



Green Industry Leaders Unite in Brussels to Call for stronger public financing and industrial policy for Europe to stay in the game

BRUSSELS, October 13, 2023 – Yesterday, in a pivotal gathering set to shape the future of renewable hydrogen, CEOs from across the entire value chain, policymakers and stakeholders convened at the Renewable Hydrogen Summit organised in Brussels by the Renewable Hydrogen Coalition (RHC).

In the opening keynote European Commission Executive Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič stated *“Hydrogen will play a key role in achieving our ambition to be the first emissions-free continent. Applying a whole-value-chain approach and upscaling the use of renewable hydrogen, ammonia and other derivatives is a condition for decarbonising our economy and reducing the EU’s dependence on the imports of fossil fuels. We now must make sure there is a viable and attractive business case for hydrogen in Europe, and beyond.”*

Industry leaders praised Europe's leadership in pioneering groundbreaking policies to scale up renewable hydrogen, which is poised to revolutionise hard-to-electrify sectors and drive deep decarbonisation. Now is time for a reality check for Europe to continue to build strong momentum. The sector still faces significant challenges that need an urgent and strong response from policymakers, from accelerating permitting, building fit-for-purpose electricity grids and hydrogen infrastructure to implementing law. Among these challenges, the biggest one remains the cost of renewable hydrogen compared to existing polluting alternatives. Bridging this cost gap will be crucial to unlock and accelerate the deployment of renewable hydrogen.

The RHC Chair Olivia Breese, Power-2-X CEO at the renewable energy company Ørsted, said *“Three urgent matters must be addressed to enable a viable industry in Europe: inflation, implementation, and infrastructure. We are in a high interest-rates world, and therefore we need to step up public funding, make it easier and faster to access so that large-scale renewable hydrogen projects can be built. Europe’s current funding systems are too complex and too shy, often failing to address the funding gap of projects. The EU Hydrogen Bank is a step in the right direction, but it’s time to boost its budget and provide clarity on future auctions fast.”* She also urged Member States to quickly implement EU regulation: *“Two years ago we basically did not have a framework for P2X in Europe. Now we need Member States to quickly translate the European framework into national measures. At the same time, we need to see an infrastructure planning, both power and hydrogen, that goes hand in hand and allows for anticipatory investments in no-regret infrastructure,”* she added.

Equally vital is the establishment of robust value chains within Europe as a matter of strategic autonomy. The European Commission rightly identified electrolyzers as strategic net zero technologies. The RHC Vice-Chair Håkon Volldal, President and CEO of electrolyser manufacturer Nel, voiced *“The future of electrolyzers and clean tech is a race to the top not a race to the bottom. As such, the introduction of non-price criteria in future auctions and support schemes can support a “Made in Europe” approach. This will incentivise local value creation, the development of jobs and skilled labour within Europe whilst also tackling the challenge of public acceptance. We need to ensure that EU funds truly contribute to the development of a strong renewable hydrogen value chain and a European success story.”*

The cost of inaction in addressing the challenges of the renewables and renewable hydrogen value chains will be far greater than the investments required. The urgency to act now cannot be overstated if Europe wants to seize the global leadership position in renewable hydrogen and shape a greener and more sustainable future. This is not only a climate change imperative. This is an energy security and European industrial competitiveness imperative.