate hydrogen technologies for energy and mobility applications.

Péter Kaderják added: "We plan to build two public hydrogen filling stations by the end of 2020, provided that the industry players are ready to contribute. We will soon launch a pilot project with the involvement of the natural gas transmission system operator and distribution companies to analyse the technical and regulatory aspects of the power-to-gas technology and how to use the highly advanced Hungarian gas pipeline network for energy storage from renewable sources."

At the workshop, Alexandru Floristean, representing the "Hydrogen Europe" industry organization, outlined the EU's regulatory and legislative steps taken so far. A comprehensive overview of the British achievements was presented by Ms Amanda Lyne, chair of the UK Hydrogen and Fuel Cell [Association](#), while the best British practices from business point of view were analysed by Mr Robert Stockwell, strategic innovation director of Fuel Cell Systems Ltd. Speakers from the Central European countries, from the public and private sector alike, delivered a broad overview of the national programmes in their home countries. As a conclusion of the discussion, participants agreed on the need to coordinate European and national programmes after 2020, including the establishment of the hydrogen filling infrastructure along the TEN-T network. They also expect long-term technological cooperation with the British partners.

Supporter of the project „UK – Central Europe Hydrogen Energy Collaboration”:  
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[www.hfc-hungary.org/UK-CEE\\_Workshop.html](http://www.hfc-hungary.org/UK-CEE_Workshop.html)