

The President's Foreword

Dear all,

During the General Assembly last week, we had the opportunity to look back on a rich and interesting year, full of challenges for our members and ourselves. And 2025 promises to be just as difficult for the automotive sector. The war in Russia continues, the new American president is threatening Europe with taxes, and China will continue to strengthen its position in the automotive sector, all of which have a negative impact on our members' economic environment. As a result, it will be even more difficult to close the gap between us and new zero-emission vehicles designed, produced and sold in Europe, at an affordable price.

As clusters, we need to play our part in helping our members to survive and thrive in such unstable and risky times. Learning from each other, collaborating and developing joint thoughts, actions and services is a solid basis for high-quality support.

Let's join forces again for the benefit of our members and the ecosystem as a whole.

Yours

Bruno Grandjean, President

Inside EACN

Strong participation in the General Assembly 2025

The General Assembly 2025 brought together cluster managers from 28 out of 32 clusters, highlighting the very strong commitment to the network.

Report of the President: Welcome to new members



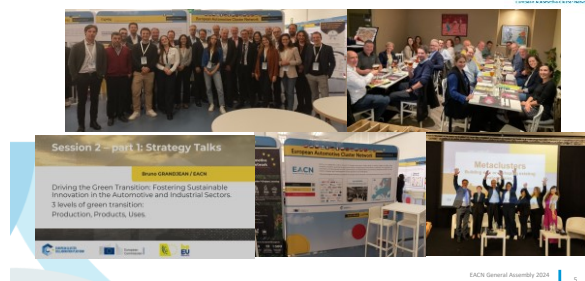
EACN Member Clusters at 01.01.2025.

The assembly was a great opportunity to look back on 12 months full of events, exchanges, mutual learnings, and project results. The highlight of the year was certainly the physical networking and discussions during the European Cluster Conference, where 36 participants from 22 Member Clusters came together. EACN had also the chance to actively share our experience as a meta-cluster and present benefits and added value for members. And with [BACC](#), [Laugea](#), and [Zone Cluster](#), we also met three of the four new

members of last year. [Automotive Cluster/Bayern Innovativ](#) has already been founding member of the initial EACN network in 2018 and joined EACN again.

Report of the President: EACN Contribution to ECC2024

EACN



Impressions from the European Cluster Conference

After the retrospect on the last year, the assembly prepared the new year with the election of the new Executive Board members 2025-2026:

- ▲ AC Bulgaria (BG): **Lubomir Stanislavov**, CEO
- ▲ Autoklastr (CZ): **Libor Dobes**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ CIAC (ES): **Josep Nadal**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ Cluster Logistics & Mobility (DE): **Uwe Pfeil**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ East Automotive Alliance EAA (PL): **Ryszard Jania**, President
- ▲ Mobinov (PT): **Miguel Araujo**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ North East Automotive Alliance NEAA (UK): **Paul Butler**, CEO
- ▲ Pôle Véhicule du Futur (FR): **Bruno Grandjean**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Cluster (PL): **Lukasz Gorecki**, Cluster Manager
- ▲ Transformative Heilbronn (DE): **Alexandra Wolf**, EU Project Manager
- ▲ Zonecluster (HU): **Veronika Erös**, Cluster Manager

The board will meet on 4 February to elect the new president and to prepare the first actions for 2025.

Introduced by the current president Bruno Grandjean, the General Assembly closed with a discussion about the difficult situation of the European automotive industry. Beside the classical challenges such as, e.g., electrification, ensuring supply chain resilience, reacting to a decreasing market in Europe, new risks are arising in 2025: the new US commercial politics, Chinese OEMs opening production plants in Europe to obviate the duties whereas most imported EVs are not from Chinese manufacturers but, e.g., from Tesla and other occidental OEMs. Another negative trend is seen in the implementation of production sites from European OEMs in Morocco and North Africa in general. 2025 remains an interesting year for the whole value chain, but also for clusters.

