

Good afternoon,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hydrogen is of prime importance for energy security, climate change and environmental questions.

We are at a crucial stage in the development of hydrogen and Fuel Cell technologies. Some are reaching maturity and we are now at a point where concrete measures must be taken to bridge the gap between the research phase and the race to market.

Most of the technological development and demonstration phases have been completed. It is now essential to develop the necessary infrastructure and

the regulatory framework to make this technology commercially feasible.

This is sphere in which European policy makers have a definite and influential role to play. In particular, we are already working on a long term energy agenda - for 2020, 2030 and 2050 - and this is the time to establish exactly how fuel cells and hydrogen fit into our plans.

The purpose of this lunch is to discuss the political and strategic orientations of fuel cell and hydrogen technologies. In this respect, there are four issues that I hope will help to set the ball rolling. These are:

Firstly, the relative weight of fuel cell hydrogen technology within Horizon 2020

Secondly, how do fuel cell and hydrogen technologies square with the Connecting Europe facility.

Thirdly, in so far as the pace of European legislation is concerned, it would appear that nothing concrete is happening with regard to facilitating the use of hydrogen cars. This is a sphere in which the European Parliament can play a role of catalyser for national legislation.

Finally, we undoubtedly need some public awareness campaigns to improve the public perception of hydrogen. Many people are still uncertain about the health and safety aspect to the use of hydrogen.

That is undoubtedly enough from me.