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Grupa Azoty Police and West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin inaugurate Hydrogen Academy

On May 13th 2023, twenty-seven scholarship recipients began classes at the Hydrogen Academy of Szczecin, established by Grupa Azoty Police and the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin as part of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley. Between May and July, the participants of the Academy will take classes and carry out their own projects based on which candidates for internships, including at Grupa Azoty, one of the largest hydrogen producers in Poland, will be selected. Paid internships at the companies participating in the Hydrogen Academy are scheduled for August and September 2023.

The purpose of the Hydrogen Academy is to train and develop highly specialised staff in hydrogen technology. The Academy's mission is to impart knowledge about the advantages and challenges of using hydrogen, and to promote innovative solutions based on this technology.

In accordance with the Academy's schedule, after the last session the participants will take a study tour of GreenLab, a Danish company which is a green and circular energy park and also a national research facility in the country. The participants will have an opportunity to learn about the latest research and technologies for processing, storing and applying green energy. It will also be an opportunity to compare the knowledge they gained in class with practice.

"Leading Polish fuel and chemical companies have been involved in initiatives related to increasing the use of hydrogen as an energy source. What was initiated by the Orlen Group in March this year has also taken place at Grupa Azoty Zakłady Chemiczne Police S.A. and the West Pomeranian University of Technology. This confirms that in the Szczecin Province we are strongly focused on innovation, science and cooperation. I believe that your project will contribute to Poland becoming the leader of the hydrogen economy in Central and Eastern Europe, and the knowledge and skills gained at the Academy will enable its future graduates to make practical use of innovative hydrogen technologies in business," said Zbigniew Bogucki, Governor of the Szczecin Province.

"The Grupa Azoty Group, one of the largest producers of hydrogen, is particularly interested in training new personnel in hydrogen technologies. We are actively involved in initiatives related to building a national hydrogen economy, and we know how great potential lies in this area. I have the conviction that the ambitious curriculum of the Hydrogen Academy, including the planned study tour, will enable the participants to acquire unique skills in the field of hydrogen and, above all, will offer them an opportunity to compare theoretical knowledge with practice, also during the internship at the Grupa Azoty Group," said Thomas Hinc, President of Grupa Azoty S.A. Management Board.

"For today's business, and especially industry, renewable energy and hydrogen technologies are the new reality.

This is why having specialists qualified in this field is in fact a requirement rather than a privilege. The Hydrogen Academy project, pursued in partnership with the West Pomeranian University of Technology, is a valuable initiative. Numerous lectures and laboratory classes with experts will create an excellent foundation for acquiring personnel specialised specifically in innovative hydrogen technologies," **said Mariusz Grab, President of the Grupa Azoty Police Management Board.**

"The West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin is a university that enables research and R&D projects in engineering, technology and natural sciences. We have a highly qualified scientific staff and are developing a unique research infrastructure, which are crucial to building Poland's green industry. We are also a leader in modern education, involving close cooperation with key business partners. The Hydrogen Academy opens up the possibility of training personnel who will build and drive the growth of hydrogen economy in our region in the future," **noted His Magnificence Rector of the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Prof. Jacek Wróbel.**

The participants of the Academy comprise fifteen students, six doctoral students and six employees of the Grupa Azoty Group. The classes will be conducted primarily by specialists and experts in hydrogen technologies and researchers of the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin.

As part of the first session, the first classes were held shortly after the Academy's opening ceremony. The lecture entitled "Hydrogen in the strategies of Polish companies, including in large-scale projects in Poland, compared with European solutions" was delivered by Prof. Dr. Habil. Mirosław Miller of Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences and Mr Gregor von Kampen-Banisch, CEO of DCEO Group and member of the Programme Council of the Polish Renewable Energy Congress.

As planned, there was also a class with an expert from Grupa Azoty – Rafał Biały, PhD, Specialist Coordinator for Regulatory Matters at Grupa Azoty S.A., discussed hydrogen in the context of European Union's climate policy.

A lecture on the national hydrogen economy and the application of PEM electrolysis with an innovative technology reducing the use of non-renewable raw materials was delivered by Prof. Ewa Mijowska, specialist in materials engineering and hydrogen technology.