Contact:

Thomas Röhr, Secretary General

✉ sg@eacn-initiative.eu

Members' lounge

Sergio Alcaraz, President of CIAC, calls for urgent funding to ensure the sustainability of the Automotive Industry

As 2024 comes to a close, the industry faces increasingly fierce competition. While Europe has seen a decline in vehicle production in recent years, Asia-Oceania, led by China, has experienced notable growth. Since 2010, vehicle production in Asia has increased by 34%, while Europe has seen an 8.4% decline, with a significant loss of presence in key countries such as Germany and France. This shift in production hubs has direct implications for Europe's competitiveness, which is already losing its prominence on a global scale.

It is time for the sector to be heard and for the right political decisions to be made so that the automotive industry can continue its transition towards sustainability, digitalization, and electrification. [Full press release](#)

Contact

Josep Nadal, Cluster Manager

✉ josep.nadal@ciac.cat

Transformation of the manufacturing industry: The path towards Artificial Intelligence and Hydrogen



The Cluster Initiative TRANSFORMATIVE DIALOG will organise the "Clusters Meet Regions" event in Heilbronn, Germany, on 09 & 10 April 2025.

The conference aims to bring up new insights and ideas that may contribute to cluster policy in general but also to future EU policies. It will examine the transformative role of clusters in **driving innovation, promoting sustainability, and strengthening resilience** within regional and European ecosystems. With Heilbronn's leadership in cutting-edge sectors like **Automotive, Mechanical Engineering, Robotics & Artificial Intelligence and Hydrogen**, the event will offer participants a first-hand experience and an excellent basis for discussion on how clusters are central in a thriving regional innovation ecosystem and are key contributors to European competitiveness.

Building on the successful tradition of previous events across Europe, the Heilbronn edition will provide a

platform for cross-sector collaboration, dynamic discussions, and hands-on engagement through **site visits, matchmakings, panel discussions, and interactive workshops.**

We are looking forward to welcoming EACN members to Heilbronn. Event information will be posted here: [Clusters meet Regions | European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)

Contact:

Alexandra Wolf, EU Project Manager

✉ wolf@wfgheilbronn.de

Clust-ER call for good practices on collaborative mapping initiatives of automotive related training offers

Clust-ER MECH is currently collaborating with the Emilia-Romagna regional government on the mapping and the analysis of the competences and skills needed by the automotive sector in their region.

Clust-ER wants to include some good practice and other already developed mapping examples from around Europe in the context analysis section, in which collaborative mapping of training offers in the automotive industry is done with the specific purpose to improve the vocational and academic supply, thus matching the needs of companies with the orientation of training centres and universities.

If you have knowledge or participate(d) in such an action, please get in touch with

Contact

Nicolò Bertolini, Project Developer

✉ nicolo.bertolini@mech.clust-er.it

Federico Capucci, Cluster Manager

✉ federico.capucci@mech.clust-er.it

News from Mobinov

MOBINOV recognized for the 2nd time as a Cluster by IAPMEI (entity responsible for clusters in Portugal)

MOBINOV was recognized as the Clusters of Competitiveness with national impact. This recognition fosters collaboration in research, innovation, capacity building, internationalization, and sustainability. MOBINOV, once again acknowledged, is crucial for economic competitiveness, climate neutrality, and digital leadership in the Automotive and Mobility Sector in Portugal.

INFIMO | Mission in Tartu (Estonia)

From January 29th to 31st, the INFIMO project, of which MOBINOV is a part, will undertake a mission in Tartu (Estonia). This mission includes visits to the

STARTUp Day event and the Delta Centre at the University of Tartu, fostering innovation, networking, and collaboration among European clusters. A unique opportunity for executives and companies to broaden their horizons. <https://www.startupday.ee/>

Contact:

Tânia Godinho, Project & Marketing Manager

✉ tania.godinho@mobinov.pt

December meeting of ACS members

In December took place the traditional December meeting of ACS members. The theme of this year's meeting was change. Tanja Mohorič, Director of ACS, began by pointing out that while the current situation in the automotive industry is challenging and unsettling, the industry is in a state of flux. Companies are therefore used to them, and most of them have always found a way out of difficult situations through innovative and breakthrough solutions, flexibility and know-how. She also reminded everyone that now is a particularly opportune moment to work together and talk frankly about the way forward. Only together can we be stronger and ready to face new global challenges.



