Position Statement on the Future Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

Contribution to the European Commission Call for Evidence on European Partnerships to be implemented as Joint Undertakings in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034

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Attachment	Background paper as supporting document

WIVA P&G — Austria's flagship hydrogen and green-gas initiative, uniting industry, research organisations, SMEs and regional actors along the entire value chain — strongly supports the continuation and further development of a dedicated, ambitious and adequately funded Hydrogen Joint Undertaking in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034.

A strong European instrument remains essential to connect research, innovation, demonstration, industrial scale-up and market activation. The Clean Hydrogen JU and its predecessors (since 2008) have built a world-leading ecosystem: €1 billion of EU funding for 2021–2027, matched by at least the same in private investment (over €2 billion total). Continuous oversubscription — 212 proposals in the 2025 call and 170 in 2026 — confirms real demand and a mature project pipeline. Fragmentation would stall industrial demonstrations and integrated ecosystems exactly when Europe must accelerate.

Hydrogen is a clean technology where Europe leads and can win. The EU accounts for 28% of the world's international hydrogen patent families (Japan 24%, US 20%; EPO–IEA 2023, data 2011–2020) and retains strong electrolyser manufacturing — unlike solar PV and batteries, where Europe lost the industrial race and now imports the large majority. A JU that converts this innovation lead into European value creation, industrial capacity and resilient supply chains is a strategic competitiveness instrument, not only a decarbonisation tool. Hydrogen also strengthens energy-system resilience and security of supply — a priority since the 2022 energy crisis — as a domestic, storable, sector-coupling energy carrier.

Hydrogen is a systemic value chain spanning production, storage, transport, infrastructure, industry, mobility, power and heat. A dedicated JU delivers the governance continuity, strategic portfolio management and long-term coordination across decade-long investment cycles that fragmented calls cannot. WIVA P&G supports the Hydrogen Europe Research position on a next-generation JU with a ring-fenced budget, an integrated research-to-scale-up programme, and stronger coordination with Member States, the SET Plan and the European Competitiveness Fund.

To deliver the full innovation-to-investment journey, the next JU should pair continuity with real simplification — shorter time-to-grant and easier access for SMEs and start-ups — and a structured bridge from research to scale-up finance (the Innovation Fund, the European Hydrogen Bank and the future European Competitiveness Fund), including support to replicate and scale successful Hydrogen Valleys.

Future programming should be broadened to carbon management. Renewable and low-carbon hydrogen is the key building block for synthetic and carbon-neutral fuels, green molecules, carbon capture and utilisation, and industrial circularity. Hydrogen Valley experience shows hydrogen alone rarely delivers deep industrial transformation; integrated solutions combining hydrogen, renewables, captured biogenic or unavoidable CO2,

storage and sector coupling are required. As the same companies and research organisations act in both fields, one coherent instrument avoids duplication and fits the Commission's portfolio approach.

Hydrogen Valleys should remain a central implementation instrument — territorial launchpads that translate European strategy into regional deployment and generate replicable knowledge, highly relevant for Austria's regional initiatives.

WIVA P&G therefore recommends continuing, broadening and adequately funding a Hydrogen Joint Undertaking - including Carbon Management - that turns European research excellence into industrial strength, climate-effective applications and sustainable value creation. A detailed background paper is attached.