

The President's Foreword

Dear all,

First of all, I warmly welcome our new member **North Hungary Automotive Cluster** (NOHAC) to EACN. NOHAC is based in Miskolc in the North-east of Hungary. A more detailed presentation will follow in our July newsletter. We are looking forward to fruitful cooperation.

The challenges of the European automotive sector are continuing, markets are down, and geopolitical tensions, including erratic decisions from the US, are raising. EACN therefore invited Mark NIKLAS, Head of Unit Mobility at DG GROW, to the EACN Coffee Break in May where we had an interesting exchange. Europe already voted the Industrial Action Plan with many measures to support the sector. The EC prefers to have a constructive dialogue to overcome the tensions but is also preparing reactions to potential new US decisions with impact on the European industry.

Our clusters are constantly active to support the European automotive industry, delivering services and engaging discussions with stakeholders on all levels, regional, national and European. That's what you can, again, discover in this newsletter.

Yours

Bruno Grandjean, President

Upcoming events with EACN (co-) organisation by EACN members

CEE Forum for the Automotive Transition | 18 September 2025 | Budapest: Early bird registration open



Zone Cluster organises in September the 2025 edition of its CEE Forum for the Automotive Transition. The event will gather key voices shaping the future of the industry and enable decision-makers, industry experts, and policymakers to discuss the breakout points and opportunities that will define the next phase of the automotive transition. EARLY BIRD registration now open - SAVE 30%! Event we bsite.

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Automotive Forum 2025: Innovation and Sustainable Development – Looking to the Future and Responding to Challenges

One of the most prominent events in the automotive sector – *Automotive Forum 2025*, organized by **Automotive Cluster Bulgaria**, will take place on June 11–12, 2025, at the *John Atanasoff Innovation Forum* in Sofia Tech Park, Sofia, Bulgaria. Once again, the forum will bring together leading industry figures, experts, and innovators to explore the key challenges and opportunities shaping the future of the automotive industry.



This year's edition will go beyond an analysis of the present state of the sector, aiming to inspire forward-looking dialogue focused on innovation, sustainability, and Bulgaria's role in the global automotive ecosystem.

On 12 Jun the European Digital Innovation Hub – Northwest Automotive Cluster Bulgaria will be launched with information on how companies can gain free access to expert knowledge and technologies, "test before invest" opportunities for new digital solutions, training and upskilling in digital competencies, as well as to connect with partners, investors, and innovation ecosystems.

Participation in *Automotive Forum 2025* is free of charge, but pre-registration is required at the official event website: https://forum.automotive.bg.

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Automotive Supplier's Day 2025 (Esslingen, Germany) – Save-the-date: 8 October 2025



e-mobil BW and the Cluster ESW invite interested companies and research institutes from Europe to join the <u>Automotive Suppliers' Day Baden-Württemberg in</u> Esslingen on 8 October 2025.

This year, Automotive Suppliers' Day is all about digital technology solutions and software applications - as key drivers for future competitiveness - showing groundbreaking innovations in research development as well as market opportunities and support services for suppliers. Focus lies on the transformation towards software-defined manufacturing and vehicles, as well as highly developed software-driven platforms. We will demonstrate how suppliers and particularly SMEs from Baden-Württemberg are successfully implementing software-based solutions for electromobility using practical cooperation projects. To strengthen their own competitive position, it is becoming increasingly important to find partners and establish collaborations at international and especially European level, therefore we are looking forward to welcoming you at Automotive Suppliers' Day! Participation is free of charge, and we invite international clusters, companies and research institutes.

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Insight EACN

EACN at "Cluster Meets Regions" in Heilbronn: Spotlight on AI and Hydrogen

On 9–10 April 2025, Wirtschaftsförderung Heilbronn with their cluster **TRANSFORMOTIVE DIALOG** had the pleasure of hosting the "**Cluster Meets Regions Heilbronn**" event in cooperation with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP). Under the title "Transformation of the Manufacturing Industry: The Path Towards Artificial Intelligence and Hydrogen", the event brought together more than 100 participants from 15 European countries to exchange knowledge, foster collaboration, and shape the future of manufacturing.

