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Grupa Azoty Group concludes first edition of Hydrogen Academy programme

Grupa Azoty S.A., Grupa Azoty Zakłady Chemiczne Police S.A., Grupa Azoty Polyolefins S.A. and Port Morski Police Sp. z o.o., as the initiators of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley, are collaborating on activities focused on establishing and developing a hydrogen economy, particularly in the Province of Szczecin. The signatories are committed to creating favourable conditions for businesses involved in advancing a hydrogen economy and hydrogen-supported energy optimisation in the region. As part of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley project, the unique Hydrogen Academy project has been established as a joint venture between the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin and Grupa Azoty Police.

The Hydrogen Academy aims to educate and foster the development of highly qualified specialists in hydrogen technologies, impart knowledge about the advantages and challenges of using hydrogen, and promote innovative solutions based on hydrogen technology.

'In today's business landscape, especially in industry, renewable energy and hydrogen technologies are becoming the new reality. This is why having specialists qualified in this field is in fact a requirement rather than a privilege. The establishment of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley and the Hydrogen Academy project attests to the growing interest in hydrogen, emphasising the significance of collaboration between industry, science, and NGOs. This marks another initiative supporting the development of a hydrogen economy the Grupa Azoty Group has engaged in as one of the leading fertilizer and chemical companies in Europe and one of the largest hydrogen producers in Poland,' said **Mariusz Grab, Vice President of the Management Board of Grupa Azoty S.A. and President of the Management Board of Grupa Azoty Police.**

The first edition of the Academy opened on 13 May 2023, welcoming twenty-seven scholarship recipients who embarked on their studies at the Hydrogen Academy of Szczecin, established through collaboration between Grupa Azoty Zakłady Chemiczne Police S.A. and the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin as part of the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley programme. The Academy participants comprise fifteen students, six doctoral students and six employees of the Grupa Azoty Group. From May to July 2023, participants attended classes and undertook individual projects, which served as the basis for selecting candidates for internships at the Grupa Azoty Group and other employers. The paid internship programmes at companies participating in the Hydrogen Academy were carried out in August and September of last year.

The Hydrogen Academy project was formally concluded on 26–27 September 2023 during the conference "Energy Crisis and the Rise of Hydrogen" hosted by the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Grupa Azoty Zakłady Chemiczne Police S.A., and the West Pomeranian Hydrogen Valley. The conference

featured speeches, panel discussions, and youth groups showcasing the accomplishments of students and doctoral students who completed the Hydrogen Academy programme. The projects developed by the graduates encompassed concepts for innovative hydrogen technology solutions aligned with the Grupa Azoty Group's corporate strategy. They covered various aspects, including the development of a hydrogen market, the implementation of the European Union hydrogen strategy considering the Grupa Azoty Group's potential, the 'green shift' in raw material diversification, technical solutions related to hydrogen technologies, applications of hydrogen technologies in decarbonisation and emissions reduction, the development of a green hydrogen market, production and utilisation of green hydrogen, and hydrogen transportation.

'Following the last session, participants embarked on a study tour of GreenLab, a Danish company serving as a green and circular energy park and a national research facility. Hydrogen Academy participants had the opportunity to explore the latest research and technologies for processing, storing, and applying green energy. The experience also allowed them to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge gained in class and practical applications. Currently, we are working on the upcoming editions of the Hydrogen Academy, with plans to expand the curriculum to encompass the latest knowledge related to renewable energy sources. The longstanding collaboration between Grupa Azoty Police and the West Pomeranian University of Technology, which spans strategic and operational levels, includes research and development initiatives, implementation-based doctoral programmes, and technical staff training. We aim to continue this successful partnership,' **said prof. dr hab. inż. Rafał Rakoczy, Dean of the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology at the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin and leader of the Hydrogen Academy.**