



European Commission  
To the attention of  
**Mr. Frans Timmermans**  
Executive Vice-President  
for the European Green Deal

December 9th, 2022

Dear Mr. Executive Vice-President,

Following the exchange between Jean Rottner (acting chair of the Summit of the Großregion-Grande Région and President of the Regional Council of Grand Est), Claude Turmes (Minister for Energy in Luxembourg), and yourself, on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Brussels, we would like to reiterate our ambition to make the Großregion-Grande Région a cross-border laboratory for the accelerated development of hydrogen in Europe in order to massively decarbonize our industries and meet the energy and climate challenges facing us.

As you know, the EU's internal border regions cover 40% of its territory and 30% of its population, i.e. 150 million people. This reality is embodied in an economic and social life that is more and more interdependent between the territories on either side of the borders, the rise in flows and mobility having made these border regions increasingly integrated areas.

The Großregion-Grande Région, a living area of twelve million people spread over four countries, is a pioneering Euro-region for cross-border cooperation. Its territory is characterized by a strong industrial identity, since the industrial sector represents 800,000 jobs and an added value of 77 billion euros. The Großregion-Grande Région is located at the heart of very dense road axes. These characteristics and the high level of integration inherent in our cross-border area lead us to understand the challenges of decarbonization of our industries in common means, in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from this sector of activity in a massive way. The development of the production and use of green hydrogen should enable us to unite around this objective, in order to make the Großregion-Grande Région a driving force in the structuring of a green hydrogen industry and market in Europe. The similarity of our orientations in terms of decarbonization constitutes a shared basis, which has enabled us to identify four convergent and priority areas:

1. **Developing a cross-border regional green H<sub>2</sub> ecosystem - Producing green hydrogen, guaranteeing its cross-border circulation and use by developing required financial instruments and contributing best practice examples to the developing European certification system;**
2. **Transporting hydrogen across borders – Defining the conditions, i.e. identifying in a coordinated way the quantities of H<sub>2</sub> needed to decarbonize the industry, and supporting the transportation of hydrogen through a coherent cross-border network of hydrogen pipelines, aiming eventually to position the Großregion-Grande Région as a “hydrogen copper plate” within the EU;**

3. **Decarbonizing the hard-to-electrify transport with green hydrogen - Supporting the coordinated deployment of vehicles and refuelling stations;**
4. **Offering cross-border and multilingual training - Reinforcing skills in the region in order to address the downstream challenges of structuring the sector by guaranteeing the balance and adequacy between the sector's professions, qualification needs, and the nature and quantity of the specific training offer.**

These avenues of cooperation could be embodied in several concrete and operational actions in the short and medium terms:

- **Increased support for investment in renewable energies and in green hydrogen production tools.**  
Based on the future deployment plan for hydrogen pipelines and river routes that can supply port terminals with hydrogen, from the North Sea to the heart of Europe, **active planning and investment work within the Großregion-Grande Région will be necessary for the creation of a green hydrogen market in Europe.** It is important that transformative steps should be constructively supported by the EU Commission in terms of state aid law. There are many industrial companies, in particular in the chemical, steel, mechanical sectors that can be connected to an early hydrogen backbone within the Großregion-Grande Région.
- **An approach to defining the legal structures that carry the pipelines, facilitating either the retrofit or the reinforcement of existing pipelines by adding new pipelines.**
- **Massive support for hydrogen production, transport infrastructures and storage.** Investments at the order of several billion euros might be required for the construction of hundreds of kilometers of hydrogen pipeline within the Großregion-Grande Région. Work is currently underway to obtain refined data on hydrogen production, port terminals storing hydrogen and riverboats transporting hydrogen, in order to estimate the related costs.
- **The establishment of a "Steering Committee Hydrogen Großregion-Grande Région" allowing for adequate interfacing between public, institutional, industrial and energy players (including gas players and the "Grande Région Hydrogen" EEIG).** The entire value chain would be represented, since potential producers, distributors and consumers would be part of this exchange platform. This exchange format would be complementary to detailed studies, such as the one initiated by the Benelux, entitled "*cross-border hydrogen backbone in the Benelux and neighbouring regions*", including the border territories of the Benelux, thus including those of the Großregion-Grande Région.

The willingness of industrial players in the Großregion-Grande Région to enter this new energy era will have a definite impact on their costs and the competitiveness of their activities and therefore of our territories. Thus, this ambition of massive decarbonization of our industries requires in particular being able to mobilize European funding likely giving a powerful impetus to the realization of this change in energy paradigm.



With this in mind, we would like to thank you in advance, Mr. Executive Vice-President, for your attention and for listening to our future requests, based on the intentions we are presenting to you today.

In order to facilitate the further formalization of the above objectives, could you please confirm the intention of the European Commission to consider the Großregion-Grande Région as the 1<sup>st</sup> cross border H<sub>2</sub> laboratory region in the EU and to endorse the implementation of these projects?

We look forward to receiving your reply, and wish to assure you, Mr. Executive Vice-President, of our highest consideration.

President of the Regional Council of Grand Est  
Acting chair of the Summit of the  
Großregion-Grande Région

Jean Rottner

Minister-President of Wallonia

Minister for Energy in Luxembourg

Claude Turmes

Minister-President of Saarland

Elio Di Rupo

Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate

Malu Dreyer

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