

## The President's Foreword

Dear all,

The last month has been particularly characterised by the new war in Middle East with significant and very impacts on the supply of gas and oil, but, soon, also on other economic activities around the world. Some already discuss risks of new semi-conductor disruptions and supply chain disruptions in general.

The European automotive industry was already hit by the war in Ukraine and its impacts, the need for green transition on vehicle and production side, by high energy prices and increasing competition especially on EVs coming from China. The European automotive industry did not need this additional challenge.

The European Commission released at the beginning of March the proposal for an EU Industrial Accelerator Act to stimulate manufacturing in Europe. The proposal includes general measures such as speeding up authorisations, implementing Industrial Acceleration Areas, or setting limits for selected foreign direct investments as well as specific ones targeting the automotive sector. The proposal lets many open questions and enters now the legislative process with Member States and the European Parliament. Let's hope it brings rapidly new dynamics to our sector.

We are also happy to see the influence of our network growing with the appointments of Uwe Pfeil from Cluster Mobility & Logistics (Germany) to the EU Expert Group on Cluster Policies and of Lyubomir Stansilavov, CEO of Automotive Cluster Bulgaria, to the expert group on EU Research & Innovation for the Automotive Sector (EURIAS). Congratulations. EACN is open to support you and to share the network's points of views.

Yours

**Bruno Grandjean**, President

## Insight EACN

### Uwe Pfeil appointed to the EU Expert Group on Cluster Policies



Uwe Pfeil is Cluster Manager of Cluster Mobility & Logistics and AIR – Artificial Intelligence Regensburg, member of the EACN Executive Board, and an

experienced networker within the European innovation landscape. He has been appointed by the European Commission to the prestigious Expert Group on Cluster Policy. This appointment is not only a personal achievement but also underscores the high level of recognition for Regensburg's cluster work at EU level.

As a member of the expert group, Uwe Pfeil will in future take part in key discussions on the further development of European cluster policy. The aim of the group is to provide impetus for European competitiveness, promote knowledge transfer and strengthen innovation ecosystems across Europe. [Further information.](#)

As EACN, we will support Uwe Pfeil in his discussions to steer future European cluster policies to the benefit of all.

### Lyubomir Stanislavov selected to the EURIAS



Lyubomir Stanislavov is the Executive Director and a Member of the Management Board of Automotive Cluster Bulgaria. He is also a long-standing member of the EACN Executive Board. He actively works to attract leading suppliers and manufacturers, promoting investment and the sustainable development of the automotive sector in Bulgaria.

He participates in national and European projects and is an active partner in the dialogue with public institutions on topics related to Industry 4.0, innovation, and new technologies. He also the initiator of the international automotive conference Automotive Forum Bulgaria, which will take place this year on May 20 at Sofia Tech Park.

Earlier this months, Lyubomir Stanislavov has been selected by the European Commission as member of the Expert Group on EU Research and Innovation for the Automotive Sector (EURIAS).

This is great opportunity for EACN to contribute to the evolution of European research and innovation for the automotive sector.

Congratulations to Uwe Pfeil and Lyubomir Stanislavov.

## Upcoming events from EACN Members

### Indústria Inteligente 20XX – Tecnologias, Talento e Competitividade | 17 April 2026 | Leça da Palmeira (Portugal)

The event “Indústria Inteligente 20XX – Tecnologias, Talento e Competitividade” (Smart Industry 20XX – Technologies, Talent and Competitiveness) will take place on April 17 at AEP, in Leça da Palmeira. Organized by MOBINOV in partnership with AEP, ABIMOTA, and APF, within the scope of the DIH 4 Global Automotive project, the event will address the challenges of the automotive industry in a context of rapid technological evolution. The program includes thematic sessions, networking opportunities, stands, and a matchmaking session, focusing on topics such as automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, and skills for the future. [Further information.](#)

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### Join Cluster Electric Mobility South-West at the Hannover Messe 2026

At the **Hannover Messe 2026 (20.04.2026 – 24.04.2026)**, the Cluster Electric Mobility South-West organises a **networking reception** open for all our partners – including EACN members – to promote international exchange at our [Baden-Württemberg stand “THE LÄND”](#), **Wednesday 22 starting at 4:30 pm, Hall 12 (E63)**.

