



## **The Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia shows how all agents are committed to tackling the climate emergency**

*More than a hundred companies and member organisations attended the official presentation in Tarragona of a strategic nationwide initiative that has been working for months for the society and the renewable hydrogen economy.*

*The vice-president of Catalonia's Government, Pere Aragonès, said that the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia "is an excellent example of the transformative projects that the country needs and an opportunity to change the energy consumption model".*

*Enagás and Repsol are the business leaders for an initiative coordinated by Universitat Rovira i Virgili, which they hope will turn the territory into an industrial model for the whole of Europe to follow.*

**Tarragona, 14 May 2021** - This Friday, the Trade Fair and Conference Centre of Tarragona (Palau Firal i de Congressos de Tarragona) was the venue for the official presentation of this initiative to the authorities and its more than one hundred participating companies and organisations. The event has highlighted the commitment that all these agents have towards driving communities and the renewable hydrogen economy to tackle the climate emergency. This strategic nationwide initiative has already been working for months to consolidate an integrated ecosystem around the hydrogen value chain, a vital energy vector for achieving the goal of climate neutrality, whilst increasing business competitiveness and improving people's well-being, especially against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was presided over by the Vice-President of the Government of Catalonia and Minister of Economy and Finance, Pere Aragonès. He stressed that the Hydrogen Valley "is an excellent example of the transformative projects that the country needs and a great opportunity to change the energy consumption model", while the chairmen of Repsol, Antonio Brufau, and Enagás, Antonio Llardén, described how spearheading the Hydrogen Valley initiative was a challenge and a mark of their commitment to communities.

All parties agreed to promote the growth of the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia, which is centred around economic development and mitigating climate change, through the signing of a memorandum of understanding by the main agents of the initiative, represented by Ramon Tremosa, Minister of Business and Knowledge of the Generalitat de Catalunya; María José Figueras, Rector of Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV); Noemí Llauredó, President of Tarragona Provincial Council; Josep Maria Cruset, President of the Tarragona Port Authority; Montserrat Ballarín, Vice-President of the Area of Social and Economic Development of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area (AMB), and Rubén



Folgado, President of the Tarragona Association of Chemical Companies (AEQT), as well as Antonio Brufau and Antonio Llardén.

After the speech of welcome and support for the initiative by the Mayor of Tarragona, Pau Ricomà, María José Figueras, Rector of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, the institution that promotes and coordinates the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia, thanked all the agents involved for their support and stated that “the key partners in terms of knowledge, administrations and companies that are taking part in this initiative aim to put all their assets and potential together to become a model to follow in the transition towards a renewable hydrogen economy and society, based around knowledge, research, production, distribution and use.” She said that the URV's role in this process was to “spearhead and promote training, awareness-raising and research in the new renewable hydrogen value chains.”

Ramon Tremosa expressed the “full support” of the Catalan government for the Valley, which he describes as “a strategic, competitive and transformative project, with a clear impact on the territory that will contribute to the necessary energy transition”. He has asked the Spanish government for “a real co-governance” in the management of the Next Generation projects. “We must play a key role if we are to take full advantage of the resources that Europe has made available to us,” he said.

Noemí Llauradó said that the institution she presides over is committed to making the Tarragona region “lead the implementation of this energy model throughout Catalonia and be a driving force for development and a European benchmark in this same field.” According to Llauradó, “the energy transition is an issue that can be implemented, especially at the local level and in consultation and dialogue with other agents.” Josep Maria Cruset said that the Port of Tarragona could be counted on for its support for a project which “combines protecting the environment and the sustainable economic development of our communities”. “That is why we put all the assets and all the potential of the Port at the disposal of the project”, he concluded.

Montserrat Ballarín said that the AMB was ready to meet “the challenges of climate change and sustainability” and stressed that they are working both to support clean energies and to drastically reduce emissions from private transport, “aiming for carbon neutrality in our territory.” The president of the AMB and mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, did not attend the event in Tarragona, but she took part in the video presentation of the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia which opened the event, alongside other agents involved. Colau said that Transports Metropolitans of Barcelona had decided to use renewable hydrogen as fuel, so it would be the first hydrogen refuelling station in Spain.

Enagás and Repsol are the two companies which are spearheading the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia. The Chairman of Repsol, Antonio Brufau, has assured that his company will be a major player in the transformation process of the Tarragona petrochemical hub, “making it a benchmark of industrial innovation for the whole of Europe.” “All of



us involved in the Hydrogen Valley want to face the challenge of the energy transition in a way that is committed to society, and we will do so with innovation and technology,” he added. Antonio Llardén said that Enagás will make use of its experience in promoting renewable hydrogen projects that are “sustainable in the long-term, with innovative technologies that drive a competitive industry and generate wealth and create jobs.” Llardén said that, “for economic and social reconstruction, industry plays a pivotal role as the foundation and driving force for a strong economy.”

Rubén Folgado, Chairman of AEQT, said that the chemical industry feels a responsibility towards being part of the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia, and that is why it is involved: “We believe we have a crucial role to play in this energy transition, as part of this process that cannot be put off any longer. We are committed to doing so not only to comply with the emissions restrictions that the European Union has established for the 2030 and 2050 horizons —basically our survival as an industry is on the line— but more importantly, out of conviction. In the chemical industry, we are particularly sensitive about being sustainable and protecting our planet.”

In his closing speech, Vice President Pere Aragonès described the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia as “thrilling” because it has to be “the first step to reduce carbon emissions”. “This initiative has everything that we want the future Catalonia to have all rolled into one, and this is the Catalonia that we have to start building right now”, said Aragonès, who believes that the Next Generation EU funds are an opportunity that should not be missed. In fact, the Hydrogen Valley is one of the 27 key projects for economic recovery that the Catalan government wants to prioritise in order to access European funds.

The vice-president also explained that the Hydrogen Valley project is a lot more than a source of clean alternative energy because it allows “us to take advantage of the current economic crisis to promote the transformation that the country's productive system needs”. According to Aragonès, “it is precisely these large, ambitious and far-reaching projects that the Catalan economy needs to become more competitive and be an example to follow across the world in the fight against the climate emergency.”

The event, presented by journalist Xavier Graset, was also used to formally announce the knowledge, science and technology alliance between Universitat Rovira i Virgili, the Catalan Institute of Chemical Research (ICIQ), the Catalonia Institute for Energy Research (IREC) and the Eurecat Technology Centre, a research and innovation hub of the Hydrogen Valley of Catalonia, which has been working on renewable hydrogen for some time now.