A key highlight was the active involvement of the European Automotive Cluster Network (EACN). EACN was represented by Secretary General Thomas Röhr as

well as cluster partners from AC Serbia and Autoklastr (Czech Republic). Their participation reflected the network's continued commitment to driving transformation across Europe's automotive sector through cooperation and innovation.



EACN members at CmR Heilbronn: Adam Priechodsky (Autoklastr), Alexandra Wolf (Transformotive), Thomas Röhr (EACN), Aleksandar Šaranac, Anna and Igor Vijatov (AC Serbia)

The two-day event focused on how **Artificial Intelligence** and **Hydrogen Technologies** are impacting and enabling the transformation of the manufacturing industry. A dynamic mix of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and networking & matchmaking sessions allowed clusters and companies to explore new project opportunities and build strategic partnerships.

On the second day, participants had the opportunity to experience innovation firsthand through site visits to the Innovation Park Artificial Intelligence (IPAI) and the German Aerospace Center (DLR), two flagship institutions contributing to cutting-edge developments in AI and hydrogen applications.

The strong participation of EACN underlined the value of cross-border cooperation and cluster-driven innovation in navigating the green and digital transformation of industry.

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Members' lounge

Happy Birthday East Automotive Alliance

Ten years of the East Automotive Alliance activity have become a fact. To mark the occasion, a festive meeting was held with the participation of EAA affiliates, cooperating companies, educational institutions and industry organizations, as well as representatives of the local and regional governments.



The event began with the Annual General Meeting of the associated members. One of the key points of the celebration was the Automotive Smart Specialization Panel, organized in cooperation with the Regional Authority (Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship). The topic of the panel and workshop was: The Potential and Challenges of the Automotive Industry in the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process and thanks to the formula Retrospective & Vision, participants - a total of 75 representatives of cluster members - were able to share their insights on the past and current EAA's activities, including, e.g. almost 70 ThinkTank meetings, which were attended by a total of nearly 900 people. The interactive form of the event also made it possible to present the cluster's vision for further development in the coming years.

The anniversary also provided an opportunity for informal meetings and networking during the numerous attractions prepared for guests, including: a trip to the historical testing ground for V1 and V2 missiles from World War II in Blizne, a visit to an exhibition of vintage motorcycles, and active recreation in the picturesque scenery of the Cyziówka resort, including practice session at the shooting range.



Workshop-Participants during the celebration of the jubilee

The culminating point of the celebration was an evening ceremonial meeting summarizing 10 years of the Association's activities, ending with a joint barbecue feast.

The event was honored with the presence of representatives of the authorities of the Podkarpackie region, presidents and managers of both large corporations and small and medium-sized companies in the automotive industry, as well as representatives of national industry associations, academia - the AGH University of Science and Technology, Rzeszow University of Technology and directors of affiliated technical high schools.



Presentation of the EAA Concept Car made of locally produced parts

We were also pleased to host representatives of all four automotive clusters from across Poland, with whom we co-found the Polish Automotive Clusters Forum: Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing (SA&AM), Polish Automotive Group (PGM) and Lower-Silesian Automotive Cluster (DKM).

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Kinga Szczepaniak



Cooperation of Polish automotive clusters – together for the future of the industry

On May 19, 2025, a meeting of representatives of all four Polish automotive clusters took place in Warsaw: Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing, Polish Automotive Group, Lower Silesian Automotive Cluster and East Automotive Alliance with representatives of the Ministry of Development and Technology (MRiT). The meeting concerned the future of cluster policy and the role of clusters in the development of the automotive sector in Poland.

Key topics included:

- ▲ Discussion of the possibility of concluding an industry contract for the automotive sector
- Presentation of the MRiT action plan for the automotive industry
- ▲ Discussion on the directions of development of cluster policy in Poland
- Cooperation with clusters as implementers of public policy;
- ▲ The need to revise the list of National Smart Specialisations, considering the automotive sector
- △ Development of the Forum of Polish Automotive Clusters as a common platform for cooperation

The participants agreed on the need for further privatepublic dialogue between representatives of industry and government administration, so that the voice of clusters is considered when creating new directions of

EACN

European Automotive Cluster Network

cluster policy, as well as changes concerning National Smart Specialisations.