The year 2025 will certainly be a year of intense reflection on the transformation of the automotive and mobility industries. This is because transformation in companies must be based on strategic reflection and transformation, which is what we discussed with selected experts at the round table.

ACS is well aware that innovation, collaboration and knowledge are some of the key building blocks for success, and the cluster will continue to organise interesting meetings, workshops, professional events and training in 2025.

Contact:

Erik Blatnik, PR koordinator

✉ erik.blatnik@acs-giz.si

A productive winter season at East Automotive Alliance

The winter season and the turn of the year also proved to be very productive for EAA:

▲ EAA did not forget the local entrepreneurs and ongoing cooperation with local government authorities. As the managing entity of the Tarnobrzeg Industrial and Technology Park, EAA co-organized a business breakfast under the auspices of the Partner Business Clubs. In addition to the numerous entrepreneurs, the meeting was also attended by representatives of the local city office headed by the mayor. Also, the Director of the Industrial Development Agency was present, as well as the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to make new contacts, exchange experiences and build business relation.



The Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, Mr. Marek Osak speaking during the EAA Business Breakfast

▲ December is a time when the EAA is particularly involved in social and charitable activities. This year, EAA actively participated in two events with a common theme of Christmas Tree. Thanks to the involvement of many companies, including EAA, a Christmas tree lighting was held in Tarnobrzeg, which brought together many of the city's residents, led by its authorities. The second Christmas Tree is a wishing tree, and it is a charity action for children and young people with various disabilities. In addition to our own contributions, we were able to attract many sponsors willing to share their kindness at this special time.

Contact:

Kinga Szczepaniak

✉ biuro@eaa-wsm.pl

New publication by the Cluster Electric Mobility South-West about traction batteries

Traction batteries lie at the heart of Europe's sustainable mobility ambitions. This paper delves into how second-life applications and recycling not only extend battery lifecycles but also drive the circular economy. CESW published an issue paper titled "Circular economy of traction batteries from Europe: The potential of recycling and second-life applications"

presenting innovative solutions, challenges, and strategies shaping the future of battery sustainability.

„The document explores the circular economy of traction batteries in Europe, focusing on second-life applications and recycling. It highlights the ecological and economic benefits of extending battery life through reuse in stationary energy systems and recovering valuable materials via recycling. Challenges such as standardization, data transparency, and regulatory impacts are addressed. Innovative business models and EU policies are emphasized as critical to achieving sustainability goals. The paper underscores the role of second-life batteries in reducing carbon footprints and conserving resources while promoting collaboration across industries and governments.“ Download the full issue paper [here](#).

Contact:

Konstantin Kolosa, Network management

✉ konstantin.kolasa@e-mobilbw.de

VAMOS ecosystem to launch a new podcast series on autonomous driving

Each podcast introduces a member company from the VAMOS ecosystem, exploring their unique business journey and groundbreaking solutions shaping the future. The podcasts allow gaining insights into the industries they're transforming, the partnerships driving their success, and their vision for global growth. Tune in to connect with trailblazing ideas and the people bringing them to life.



VAMOS ecosystem partnered with one of the biggest media companies in the world, Bauer Media, to produce this innovative content. Discover and access the VAMOS Podcast Series: Showcasing Our Members - Vamos [here](#).

