Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

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The Commission presents its second interim evaluation of the Clean Sky; **Fuel Cells and Hydrogen** and Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Technology Initiatives Joint Undertakings.

This report summarises the findings and main recommendations provided by the panels of independent experts (IEGs) who conducted the evaluations.

The overall conclusion of the IEG reports is that the Joint Undertakings have been **successful in achieving their objectives**, that they are relevant to the challenges of Horizon 2020 and **they should be continued**. The second interim assessments show that the existing Joint Undertakings have successfully demonstrated the **viability of the Public Private Partnership** (PPP) concept for research in strategic technological areas. They have been effective in delivering on the main objectives and have been able to reinforce Europe's role in aeronautics, pharmaceutics and fuel cell and hydrogen R&D.

More specifically, the report presents the **Commission's observations and recommendations** and highlights the areas in which follow-up actions should be planned.

Implementation of the FCH Initiative: on Fuel Cells and Hydrogen, the coupling of the long-term commitment by the EU and the stable funding provided through the instrument have allowed the Joint Undertaking to give confidence to the industry and support the sector in bridging the gap between research and deployment.

As regards financing, **Fuel Cells and Hydrogen** has a maximum EU contribution for research activities of **EUR 470 million**. So far, six annual calls for proposals have been launched and a portfolio of projects was subsequently selected. Under the first five calls, approximately EUR 380 million was committed across 131 projects. Negotiations for the 71 projects submitted under the 2013 call for proposals, with a total indicative funding of about EUR 68 million, were still ongoing as this second interim evaluation was being carried out.

Commission's observations: the Commission agrees that decision-making procedures should be as **swift as possible**, but underlines that proper deadlines should be ensured in the organisation and preparation ofGoverning Board (GB) meetings. The EU will, as a member of the Governing Board, monitor the proper allocation of resources, the continuous commitment from members and the efficient application of procedures. The Commission's proposed Regulation for Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 includes the possibility of sharing a set of administrative functions. Given the autonomous nature of the

Joint Undertakings, however, it would not be possible for the Commission to re-claim the functions as proposed by the IEG.

On the subject of funding, the Commission agrees with the proposed measures. The new proposed Regulation for Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 provides that the JU will indeed have access to the guarantee fund, which implies that the participation of SMEs will be facilitated. The Commission will investigate the possibility to include hydrogen infrastructures in the new National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for Structural Funds.

Perspectives: the Commission acknowledges the thorough and in-depth work carried out by the IEGs in undertaking the second interim evaluation of the three Joint Undertakings. It also notes that the IEGs recognised the validity of the PPP approach and expressed positive views about the future prospects for Joint Undertakings under Horizon 2020.

The IEG recommendations are considered valuable for removing or at least reducing the weaknesses identified in the current Joint Undertaking operations. The Commission undertakes to implement corrective measures when appropriate and within its powers of intervention whilst recalling that implementing the recommendations addressed to the next generation of joint undertakings requires the adoption of new Council Regulations.

Since 10 July 2013, when the Commission presented its proposed Regulations, the processes for continuing the JUs are fully underway.