Participants from Polish automotive clusters and the Ministry of Development and Technology

Later in the day, best practice workshops were organised by PGM, as part of the Forum of Polish Automotive Clusters. It was a very fruitful meeting, allowing for better understanding the way the clusters operate and discussion of joint initiatives.

The next day, a meeting of the Forum was organised at the Łukasiewicz PIMOT Institute. In addition to summarising the visit to MRiT we had the opportunity to visit the Institute. Thanks to the courtesy of the Director of PIMOT, we were introduced to the laboratories where crash tests are carried out, concerning the radiation of objects and the durability of batteries.

The visit to PIMOT allowed us to familiarize ourselves with the research and certification capabilities of the Institute, which can be successfully used by associated companies that need such specialized services.

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UAMC to open AutoBusinessForum in Kyiv (Ukraine)



Olga Trofymova moderating the panel round

Olga Trofymova, Cluster manager of the Ukrainian Automotive and Mobility Cluster opened the AutoBusinessForum at AutoTechService Expo that took place from 13 to 15 May in Kyiv. In the focus: A panel on "The Automotive market in the Ukrainian Context."

Olga Trofymova, Cluster Manager

Driving Investment: Lithuania's Role in the Global Automotive Transformation

On 27 March, over 70 industry leaders, policymakers, and experts gathered at Teltonika HQ in Vilnius to explore how Lithuania can seize emerging opportunities in the shifting global automotive and mobility landscape. This annual event of EACN member Baltic Automotive Components Cluster (BACC) has been moderated by Giedrius Valuckas, its chairman. The event brought together high-level speakers including Minister Lukas Savickas, Elijus Čivilis (Invest Lithuania), Benjamin Krieger (CLEPA), Ernestas Zdaniauskis (Teltonika), Dr. Navid Anderson (Eversheds Sutherland), and others.

Key takeaways:

- ▲ The EU faces complex challenges: growing geopolitical tensions, 25% U.S. tariffs on EU automotive, soaring energy prices, and talent shortages.
- Meanwhile, China is gaining ground in technology and supply chains, prompting urgent questions about Europe's competitiveness.
- ▲ Discussions highlighted Lithuania's strategic potential—its innovation ecosystem, supportive policy environment, and growing role in Europe's reindustrialization and defense sectors.



Participants at BACC's annual event

The event also marked an important milestone in strengthening ties between CLEPA and Lithuania's Ministries of Economy and Transport. Interest in BACC's initiatives is growing, with new collaboration prospects emerging—including potential partnerships with Vilnius Tech's Competence Centers in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity.



Despite global uncertainty, Lithuania is moving full speed ahead. With strong momentum and an eye on the future, the country is well-positioned to drive innovation, attract investment, and become a key player in the next chapter of European mobility.

Contact:

Diana Manko, Managing Director



The companies of the Galician Automotive and Mobility Cluster are committed to competitive sustainability

More than 50 professionals from the Galician automotive and mobility industry met in Vigo (Spain) at a conference organised by CEAGA to analyse and share strategies and best practices for the efficient management of resources, incorporating the principles of the "Green Factory" model.



Participants at the Galician automotive and mobility conference

Companies from the automotive cluster, such as Stellantis Vigo, Borgwarner Emissions Systems and OPmobility Exterior Business, shared their success stories at this meeting, which was designed to help companies improve efficiency in the consumption of resources and promote sustainability in the industrial sphere. Hijos de Rivera and BA Glass also took part with the aim of learning about the sustainability strategies promoted by companies from other industrial sectors. The main part was the organisation of working groups, where participants were able to share their plans to promote the "Green Factory" concept and circular economy, identifying possible collaborative projects and sustainable initiatives, both to be implemented individually in their own organisations and at cluster level.

This session is part of a series of four workshops on innovation and strategic reflection organised by CEAGA, aimed at top management, to lay the foundations for the automotive industry of the future. The next three will be on "Smart logistics" (10 June);

"Business resilience" (8 July); and "Intelligent transformation" (23 September).