Contact:

Mia Backman, Senior Facilitator

✉ mia.backman@dimecc.com

Cluster Mobility & Logistics organises joint stand at LogiMAT 2025

Together with eleven co-exhibitors, the Cluster Mobility & Logistics will be represented at LogiMAT in Stuttgart from 11 - 13 March 2025. As Europe's largest annual intralogistics trade fair, LogiMAT 2025 will be held under the motto 'PASSION FOR SOLUTIONS - Specialists - AI - Sustainability'

In addition to the trade exhibition, the cluster is also inviting visitors to a Bavarian breakfast at the joint stand on 12 March from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., which will provide ample opportunity for networking and making new contacts. You will find joint stand in Hall 4, Stand D53.

Contact:

Maria Hirschberger, Marketing

✉ maria.hirschberger@techbase.de

CIAC becomes supporting partner of Advanced Factories 2025

Advanced Factories will take place from 8 to 10 April 2025 in Barcelona. It is an important event in industrial automation and robotics. More than 570 exhibiting companies will showcase their latest innovations in robotics, automation, AI, machine vision, 3D printing, digital twins, IoT, big data, industrial cloud, blockchain... as well as solutions for production system integration, cybersecurity, predictive maintenance, quality control, and improving energy efficiency. [Further information](#).

Contact:

Patricia Molina, Communication & Marketing Manager

✉ comunicacio@ciac.cat

Project corner

Interreg Central Europe Project Drive2Transform

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



Co-funded by
the European Union

Drive2Transform

The [Drive2Transform](#) project helps SMEs to take up trends like electrification, connectivity, automation, and the platform economy and to master the necessary shift by developing a cross-regional strategy and deploying an open transformation platform for the automotive sector.

On Friday, 22 November 2024, the Drive2Transform Consortium met to conclude on the first analysis phase and to officially finalise the first deliverables, the Regional Reports from the project partners, featuring the **Transformation Readiness Index**, as well as the Transnational Report and the Guideline. All deliverables can be downloaded [here](#).

Contact:

Maria Hirschberger, Marketing

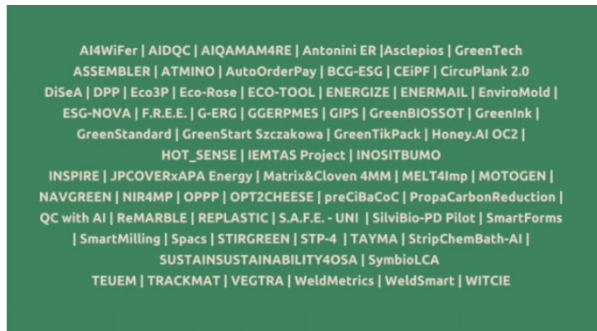
✉ maria.hirschberger@techbase.de

greenSME Open Call 2 resolved – 65 new projects starting their journey towards green manufacturing



The greenSME project, coordinated by Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Cluster and co-funded by the European Union, aims at strengthening manufacturing SMEs' capacity to adopt advanced green and digital technologies and social innovation for sustainability. The consortium supports SMEs through a sustainability assessment tool, an action plan, and financial support to foster projects between manufacturing SMEs and Sustainability and Technology Providers.

In December 2024, [65 new projects](#) with a total of 130 beneficiaries have been selected on the basis of the 2nd Open. Projects receive a total grant of EUR 35 000, of which EUR 10 000 and EUR 25 000 are overall grants for manufacturing SMEs and Sustainability & Technology Provider respectively.



The approved Open Call 2 projects are realized by beneficiaries from Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, UK, Ukraine.

Contact

Ewa Dudzic-Widera, SA&AM Project Manager

✉ edudzic@silesia-automotive.pl

1st Call of the SCAIRA Project | Extended

**Interreg
Sudoe**



Co-funded by
the European Union

SCAIRA

The SCAIRA project aims to support automotive and aerospace startups and entrepreneurs in rural areas of the SUDOE region, offering mentorship, access to funding, and workshops tailored to their needs. The application deadline for the project's acceleration programme has been extended until January 27. Participants will have the opportunity to tackle industrial challenges, develop innovative solutions, and boost the growth of their businesses. Find more information [here](#).