Furthermore, the Cluster Electric Mobility South-West is part of a **panel** of cluster organisations **organised by the European Commission (DG GROW)** to share our expertise on how clusters facilitate cooperation among different actors in and across value chains and how they can be leveraged to make European industry more resilient, ensure continuity of supply and safeguard economic security in key sectors. The panel session will be on **Friday 24 April, 10:45 – 11:45 am, Hall 12 (E46)**.

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### Reminder: CIAC organises the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Innovation Corner | 5 May 2026 | Barcelona

CIAC opens the call for the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Innovation Corner, a space where the most disruptive projects meet the industry that is transforming the mobility of the future. 2026 is also the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Advanced Factories**. The Innovation Corner will take

place on 5 May 2026 at the Barcelona Fair. [Further information and registration](#) (see also NL 01.2026).

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### Cybersecurity Congress at TechBase Regensburg | 7 May 2026

This [Cybersecurity Congress](#) organised on 7 May by TechBase (Cluster Mobility & logistics) aims to become the leading regional platform for information security, digital sovereignty and strategic networking. The focus will be on current challenges posed by hybrid threats, AI-based attacks, industrial cyber defence and the protection of critical infrastructure. The event is aimed at companies, public authorities, research institutions and start-ups from the Regensburg and Upper Palatinate economic region. An accompanying trade exhibition will take place alongside the conference programme. The conference will be held in German.

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### SEE Automotive Conference Connect & Supply | 12 – 13.05.2026 | Belgrade



The **Serbian Automotive and Mobility Cluster** organises on 12 – 13 May the 2026 edition of the **SEE Automotive Conference 2026 – Connect & Supply**. The conference will take place in **Belgrade, Serbia**. The conference will bring together **300+ decision-makers from 200+ automotive companies**, including **OEMs and Tier 1 & Tier 2 suppliers**, offering a unique platform to connect, exchange insights, and develop new business opportunities across the region. [Further information and registration.](#)

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### 13<sup>th</sup> Hydrogen Day in Hardthausen | 24 June 2026

The Technologie-Transfer-Zentrum Lampoldshausen, the DLR Institute of Space Propulsion, the municipality of Hardthausen, and the Wirtschaftsförderung Raum Heilbronn are pleased to invite you to the **13<sup>th</sup>**

## Hydrogen Day in Hardthausen am Kocher on 24 June 2026.

This expert conference offers a diverse program of presentations on current developments in the hydrogen sector, engaging panel discussions, and an exciting exhibition area at the Hydrogen Marketplace. Breaks between sessions provide ample opportunity for networking and professional exchange with fellow participants. The event will focus on the key topics currently shaping business and society in the field of hydrogen. Take this opportunity to connect with companies from the hydrogen industry, exchange ideas, and explore new approaches.

Participation in the event is **free of charge, but prior registration is mandatory**.

Please note that the conference will be held **in German**. If you are interested in attending from abroad, please contact

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## Members' lounge

### Industry 4.0 and AI in Corporate Practice – Autoklastr partnered with the 3rd Czech-German Business Forum in Ostrava

The Assembly Hall of VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava (VŠB-TUO) became the venue for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Czech-German Business Meeting on March 18, 2026. The event was organized by the Fraunhofer Institute and VŠB-TUO Ostrava, supported by Autoklastr as a conference partner. This significant event attracted approximately 150 top academics and corporate representatives from the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. The conference focused on case studies and presentations of the practical use of university-industry cooperation results in the fields of Industry 4.0 and the application of AI for R&D and manufacturing activities in the CEE region.

Autoklastr serves as an intermediary for cooperation between top R&D university departments and manufacturing companies. Owners and CEOs of three Autoklastr member companies presented successful corporate applications of I4.0 and AI:

**Edmund AI** introduced the Edmund system for smart machine diagnostics and TPM management. The motto "talk to your machine" with the help of Edmund is a prime example of how industrial AI realistically helps in operations, where it connects data from PLC and IoT, enables the management of records and data associated with maintenance, diagnoses potential equipment failures, helps in structured problem solving

in maintenance, significantly reduces downtime and repair time, and increases OEE.



*Libor Dobeš, autoklastr, presenting the latest trends in the automotive industry from global, EU, and Czech perspectives*

**24 Vision** is an advanced solution for visual inspection of products using AI within the cycle time of the production line at a leading OEM and a top Tier-1 supplier in the Czech Republic.