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Defence as strategic opportunity for Catalan automotive industry

Sergio Alcaraz, President of CIAC, calls for considering the defence sector as a key vector for the reinvention and future of Catalonia's automotive industry as it possesses key assets: precision engineering, high-volume manufacturing, complex supply chain management, and leading-edge technology in mobility, materials, and control systems. Full press release.

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Meet Cluster Mobility & Logistics at the IAA Mobility in September in Munich

The Cluster Mobility & Logistics will be represented from 9-12 September 2025 at the IAA MOBILITY with a joint stand in the Summit (hall B2, stand E11). On 10 September from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the co-exhibitors and the Cluster Mobility & Logistics invite you to network and exchange experiences at the **Bavarian Breakfast** at the stand. The number of participants is limited, please register. It is also necessary to book a time slot.

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New white paper "Automated Last Mile Mobility Solutions: How driving automation can solve the last mile challenge"



This white paper, released by VAMOS member Remoted, discusses a proposed solution that involves deploying small automated vehicles on last-mile routes to enhance the accessibility of public transportation while keeping service costs under control. The key



advantage of automated vehicles is that they eliminate the largest single cost component, ie. the driver, and replace it with software that automates the driving task. <u>Download the White Paper</u>.

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Project corner

TRIREME meeting

East Automotive Alliance, as the only organisation from Poland, has been involved in the TRIREME project. The project is very important for the automotive industry from the perspective of reskilling and upskilling of the workforce in the face of green and digital transition.

The third consortium gathering took place in Ostrava in April — an engaging two-day session focused on strengthening collaboration and sharing progress across all Work Packages (WPs).



TRIREME participants in Ostrava, Czech Republic

The meeting offered a valuable platform for partners to align on project milestones, exchange insights, and refine strategies moving forward. Each WP presented updates on current activities, key deliverables, and upcoming objectives, following an opening overview that provided a clear picture of TRIREME's overall trajectory.

Meeting Highlights:

- Project status update and Administration
- Skills Intelligence Job roles and skills
- Training Offer Development & Gathering
- Best practices & policy recommendations
- A guided tour of the Mobility Lab of the VSB-TUO campus,
- ▲ Dissemination and Sustainability Session

Alongside the presentations, the meeting sparked dynamic discussions, encouraged collaboration, and set the stage for strategic action. The workshops were excellent opportunities for collaborative input, fostering the continuous improvement of our deliverables and reinforcing the project's commitment

to excellence. With clear priorities mapped out across all Work Packages, the TRIREME consortium is geared up and ready to drive the project forward.

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INFIMO: Strengthening Innovation Ecosystems for Sustainable and Inclusive Transformation

The European project **INFIMO** with Mobinov as member aims at strengthening innovation ecosystems in regions with low innovation performance, promoting sustainable and inclusive transformation. To achieve this, it adopts three main approaches: promoting diversity through the Women in Tech initiative, which seeks to increase female participation in technological sectors; the Generic Collaboration Model, fostering cross-sectoral and inter-regional partnerships; and the Advanced Collaboration Model, consolidating collaborative practices within regional systems. The integration of these approaches enables the creation of more dynamic ecosystems aligned with the EU's digital and green priorities. Find project information and results on the **INFIMO** website.

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The SCAIRA 2nd Call

The 2nd call for the SCAIRA programme (Interreg SUDOE) seeks **innovative solutions in technology, robotics, logistics, sustainability, industrial symbiosis, and digital transition**. The selected projects will participate in a 6-month acceleration programme with mentoring, technical support, funding, and networking. Major players such as Airbus, Renault, and Horse Aveiro will present industrial challenges. <u>Further information</u> and application.

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Drive2Transform – Making transformation measurable – Readiness Index

The Interreg Central-Europe Drive2Transform project supports the automotive sector in managing the transformation process through the development of a cross-regional strategy and the use of an open transformation platform.

The **international readiness index** forms the central basis of the Drive2Transform project. Companies use a



structured **online interview** to determine their status quo in four key areas of transformation:

- Electrification: Future of electromobility (batteries, charging infrastructure, power electronics)
- Automation: Technologies for autonomous driving & driver assistance systems
- Connectivity: Smart communication & data networking (V2X, cloud, infotainment)
- Platform economy: Digital platforms for mobility services (ride sharing, fleet management)

Companies that would like to participate in the **International Readiness Index** or would like more information can contact the Cluster Mobility & Logistics. **Results and benchmark reports** of the project are available on request.