Contact:

Tânia Godinho, Project & Marketing Manager

✉ tania.godinho@mobinov.pt

Trends Shaping the Automotive Mobility Sector

The TRIREME project, with Mobinov as partner, elaborated a [study on the trends shaping the automotive mobility sector through 2050](#). The study highlights topics such as



digitalization, sustainability, the circular economy, and new business models. It focuses on the transformation of the labour market, gaps in critical skills, and the need for technological adaptation and training. It also emphasizes the importance of resilient value chains and the implementation of sustainable practices to address global challenges.

Contact:

Tânia Godinho, Project & Marketing Manager

✉ tania.godinho@mobinov.pt

Common Project of Podkarpackie Marshal's Office and EAA

It has been a busy time recently, mostly due to the project agreement signed in November between the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and East Automotive Alliance entitled **Support in networking stakeholders of the innovation system of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and activation of participants in the entrepreneurial discovery process**. This support, of course, relates to the automotive industry, which is one of the four smart specializations of our region. The signing of the agreement is the quintessence of excellent cooperation with the regional authorities and is a good example of how clusters can

support regional economic policy while realizing their statutory goals and raising funds for their activities. We are proud of such cooperation and grateful for such a mature approach from the Podkarpackie authorities. This is a pilot project that will take 6 months to implement, and it has been the tasks performed under it that have been driving our activities in November, December, and now in January.

Contact:






Kinga Szczepaniak

 biuro@eaa-wsm.pl

Other information

Strategic Dialogue on the Future of the European Automotive Industry will be launched on 30 January

the European Commission is launching a Strategic Dialogue with the European automotive industry, social partners and other key stakeholders on 30 January to respond to the urgent need for action to protect the European automotive industry and give it a future within the European Union. **Commissioner Tzitzikostas has been tasked with developing an action plan** for the sector. The Strategic Dialogue will anchor on regular meetings bringing together key representatives of industry, notably OEMs and tier-1 suppliers, with social partners, representatives of infrastructure and civil society as well as selected Commissioners, chaired by President von der Leyen. **The first meeting will aim to come to a shared view of the most critical challenges and potential pathways to solutions.** It could also formulate specific goals and ambitions for further work. Potential topics for the working group could include:

-  Innovation and leadership in future technologies and capabilities (especially software, autonomous driving, next-gen batteries)
-  Clean transition and decarbonisation
-  Competitiveness and resilience (energy, labour, raw materials and other inputs)
-  Trade relations and international “level playing field”
-  Regulatory streamlining and process optimization

[Further information](#) and [concept note](#).

Innovation Fund 2024 Call

On 3 December 2024, the Commission opened the Innovation Fund 2024 Call (IF24 Call) and the Innovation Fund 2024 Battery call (IF24 Battery).

With a total budget of 2.4 billion€, the IF24 Call supports projects with a significant potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in various sectors. The IF24 Battery call has a budget of €1 billion for electric-

vehicles battery cell and it will support projects can produce innovative electric vehicles battery cells or deploy innovative manufacturing techniques, processes and technologies.

The deadline for applications is the 24 April 2025. [Further information](#).

Trainings about Horizon Europe proposals

The European Commission organises the following events to help applicants and beneficiaries with their Horizon Europe proposals and projects:

-  13 March 2025 | 09:30 – 12:30 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Finding opportunities and submitting a proposal in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)
-  20 March 2025 | 09:30 – 12:45 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Grant Agreement Preparation in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)
-  27 March 2025 | 10:00 – 12:00 CET | Online
Lump Sum Funding in Horizon Europe: How does it work? How to write a proposal? (for applicants and beneficiaries) | [Event website](#)
-  03 April 2025 | 09:30 – 13:00 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Grant Management in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)

There is no need to register to the events.

Horizon Europe Work programmes 2025

Interested in informing your members about potential upcoming calls for proposals? The Website [Science|Business®](#) published a set of working papers including those for Digital, industry & space, Climate, energy & mobility; and EIC.