**Cerebrica** presented a system for advanced production planning and scheduling, process optimization, and real-time production management using composite AI. The solution was honored with an award from the Czech-Slovak Society for I4.0 at the International Engineering Fair in Brno 2025. The company is looking for partners for the development of tools for real-time management with large volumes of data using AI and the VQL quantum computer at IT4I Ostrava.

The conference was excellently organized and provided ample space for presentations and networking; it was very inspiring. The completely full hall and lively discussions at the exhibition stands in the foyer confirmed that the topics of Industry 4.0, sustainable manufacturing, smart supply chains, and AI resonate across the entire region and far beyond its borders.

## MOBINOV at EV & Charging Expo 2026 in Canada

The [EV & Charging Expo 2026](#) is an international event dedicated to electric mobility and charging solutions, bringing together companies, experts, and technological innovation from across the sector. It will take place on April 8 and 9 in Canada, offering a privileged space for networking and discovering new trends. Miguel Araújo, Managing Director of MOBINOV, will be present at the event, reinforcing the interest of the Portuguese ecosystem in global developments in electric mobility. This event represents a strategic opportunity to closely follow the sustainable future of the automotive sector.

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## DIMECC Oy (VAMOS Ecosystem) establishes a subsidiary in Norway

DIMECC Oy, legal entity of EACN member VAMOS Ecosystem, establishes a subsidiary in Norway, DIMECC AS. The company will start operations in the Norwegian market in the same role as DIMECC Oy in Finland, acting as the leader of multi-stakeholder development of new business and technology. DIMECC AS will start operations immediately, focusing on managing the ecosystem of autonomous mobility solutions. Eja Tuominen has been appointed CEO of DIMECC AS.



*Eja Tuominen, CEO of DIMECC AS*

**Eja Tuominen** is an experienced Nordic business manager. She serves, among other things, as a member of the Board of Directors of Tokmanni Group Oyj in Finland and Löfbergs AB in Sweden. Tuominen is a citizen of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, has lived in Norway for seven years, and is currently the director of SAMS Norway, an association for autonomous systems. In 2024, SAMS Norway sought to collaborate with the Finnish VAMOS ecosystem in the development of autonomous mobility, which opened the opportunity to combine activities in Norway within the DIMECC framework. [Read the full press release.](#)

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## PGM at APRA Europe Symposium 2026 – strengthening remanufacturing capabilities in the cluster

The Polish Automotive Group (PGM) participated in the APRA Europe Symposium 2026 in Thessaloniki, one of the key European events dedicated to remanufacturing in the automotive sector. PGM was represented by Bartosz Mielecki (Managing Director) and Igor Pątek (ELERTE), engaging with industry leaders, technology providers and remanufacturing experts from across Europe.



*Participants at the APRA Europe Symposium*

Within PGM, companies have traditionally focused on the production of automotive components both for OEM and aftermarket. In recent years, an increasing number of specialised remanufacturing companies have joined the cluster, strengthening its capabilities in this area. These activities are typically carried out by dedicated entities, as remanufacturing requires distinct processes, competencies and operational models compared to the production of new parts.

Remanufacturing is gaining strategic importance in the context of the circular economy and the need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It represents a full industrial process - comparable in quality and rigour to manufacturing from primary raw materials - where used components are restored to their original performance parameters through advanced production processes.

By engaging in the remanufacturing ecosystem, PGM supports the development of sustainable industrial models while enhancing the competitiveness of its members across both OEM and aftermarket value chains.

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## Toyota Efficiency Academy – from supplier screening to operational excellence

The Polish Automotive Group (PGM), in cooperation with Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland (TMMP), launched a series of workshops under the “Toyota Efficiency Academy” initiative, aimed at strengthening operational excellence among manufacturing companies.

The initiative was preceded by a supplier scouting process, during which Toyota’s engine and transmission plant in Poland identified and assessed the potential of PGM member companies. Several companies were invited to present their production capabilities, followed by on-site audits in selected facilities.



*Workshop at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Poland*

As a next step, TMMP offered PGM members participation in the Toyota Efficiency Academy workshops. The objective is to support companies in improving their production processes, increasing competitiveness, and bringing more suppliers closer to meeting the requirements necessary to establish cooperation with Toyota.

The workshops are delivered by highly experienced practitioners from TMMP, ensuring a strong practical, hands-on approach based on real industrial experience.

