

Press Release

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BELFAST MET LEADING THE WAY IN EMERGING TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT – DELIVERING GREEN COLLAR JOBS

Belfast Metropolitan College's Springvale Campus recently played host to the official launch of the North West Europe Interreg funded €9.39M GenComm project.

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Nuala McAllister, as well as partner organisations involved in the project attended the launch – which aims to answer the energy sustainability challenges facing remote communities across North-West Europe through production and storage of renewable hydrogen.

The innovative GenComm project led by Belfast Metropolitan College, with nine other EU partners, will develop hybrid hydrogen technology pilots from renewable technologies including wind, bio and solar. The project will play a key role on the international stage and help drive the EU's transformation to a low-carbon energy system.

The project will demonstrate the commercial maturity of hydrogen technologies by implementing three pilot plants, linking the three main northwest European renewable sources, Solar Power, Wind Power and Bioenergy, with energy storage and the main forms of energetic demand; heat, power and transportation fuels. The ultimate goal of the project is, through the combination of sources and forms of demand, to lead NWE's road to sustainability while granting hydrogen its position as a commercially viable energy medium for the future.

Dr Michel Junker keynote speaker stated: "**As keynote speaker at the GenComm launch, I'm very proud to have been invited to participate in this very exciting and ambitious project focusing on the deployment of hydrogen energy applications in European Northwest Regions. The Regions are the key to the deployment of hydrogen applications (mobility, on-site heat and electricity production, energy storage...) as an energy carrier to store renewables.**"

“The need for using an increasing part of renewables in our energy mix to make them available for our everyday applications, to reduce our dependence to fossil fuels and to solve our climate and air pollution challenges is one of the toughest challenge for Europe for the next 20 years. Hydrogen is considered as one of the premium solutions to pave the way on this direction. The GenComm project is clearly leading on this route and its results will contribute to accelerate the deployment models for hydrogen in European regions.”

Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Principal and Chief Executive of Belfast Met said: **“This European Project in renewable technologies reinforces the Belfast Met purpose of leading the city, and indeed, Northern Ireland to work. Through this pioneering project, we will deliver the skills, education and competencies required for new green collar jobs. We are extremely proud that through this project the Further Education sector will develop and deliver new programmes and courses producing engineers and technicians with the technological skills mix required to meet Europe’s energy requirements. Belfast Met has always been a leader in the field and this project, together with our new international partners, will forge new international links, reinforcing our position of leading industry and demonstrating our commitment to delivering a capable, qualified and vocationally mobile workforce.”**

“Today we all celebrate and share in the success of GenComm ensuring that we are ahead of the curve, leading industry, pioneers in emerging technologies.” She continued.

Councillor Nuala McAllister Lord Mayor of Belfast stated: **“I would like to congratulate Belfast Met and its European partners for leading and securing such an innovative and pioneering smart energy storage demonstration project. We know that energy security and the transition to the low carbon economy is a major issue for this region, which is heavily dependent on fossil fuel energy. We absolutely need cheaper, cleaner alternative sources of power to secure inward investment, create wealth and job security.”**

“Belfast has a proud history of world-class innovative and industrious engineering from the shipbuilding, aircraft and linen industries. It is wonderful to see that these pioneering engineering skills are still here, and can be deployed to advance the smart

power revolution, which is upon us. This opens a new industrial chapter for the city, its citizens and the region.”

Interreg North West Europe Programme Director Mr Ruut Louwers; stated: **“GENCOMM promises to improve living and working conditions in smaller communities, by offering energy independency. That way, it contributes to keeping smaller communities connected and better equipped to compete with larger urban communities. That would be a big contribution to a reduction of disparities between the urban and more rural communities, one of the goals of EU cohesion policy. This is going to happen as of today with the start of this European cooperation project, by investing in those communities in five different EU countries. We are really looking forward for the concrete results which are planned!”**

Speaking at the event Gina McIntyre; CEO SEUPB stated: **“SEUPB are pleased to have supported this project from its inception, this project represents one of the most significant investments from an Interreg VB Transnational Programme to a partnership within Northern Ireland. This is a critically important project which, will contribute to the energy independence of small isolated communities in Northern Ireland and throughout the programme eligible region. It will do this through a collaborative partnership at the transnational level which will work to develop solutions to common challenges and this is the very essence of an Interreg Project.”**

Paul McCormack; Gencomm Project Manager stated: **“Producing low carbon Hydrogen from renewable energy sources is a game changing technology, it provides us with a clean energy carrier and storage medium that has great potential for energy security European communities whilst reducing our dependence on hydrocarbons. The GenComm project addresses Europe’s energy challenges and as such has significant commercial benefits, promoting energy security and economic growth. Hydrogen technologies will deliver a new, cleaner energy system for Europe across many applications including energy storage, transport and distributed power generation.”**

For more information on Project GENCOMM visit: <http://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/gencomm-generating-energy-secure-communities/>

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