

Vanguard Initiative Hydrogen Pilot Summit

Building Robust, Autonomous & Connected Regional Hydrogen Ecosystems

26 October 2026 | 09:30 – 13:00

Permanent Representation of Republic of Slovenia to the EU

Rue Joseph II 14, 1000 Brussels

The Vanguard Initiative Hydrogen Pilot Summit brings together regional authorities, industry representatives, research organisations and innovation ecosystems from across Europe to explore how interregional collaboration can accelerate the development and deployment of hydrogen technologies and value chains. The programme will highlight the latest developments in European Hydrogen Valleys and cross-border corridors, advances in hydrogen technologies and materials and the role of smart digital systems in building resilient local energy ecosystems. Through keynote addresses, regional case studies, expert discussions and networking, the Summit will identify opportunities for stronger cooperation and outline strategic priorities for the Vanguard Initiative Hydrogen Pilot towards 2027.

Programme

*Moderated by Dr. Draško Veselinovič,
Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA)*

09:00 – 09:30 | Welcome coffee and registration of participants

09:30 – 10:15 | Opening & Keynote presentations

Setting the stage for interregional collaboration and the strategic direction of the Vanguard Initiative's hydrogen activities

- **09:30 – 09:35 | Welcome & Opening Remarks**
 - **H.E. Metka Ipavic** (Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the EU)
 - **Dr. Draško Veselinovič** (Director, Slovenian Business & Research Association)
- **09:35 – 09:45 | The Role of the Vanguard Initiative in Accelerating European Hydrogen Deployment**
 - **Gavin Lewis** (Welsh Government)
- **09:45 – 10:00 | Joint Address by the VI Hydrogen Pilot Co-Leaders**
 - **Draško Veselinovič** (Slovenia), **Fabrizio Guarassi** (Lombardy) and **Jerzy Kopec** (Małopolska)

- **10:00 – 10:10 | From Innovation to Deployment: The Clean Hydrogen Partnership Perspective**
 - **Valérie Bouillon-Delporte** (Executive Director, Clean Hydrogen Partnership)
- **10:10 – 10:20 | EU Hydrogen Policy: Priorities and the Way Forward**
 - **Marion Malafosse** (Policy Officer, Decarbonisation and Sustainability of Energy Sources, DG ENER)

10:20 – 10:55 | Session 1: European Hydrogen Valleys & Mega-Corridors

Exploring large-scale, cross-border infrastructure projects, corridors and the European partnerships connecting them

- **10:20 – 10:30 | European Coordination**
 - **Jeanne Fabreguettes** (S3 Hydrogen Valleys Partnership and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region)
Presentation Title: Synergies Across Europe: The Hydrogen Valleys S3 Partnership
- **10:30 – 10:40 | Spanish Case Study**
 - **Zuriñe Hernández** (Basque Energy Agency - EVE)
Presentation Title: The Basque Hydrogen Corridor and Infrastructure Development at the Port of Bilbao
- **10:40 – 10:50 | Regional Integration in Central Europe**
 - **Katarzyna Faruga** (HZwo e.V. - Energy equipment and solutions in Chemnitz)
Presentation Title: Saxony's Hydrogen Cluster: Connecting Regional Innovation to Central European Valleys
- **10:50 – 10:55 | Audience Q&A**

10:55 – 11:20 | Session 2: Advanced Materials, Systems & Technical Innovation

A deep dive into next-generation hydrogen components, materials research and academic and industrial pilot centers

- **10:55 – 11:05 | Dutch Innovation Ecosystem**
 - **Paul Gosselink** (Innovation Coalition Hydrogen)
Presentation Title: The Dutch Innovation Coalition: Advancing Electrolyser Systems and Key Component Manufacturing
- **11:05 – 11:15 | Pilot Testing & Tech Centres**
 - **Tomaz Čebela** (DUBT Center for Carbon-Free Technologies)
Presentation Title: The Kisovec Centre: Testing and Scaling Hydrogen Technologies for Industrial Use
- **11:15 – 11:20 | Audience Q&A**

11:20 – 11:55 | Session 3: Smart Local Systems, Digital Twins & Autonomy

Shifting the focus to system integration, smart grid interfaces, energy communities and the move toward robust regional autonomy

- **11:20 – 11:30 | Digital Systems & Local Communities**
 - **Zoran Marinšek** (Competence Centre for Advanced Control Technologies (KCSTV), Local Energy Community as a Small Hydrogen Valley (H2LEC))
Presentation Title: The H2LEC Framework: Optimizing Local Energy Communities with Integrated Hydrogen Systems and energy exchange with support of Digital Twin Technologies
- **11:30 – 11:40 | Cross-Border Valley Management**
 - **Andreja Kumer** (North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley)
Presentation Title: The North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley: Integrating Green Energy with AI-Driven Management
- **11:40 – 11:50 | Industrial Hydrogen Applications**
 - **Marija Pavlovčič** (North Adriatic Clean Hydrogen Investment Platform)
Presentation Title: Commercializing Hydrogen in the North Adriatic: Industrial Use-Cases and Clean Tech Integration
- **11:50 – 11:55 | Audience Q&A**

11:55 – 12:00 | Summit Closing & Strategic Next Steps

12:00 – 13:00 | Networking Lunch

EVENT ORGANISED ON THE
OCCASION OF THE EUROPEAN
HYDROGEN WEEK