An interesting aspect of the initiative is its organisational context. Due to a temporary decrease in production volumes, TMMP has decided to retain its highly qualified workforce and utilise their expertise by delivering efficiency workshops to manufacturing companies across various industries - not only potential suppliers. This approach allows the company to maintain key competencies internally while simultaneously contributing to the development of the broader industrial ecosystem.

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## CIAC members' visit at Highly Marelli



*Participants of the cross visit at Highly Marelli*

As part session of a Cross Visits programme, a group of members from CIAC visited Highly Marelli, a manufacturer of vehicle air conditioning systems (HVAC). The visit aimed at allowing participants to learn

first-hand about the industrial and technological capabilities of the companies that are part of the cluster's ecosystem. It included welcome speeches by Josep Maria Vall, President of CIAC, and Sergi Fenollosa, Plant Manager at Highly Marelli, a presentation of the company, and an introduction on the functioning of HVACs, becoming increasingly important in electrified vehicles where thermal management is essential to ensure battery efficiency and durability. The exchange ended with a visit of the production and a networking session. [Full press release.](#)

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## Circular Economy Study for the Automotive Industry in Heilbronn-Franken Published

As part of the TRANSFORMOTIVE network, a project led by the Wirtschaftsförderung Raum Heilbronn GmbH, a comprehensive Circular Economy (CE) Potential Analysis has been commissioned for manufacturing companies in the automotive industry within the Heilbronn-Franken economic region, with a particular focus on suppliers and equipment manufacturers. The study is now [available](#). It provides valuable insights into the methodology and research design of the analysis, regional company assessments, as well as technology and trend analyses related to automotive circularity. In addition, the study includes an extended SWOT analysis, an evaluation of opportunities and risks, and concrete recommendations for action in the Heilbronn-Franken region.

A key takeaway is that Circular Economy should not be viewed as an isolated sustainability topic. Instead, it represents a strategic field for structural development, closely linked to industrial policy, innovation, and transformation strategies. One of the central recommendations is the establishment of a coordinated regional Circular Economy framework. This implies a shift from fragmented individual projects towards a clearly structured regional architecture with defined points of contact, reliable institutional frameworks, and appropriate regulatory support.

The study is in German language, if English option is needed, please contact:

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## Project corner

### JEWEL Eurocluster to launch its 1<sup>st</sup> OpenCall

The JEWEL Eurocluster with EACN member Clust'ER Meca as partner is ready to launch its 1<sup>st</sup> Open Call offering cascade funding of up to €54,000 (90% funded) to support disruptive manufacturing innovation solutions for a Net Zero future. The call targets manufacturing SMEs ready to collaborate and innovate across borders. The consortium is looking for disruptive projects in the following key Net Zero technologies: Batteries, Hydrogen, Grid Technologies, and Industrial Decarbonisation. Official publishing: 30 March 2026.

Contact

[JEWEL HelpDesk](#)

### IH-MIE Project: Upcoming Steering Committee in Poland

On April 14th, the [IH-MIE project](#) consortium will gather in Poland for the next Steering Committee meeting. The session will focus on evaluating overall project milestones and reviewing achieved progress across the different work packages. Partners will present updates on technical developments, highlighting key results and any challenges encountered. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to align on priorities and discuss the next steps for the upcoming phases of the project. This Steering Committee will play an important role in ensuring effective coordination among partners and keeping the project on track towards its objectives.

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### 1<sup>st</sup> GREEN MANTIS Open Call published

The GREEN MANTIS Eurocluster is looking for collaborative projects from SMEs that bring Net-Zero Technologies into manufacturing processes. Concretely, this means projects working on:

- ⚡ Electricity Grid Technologies — smart energy monitoring and management systems that give industrial users better control over energy flows and losses.
- ⚡ Energy System-Related Efficiency Technologies — solutions designed to reduce the energy consumed by industrial processes, through better use of what is already available.
- ⚡ Transformative Industrial Technologies leading to decarbonisation — innovative approaches that reduce carbon emissions at the source, transforming traditional manufacturing into something leaner, cleaner, and more competitive.

Deadline: 20 May 2026 at 17:00 CET. [Further information](#).

### ASA Conference on Skills (R)evolution in the Automotive-Mobility Ecosystem

Within the framework of the ERASMUS+ **TRIEME** project and **ahead of the upcoming consortium meeting**, ASA is organizing an international conference in Romania, focused on future skills for the Automotive-Mobility Ecosystem. The event will focus on skills intelligence, emerging training demands and the social effects of both digital and green transitions. It will emphasize key priorities such as digital transformation, sustainability, circular economy, resilient supply chains and innovative business models. Co-organized with the European Chips Skills Academy (ECSA), the conference highlights the increasing alignment between the automotive and semiconductor industries, as well as the importance of coordinated skills strategies across Europe. [Further information](#).

