

Opening Remarks by the Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry, Mr George Papanastasiou, at the “Hydrogen for a Clean Future: Pathways for Cyprus & Beyond” Conference

14 November 2025, Frederick University, Nicosia

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the conference. It is a great pleasure to be here today, at Frederick University, joining experts, innovators and stakeholders who share a common vision for a sustainable energy landscape. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Cyprus Hydrogen Association and the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation for organising this timely event and for their unwavering commitment to advancing our country’s hydrogen sector.

Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in the global energy transition. The urgency of climate change, combined with recent geopolitical developments, has fundamentally reshaped the energy landscape and intensified the imperative for energy independence and security. The goal of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 is not merely an aspiration – it is a necessity for future generations.

In this context, hydrogen – particularly renewable hydrogen – has emerged as one of the key pillars of Europe’s decarbonisation strategy, a driver of industrial competitiveness, and a future geopolitical asset. The European Union has recognised this through its 2020 Hydrogen Strategy, the REPowerEU plan, the creation of the European Hydrogen Bank, and the establishment of the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH).

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry has been actively involved in ENNOH's foundation from its very inception. When the first meeting took place in January 2024 to discuss ENNOH's statutes and initiate the foundational process, Cyprus was among the participants joining this critical European initiative.

Today, Cyprus participates as an associated partner in ENNOH, demonstrating our commitment to being part of Europe's hydrogen infrastructure development from the ground up. This involvement ensures that Cyprus remains connected to the broader European hydrogen ecosystem and benefits from the technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and coordinated planning that ENNOH facilitates. Our participation reflects our belief that, while we are a small island nation, we must be present at the table where Europe's hydrogen future is being shaped.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Building on this European engagement, Cyprus' National Hydrogen Strategy represents a realistic and feasible approach, tailored to our specific national circumstances and needs.

The Strategy for the period 2025-2030 prioritises regulatory adaptation through the development of a comprehensive framework, which addresses the entire hydrogen value chain – from production and distribution to end-use applications. By 2027, we aim to establish this framework, which will encompass clear licensing procedures and the necessary safety and quality standards to support a reliable hydrogen ecosystem.

Beyond the regulatory framework, our Strategy also focuses on the gradual introduction of hydrogen in heavy transport – trucks and buses – as the optimal and most cost-effective pathway for integrating hydrogen into our energy mix. This approach acknowledges that for Cyprus electrification of passenger transport remains the most suitable and efficient option, particularly given our island’s extensive renewable energy potential and the compatibility of short distances with current electric vehicle capabilities.

However, we must be realistic about the challenges ahead. Water scarcity is a critical factor for Cyprus, as producing green hydrogen through electrolysis requires between 9 and 15 kilograms of water for every kilogram of hydrogen produced. In addition, the necessary investments in specialised infrastructure are exceptionally high and require careful technical and strategic planning.

These challenges are not unique to Cyprus. We observe that Europe’s shift toward an economically viable model implies a slower green transition due to increased costs. Yet this should not discourage us. Private initiatives that promote innovative technologies through pilot programs must continue to ensure we don’t fall behind international technological developments.

The Government will support hydrogen development by actively encouraging private initiatives and pilot projects, while establishing the legislative and regulatory frameworks needed for success. Innovation and entrepreneurship are the fundamental driving forces of the energy transition and the collaboration between private investment and targeted government policy can create a dynamic and sustainable hydrogen ecosystem.

This spirit of collaboration, between Government and private sector, is already evident here today. This conference exemplifies the kind of partnership we need – bringing together academic institutions, European organisations, industry leaders, and policymakers to create the fertile ground where hydrogen’s promise can become reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We stand at a critical juncture in Cyprus’ energy journey. The challenges we face are undeniably significant, but the opportunities before us are extraordinarily promising. With a clear strategy, strong cooperation among all stakeholders, and steadfast support for innovative initiatives, we can position Cyprus as a meaningful contributor to sustainable energy development in the Mediterranean region.

The presentations and discussions that follow will, I am certain, offer valuable insights to guide our path forward.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and enlightening conference.