Attention: These documents remain drafts and may be subject to modifications before their official publication. [Access to the draft working programmes](#)

EU and Switzerland successfully conclude negotiations on Horizon Europe and Euratom

The Commission and the Swiss Government have concluded negotiations on the association of Switzerland to all three pillars of Horizon Europe and the Euratom research and training programme. The signing of the Agreement on Swiss participation in Union programmes is expected to take place in 2025, pending the completion of all necessary validations on both sides. [Press release](#)

EIC work programme and funding opportunities 2025

On 29 October 2024, the European Innovation Council published the work programme 2025. Information about EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, EIC Accelerator, and EIC STEP Scale Up can be found [here](#). The **EIC Accelerator programme includes a mobility challenge 'Breakthrough innovations for future mobility'** (p. 93ff of the [work programme](#)).


European Startup Prize for Mobility #6 | Deadline: 7 February 2025


European startups in clean mobility can apply (individual application) to the European StartUp Prize (EUSP) and compete with pairs in Europe. The TOP 50 startups will benefit from visibility and access to a private Demo Day with 100+ European VCs and CVCs. The TOP 10 startups will be supported by the EUSP team, benefit from a 3-month remote acceleration and investment program powered by Via ID (lobbying, European expansion, mentoring) and funding opportunities (dilutive and non-dilutive). And the TOP 4 startups, selected from the TOP 10, will also benefit from a personal strategic business consultancy provided by Boston Consulting Group. [Full information and application](#)


New EU publication: Addressing European research and innovation challenges for system transitions in energy and mobility


This new publication is an independent expert report aiming at offering recommendations and ideas on challenges and priorities for research and innovation (R&I) in the areas of clean energy and mobility. The paper sets out a vision for future energy and mobility systems that is aligned with the EU's long-term ecological, economic and social objectives. The paper explores nine 'innovation pathways' in energy and mobility systems that are assessed against four contemporary challenges affecting energy and mobility systems. Download the publication [here](#).


Agenda


 **11 – 13 February 2025** | Brussels (Belgium)
RTR Conference 2025 | organised by 2ZERO, CCAM, ERTRAC, EC | [Further information](#)


 **11 – 13 March 2025** | Stuttgart (Germany)
LogiMAT | [Further information](#)


 **13 March 2025** | 09:30 – 12:30 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Finding opportunities and submitting a proposal in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)


 **20 March 2025** | 09:30 – 12:45 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Grant Agreement Preparation in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)


 **27 March 2025** | 10:00 – 12:00 CET | Online
Lump Sum Funding in Horizon Europe: How does it work? How to write a proposal? (for applicants and beneficiaries) | [Event website](#)


 **03 April 2025** | 09:30 – 13:00 CET | Online
Horizon Implementation Day: Grant Management in Horizon Europe | [Event website](#)

 **8 – 10 April 2025** | Barcelona (Spain)
Advanced Factories | [Further information](#)


 **6 May 2025** | Brussels & online
Info day 2025 on calls for proposals Cluster 5: Climate, Energy & Mobility | organised by the European Commission | Further information to come

 **13 – 15 May 2025** | Ispra (Italy)
5th European Conference on Connected and Automated Driving (EUCAD) | organized by the EC, CCAM, and FAME project | [Further information](#)

 **27 – 28 May 2025** | Belgrade (Serbia)
SEE Automotive Conference | organised by AC Serbia | Save the date

 **5 – 6 June 2025** | Rzeszów (Poland)
EU Industry Days 2025 | organised by the European Commission and ECCP | [Further information](#)


Legal notice

Links preceded by the  are also available on the EACN website with a limited access to employees from EACN clusters and their members.

This is the internal newsletter of EACN. Input comes from the Executive Board members, the Secretary General as well as from EACN cluster members.

EACN contacts:

 [Bruno Grandjean](#), President

 [Thomas Röhr](#), Secretary General

☎ +33 6 47 38 02 00

www.eacn-initiative.eu |  | 

Newsletter published on 27.01.2025