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PRESS-RELEASE HyCologne

Hydrogen-driven Hybrid Busses take up Regular Service / Heralds of Fuel Cell Technology

Hürth, September 8, 2011 – Two hydrogen-driven fuel cell hybrid busses have successfully finished a four-month test period. The 18 meter articulated busses named “Phileas” will now take up regular public transport service on inner-city and regional lines in the Rhein-Erft county for the first time. The cities of Hürth and Brühl will be the core areas of the traffic service offering. As Eugen Puderbach, managing director of the operating company RVK (Regionalverkehr Köln GmbH) underlines: “We are very happy to start regular transport service with our hydrogen busses. It is our objective to further develop the technology and deploy it in the Greater Cologne region.”

After years of research and development in the realm of fuel cell technology it is now high time to communicate the results to the broad public and make them palpable in daily life. Dr. Albrecht Möllmann, 1st chairman of “HyCologne Wasserstoff Region Rheinland e.V.,” points out that the HyCologne initiative also considers public relations to be among its tasks as a project development agency. “The fuel cell busses will be used in the regional public transport service and be officially presented at several public events: at the 46th IAA Motor Show in Frankfurt / Main, the 11th German Aerospace Day in Cologne, the fuel cell symposium f-cell 2011 in Stuttgart as well as at the first-time UrbanTec trade fair & congress in Cologne and further more. The busses will act as heralds of fuel cell technology.”

On Sunday, Sept. 18th, 2011 the German National Research Center for Aeronautics and Space (DLR) will organize the 11th “Tag der Luft- und Raumfahrt” on its R&D location in Cologne. On this occasion the visitors’ attention will be drawn to the 18 meter articulated hybrid bus along with the flying observatory SOFIA and the world’s biggest airliner Airbus A380. Under the patronage of the German Minister of Economics Dr. Philipp Rösler, the DLR and the European Space Agency (ESA) together with the Cologne-based European Astronaut Centre (EAC) will show exciting research projects in the areas aerospace, energy and traffic. Technological innovation to put your hands on is the slogan of the day. Visitors will be invited to inspect the hybrid bus inside out. Information material and a video presentation will explain the background of the development and the functional design of the fuel cell hybrid busses in a comprehensible way.

In the time from September 25th till 28th, 2011 one of the Phileas busses will serve as a shuttle bus for the 800 participants from more than 20 nations and 4 continents who take part in f-cell symposium in Stuttgart. The bus will commute between the different event locations and take the participants on the excursions to the Daimler fuel cell vehicle development center in Kirchheim/Teck and the Max Planck Institute in Stuttgart. The focus of the 2011 f-cell congress is on “Mobile applications – Fuel cells and batteries moving the future”.

In Cologne the Koelnmesse GmbH will put a new trade fair concept into practice: UrbanTec - Smart Technologies for better Cities. This event with its integrated congress held from October 24th – 26th, 2011 will present technologies and developments which are apt to improve life in existing growing and newly emerging urban agglomerations in a sustainable way. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has assumed the UrbanTec patronage. Here, a Phileas bus will serve as a shuttle for the congress and the surrounding events. Its tangible presence will clearly demonstrate the promising potential of fuel cell technology.

As Dr. Albrecht Möllmann puts it: "To the members of the HyCologne initiative it is a pleasure to see the developments in other cities and federal states apart from Cologne and NRW. We will all benefit from the experiences here and there, respectively. Therefore, our participation in national and international projects such as the "Hydrogen Bus Alliance" and "CHIC - Clean Hydrogen in European Cities" is of essential importance: The ensuing information exchange and research results will be beneficial to future bus generations and other projects." In August 2011, the Hamburger Hochbahn AG (HOCHBAHN) tramway has deployed four Mercedes-Benz Citaro FuelCELL hybrid busses in regular service. This launch was supported by NIP, the National Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology Innovation Programme of the German Federal Ministry of Transport.



Planning, design and construction

The Phileas busses are manufactured by the Dutch company APTS (Advanced Public Transport Systems), the know-how inside is German to a great extent, though. The fuel cell system has an electric capacity of 150 kilowatts. The busses are equipped with an innovative hybrid traction system supplied by Vossloh Kiepe GmbH in Düsseldorf. The self-adaptive energy management system controls the energy streams between the consumers and the dual energy storage system which consists of a combined double-layer capacitor plus battery.

The battery system is supplied by Hoppecke Batterien GmbH & Co. KG in Brilon near Paderborn, the fuel cells are produced by the Canadian supplier Ballard Power Systems Inc. All in all four busses were built as prototypes, two of which are operated by RVK and the Dutch public transport provider of Amsterdam GVB respectively.

HyCologne - Wasserstoff Region Rheinland e. V.

On an international level the Phileas project is represented by HyCologne - Wasserstoff Region Rheinland e.V., the hydrogen promotion initiative for the Rheinland region based in Hürth near Cologne. Scientific support is provided by institutes of the Cologne University of Applied Sciences (FH Köln) and the RWTH Aachen University. Financial support comes from the European Regional Development Fund, the NRW government, the Rhein-Erft county as well as from the cities of Hürth and Brühl.