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E-Boost final conference: the end of a transformative European project

The E-Boost Euroclusters project has officially reached its grand finale. On May 22, within the framework of the Mobility and Industry Suppliers Meetings (MISM) by the Automotive and Mobility Cluster of Aragon (CAAR), in Zaragoza, project partners, industry leaders, and European stakeholders gathered at Mobility City to present the results of this ambitious initiative.

Over the past 30 months, E-Boost has played a pivotal role in accelerating digital transformation and fostering growth within the electromobility and automotive sectors across Europe. The final event served as a platform to reflect on the key achievements and impact of the project, while strengthening collaborations among mobility suppliers, SMEs, and major industry players.



E-Boost partners at the final conference in Zaragoza

Throughout the project's journey, six key partners have been instrumental in achieving its goals: CAAR -Automotive and Mobility Cluster of Aragón (Spain); CARA - Cluster for Sustainable Solutions (France), DITECFER - Distretto per le Tecnologie Ferroviarie (Italy); ZNIK SP ZOO (Poland); Logistics Initiative Hamburg (Germany); and RAI Automotive Industry NL (The Netherlands).

The conference was enriched by the presence of renowned procurement leaders from Renault Group, SEAT S.A., Stellantis, and Gestamp, who shared valuable insights into industry trends and future purchasing strategies within the B2B event 'MISM'. With 600 meetings, site visits, and expert-led discussions, the event provided meaningful business opportunities and reinforced the importance of crossborder cooperation in shaping a more innovative and sustainable mobility ecosystem.

The E-Boost activities kicked off on May 21 with a visit to Fersa Bearings, a leading electromobility company, offering European delegates an inside look at cutting-edge technological advancements in the field. As part of the final agenda, attendees also had the opportunity to engage in exclusive site visits to Moontech Industrial Solutions, ATRIA, and Chargevite, gaining firsthand exposure to pioneering electromobility solutions.

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SURE5.0 final event in Galica

On 15 May, the European project SURE5.0 consortium met in Galicia, Spain, to conclude the project and present its results at the international AIMEN AERO event.

Representatives from the consortium, European stakeholders, and beneficiary SMEs gathered to reflect on the work carried out and share best practices and experiences. The event included presentations, a roundtable, and discussions on the role of SMEs in transforming the aerospace sector through sustainable, digital, and human-centric approaches.



SURE5.0 Project team

Three of the beneficiary companies, IGESTEK, Kreios Space, and AvioConvert, attended the event in person to present their projects and exchange ideas with other participants. Their presence brought the programme to



life, highlighting real examples of transformation enabled by the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme. The final event also provided a space for informal exchange and future collaboration, strengthening the network built during the project.

Within the framework of SURE5.0, €2.6 million in cascading funding was mobilized to implement Industry 5.0 transition plans through its Acceleration Program. In total, 53 European companies have received a maximum grant of €50,000.

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Hack2BRIDGE Greece: More than 40 teams compete in the first BRIDGESMEs hackathon

As part of the European BRIDGESMEs project, the first edition of Hack2BRIDGE was held on 16-17 May 2025 in Athens, bringing together dozens of participants from across Europe. Co-organized by Corallia, EGG Enter Grow Go, the Attica Regional Development Fund, and the Attica Region Innovation Hub, the event served as a meeting point for SMEs, startups, researchers, and professionals to collaborate and develop innovative solutions.

The competition concluded with the announcement of the three winning projects: Narratologies, Calt, and Famejam, which took first, second, and third place, respectively. The winners shared a total of €9,000 in prizes and gained access to egg's Acceleration Platform. This first hackathon focused on the Cultural and Creative Industries and Tourism ecosystem, but future hackathons will focus on different ecosystems, including Mobility, Transportation, and Automotive.



The winning teams from the Hack2BRIDGE Greece

The BRIDGESMEs project, funded by the European Commission, brings together nine partners from different European countries to promote the transition to Industry 5.0 for SMEs in various industrial ecosystems.