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## Other information

### EU Industrial Accelerator Act

The European Commission published on 4 March the proposal for an Industrial Accelerator Act. This act is built around four pillars:

- ⚡ Speeding up and simplifying permits for manufacturing companies,
- ⚡ Use of public procurement and public incentives to boost lead markets: Energy intensive industries (low-carbon steel, low-carbon and Made in EU aluminium and cement), automotive, and Net-Zero technologies,
- ⚡ Constraints for important Foreign Direct Investment (>100 M€ and >40% global market share) to ensure added value is created in Europe (e.g., high quality jobs, joint ventures with EU entities, ≥ 1% of gross annual global revenue for R&D in EU, 30% input products manufactured in EU)
- ⚡ Obligation for all Member States to create at least one Industrial Acceleration Area with baseline area-wide permits and tacit approval to facilitate clean industrial and manufacturing investments.

The EU Industrial Acceleration Act was subject to the [EU Clusters Talk](#) of 11 March and the EACN Coffee Break of 25 March. [Further information](#) and [download](#).

## Commission invites feedback on new draft State aid rules

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on a revised **General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)**, a key framework that allows Member States to grant certain State aid without prior notification, speeding up support for businesses while safeguarding fair competition.

The proposed update aims to simplify rules, reduce administrative burden and better reflect today's economic, social and technological realities.

Proposed changes include:

- ▲ Easier access to aid for SMEs and social enterprises
- ▲ Stronger support for R&D, innovation and clusters
- ▲ Expanded aid possibilities for renewable energy and housing projects
- ▲ Increased incentives for skills, digital and STEM training

Stakeholders, Member States and ecosystem actors including clusters are invited to share their views by 23 April 2026. [Explore the proposal and take part in the consultation.](#)

## EU-wide definitions for innovative enterprises released

The European Commission's new EU-wide definitions for innovative enterprises, startups and scaleups are such an important milestone, and clearly highlight Europe's commitment to fuelling innovation and growth within its borders. Read the [recommendation \(C\(2026\) 1800 final\)](#).

## Automotive Regions Alliance High-Level Meeting 2026 in May in Bilbao, Spain

The Automotive Regions Alliance (ARA) organises its High-Level Meeting on 26 and 27 May 2026 in Bilbao.

The Bilbao High-Level ARA Conference will bring together representatives from the European Commission, Ministers and cluster representatives to exchange and shape the voice of Europe's automotive regions on the recently adopted *Industrial Accelerator Act*, while fostering a coordinated response to the challenges of the automotive industry is facing. Access is limited to one representative, one sherpa and one cluster per member region.

Further details, including the draft agenda, practical information, and registration, are available at the following link: [Automotive Regions Alliance Bilbao High-Level Meeting](#)


## CLEPA published its Pulse Check


The new CLEPA Pulse Check is out, and the data signals a deepening profitability crisis. Companies are shifting into non-automotive sectors, not by choice, but as an emergency measure to safeguard capacity. CLEPA insists on


- ▲ A CO<sub>2</sub> framework that enables innovation, allowing all carbon-neutral tech to compete, without mandates, and preserving consumer choice.
- ▲ Immediate implementation of the Industrial Accelerator Act to prevent unfair competition and keep Europe's mobility future anchored in Europe.
- ▲ A stronger EU trade stance, moving beyond passivity toward risk-based assessments and robust enforcement to ensure a level playing field.


[Download the Pulse Check](#)

## Agenda


 21 April 2026 | Cluj-Napoca (Romania)  
**International conference on future skills for the Automotive-Mobility Ecosystem** | organised by the Automotive Skills Alliance | [Further information](#)

 05 May 2026 | Barcelone (Spain)  
**11<sup>th</sup> CIAC Innovation Corner** | organised by CIAC | [Further information and registration](#)

 18-21 May 2026 | Budapest (Hungary)  
**Transport Research Arena (TRA) 2026** | [Further information](#)

 24 September 2026 | Beacon of Light (United Kingdom)  
**North East Automotive Expo 2026** | Organised by NEAA | [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.

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