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Partner research

Human-Machine-Interface supplier needed

CIAC is looking for companies within the European Union that manufacture Human-Machine Interface (HMI) systems for the automotive industry, including elements like touchscreens, control panels, displays, and similar input/output devices. If you know such companies, please get in contact with Elina Melik-Stepanyan (elina.melik-stepanyan@ciac.cat).

Other information

Publication of the Horizon Europe 2025 Working programme

Work programmes set out funding opportunities through calls open in 2025, covering:

- Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and research infrastructures under Pillar I
- all clusters under Pillar II
- European innovation ecosystems under Pillar III
- the part widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area
- European Research Council (ERC)
- Joint Research Centre (JRC)
- European Innovation Council (EIC)

A significant part of Pillar II of Horizon Europe will be implemented through institutionalised partnerships, particularly in the areas of Mobility, Energy, Digital and Bio-based economy, which will also have separate work programmes. Download work programme sections

Horizon Europe info days - Cluster 5: Replay available

The replays of the different sessions of the webinar on Cluster 5 "Focusing on the twin green and digital transitions to achieve climate neutrality in Europe by 2050" from 6 May are available. The webinar covered the following topics (within others):

- Implementation best practices how to prepare a good proposal
- Multimodal Transport, Safety and Resilience
- ▲ Towards Zero Emission Road Transport (2Zero), cross-cutting on transport
- ▲ Batteries (BATT4EU)
- Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility (CCAM)
- ▲ International cooperation
- Aviation, Waterborne Transport, Health

Website with replays



Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument – Calls 2025 for Strand 1 and Strand 2a are open

The European Commission launched on 22 May 2025 two new I3 Instrument calls for proposals open to consortia of applicants from private organisations (SMEs, start-ups), public institutions and academia (universities, research organisations). Strand 1 (budget: 23 M€) targets consortia of innovation actors from regions of different levels of development and with performance) innovation shared complementary smart specialisation areas, which are ready to make investments in interregional innovation projects. Strand 2a (budget: 24 M€) focuses on supporting interregional innovation investments aiming at developing value chains in less developed regions and reinforcing the integration of innovation actors in EU value chains. Deadline for submission: 13.11.2025.

Online Info Day: 11.06.2025, 09:30 – 12:30 CET (<u>registration mandatory</u>). <u>Webpage</u>.

New Roland Berger study: "Stagformation" Disrupts Automotive Suppliers

The new Global Automotive Suppliers Study 2025 by Roland Berger has been released and forecasts a "Stagformation" period where stagnating growth is paired with rising transformation demands. <u>Download the full study</u>

Agenda

3 – 4 June 2025 | Rzeszów (Poland)

Cluster Meet Regions Rzeszów: Exploring the Innovation Ecosystem: Clusters as Catalysts for Regional Competitiveness | organised by the European Commission and ECCP | Further information

EU Industry Days 2025 | organised by the European Commission and ECCP | Further information

11 June 2025 | Online

Online Infoday I3 Calls for proposal | organised by the European Commission | Registration

AUTOMOTIVE CLUSTER 11 – 12 June 202 | Sofia (Bulgaria)

International Automotive Forum 2025 | organised by Automotive Cluster Bulgaria [<u>Further information and registration</u>

15 – 18 June 2025 | Gothenburg (Sweden)

International Electric Vehicle Symposium & Exhibition EVS 38 | Further information

16–17 September 2025 | Brussels (Belgium) & online European Research & Innovation (R&I) Days 2025: Together, towards a Research and Innovation Union | organised by the European Commission | Further information

18 June 2025 | online

EU Cluster Talks: Security, Innovation and the Green Transition: Recap of the EU Industry Days | organised by ECCP | Registration

© 26-27 November 2025 | Regensburg (Germany)

Clusters Meet Regions Regensburg | organised by ECCP and Cluster Logistics & Mobility | Further information

© Committee of Climba 4 December 2025 | Belfort (France)

Forum Hydrogen Business For Climate: Safe & Scale - Secure and accelerate | co-organised by Pôle Véhicule du Futur | Further information and registration

Legal notice

Links preceded by the A 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:

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