



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

# Sustainably from A to B: Transition Pathway for Mobility

## Summary



EU Clusters Talks  
7 February 2024, 8:30 – 9:45 CET

An initiative of the European Union





## Sustainably from A to B: Transition Pathway for Mobility

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform, on behalf of the European Commission, organises the EU Clusters Talk “Sustainably from A to B: Transition Pathway for Mobility” on 7 February, 8:30 – 9:45 CET, to present the status and content of the transition pathway, discuss the critical challenges, and potential solutions for the ecosystem.

### Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Zivile Kropaite

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Transition Pathway for Mobility  
*Dario Bazargan, Policy Officer, GROW.i.2 - Maritime & Rail Supply, European Commission*  
*Giuseppe Marotta, Policy Assistant, GROW i.2 - Automotive & Cycling industries, European Commission*
3. Panel debate  
*Jean-Baptiste Hahn, Head of European Affairs, CARA*  
*Libor Dobeš, Managing Director, Autoklastr*  
*Rudolf Aunkofer, Managing Director, CNA Centre for Transportation and Logistics*  
*Pascal Strobel, SME and R&D Project Management, Automotive Transformation Hub, saarland.innovation&standort*
4. Funding opportunities

### Key messages

- The transition pathway for mobility is a co-creation exercise aimed at supporting the green and digital transition and building resilience.
- The Commission will ask for pledges, which are commitments from stakeholders to take actionable steps based on identified challenges, opportunities, and actions necessary for pushing the transition forward.
- Important elements for the ecosystem to remain competitive include good technology transfer, entrepreneurship, integration of advanced technologies and international cooperation.
- Long-term planning and agreement on strategic focuses can ensure the consistent production capabilities needed to compete globally.
- The inclusion of the bicycle industry in the transition pathway shows the growing economic significance of the sector, which is needed for the sustainable transition. Mobility clusters have started to include the cycling industry into their activities.



## 1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Zivile Kropaite, the following news items were presented:

1. Invitation to [public roundtable](#) on 29 February for the green and digital transition of the mobility ecosystem
2. Register now for the [European Cluster Conference](#) on 7-8 May 2024, the matchmaking event and express your interest to have a booth.
3. Save the date for Clusters meet Regions in Milan, Italy, on 26-27 March 2024.
4. Free trial of the [Trend Universe](#) for all ECCP users with a profile and new innovation trends
5. Take part in a 2-minute [ECCP user survey](#)

## 2. Transition Pathway for Mobility

**Dario Bazargan, Policy Officer, GROW.i.2 - Maritime & Rail Supply, European Commission**

**Giuseppe Marotta, Policy Assistant, GROW i.2 - Automotive & Cycling industries, European Commission**

Dario Bazargan introduced the transition pathway for mobility, which was developed within the context of the European Union's updated industrial strategy. This strategy emphasizes the need to accelerate both the green and digital transitions while ensuring resilience, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19, across 14 industrial ecosystems, including mobility. The transition pathway is a co-creation exercise aimed at supporting these transitions. It involves a collaborative effort among member states, industry sectors, local and regional authorities, and clusters to map out challenges, needs, and actions necessary to achieve shared goals. The process began with an invitation to stakeholders to join in 2021, leading to a staff working document published in 2022. This was followed by the first co-creation roundtable event in November 2022, involving over 150 stakeholders, and several subsequent co-creation roundtables.

The transition pathway for mobility is now published and identifies over 100 specific actions to support the twin transition and enhance long-term resilience and competitiveness. These actions are organized around seven main building blocks: sustainable competitiveness, regulation and public governance, social dimension, skills, R&I and technological solutions, infrastructure, and investment and funding. The report also details the role of clusters and cluster cooperation in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and highlights several actions, including the mapping of existing partnerships, setting up new clusters and incorporate companies, identify new areas of collaboration, or support inter-modality through cross-sectoral initiatives.

Giuseppe Marotta focussed on the co-implementation phase that starts now. This phase is about translating the outlined actions into concrete measures to advance the green and digital transitions within the mobility ecosystem. The kick-off is scheduled for 29 February, marked by an in-person event in Brussels. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend and participate actively in this next step.



A call for pledges will be issued. These pledges are commitments from stakeholders to take actionable steps based on identified challenges, opportunities, and actions necessary for pushing the transition forward. These pledges should align with the action fields identified in the mobility transition pathway and, while not legally binding, serve as a tool for monitoring progress and addressing any challenges during the transition. The European Commission will support this process with the Transition Pathway Stakeholders Support Platform, a dedicated web platform for formulating, uploading, and publicly tracking pledges.

### 3. Panel debate

The panelists discussed the innovation needs and challenges in the automotive and railway sectors, the activities of their clusters to foster innovation and collaboration, the importance of cross-sectoral activities with other ecosystems, and the including of the cycling sector into the mobility ecosystem.

Libor Dobeš outlined his cluster's approach to innovation and collaboration within the mobility ecosystem, emphasizing the **integration of advanced technologies and international cooperation**. Their activities focus on leveraging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance energy efficiency and productivity in production facilities. He also highlighted the importance of **national and international networking**, e.g. through the EACN network. Cross-sector and cross-border collaboration can foster innovation and offer the possibility to share best practices across different ecosystems. Mirroring the European approach, they also participate in roundtable discussions in the Czech Republic, bringing together local stakeholders, large companies, and R&D centres, to share experiences, form working groups, and tackle specific challenges.

Pascal Strobel addressed the challenges facing the automotive industry in Saarland, Germany, with a particular focus on **technology and products**. The strategy involves collaborative efforts with stakeholders within the region to discuss and identify the best practices and technologies that promise to advance the sector. The government supports with commitments to foster **technological transfer and entrepreneurship**. The emphasis on good technology transfer and entrepreneurship indicates a strategic effort to ensure that the region remains at the forefront of automotive innovation.

Rudolf Aunkofer expressed his support for the European transition pathway, particularly for its relevance to the challenges faced by the European railway industry. The railway sector is characterised by **fragmented** country markets, with SMEs reliant on a few large companies that operate international railway systems. The primary challenge involves **bridging the gap between these localised SMEs and major original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)** and vendors across Europe. The goal is to foster a more integrated European rail tech industry. Furthermore, he underscored the significance of **attracting younger talent**. Given the aging workforce, creating a more dynamic and internationally appealing industry ecosystem is crucial for future transitions. This approach not only aims to enhance the competitiveness and innovation of the European rail tech industry but also ensures its sustainability and adaptability in the face of evolving global challenges.

Guiseppe Marotta confirmed the **predominance of SMEs** in the European market, with more than 90% of companies operating at a local or regional level. However, a significant challenge identified is the limited visibility of these SMEs beyond their immediate geographic areas. To address this issue, the



transition pathway implementation tool aims to facilitate broader visibility and communication for companies of all sizes, not just large corporations that are already accustomed to operating internationally. The forthcoming web platform is designed to serve as a matchmaking tool.

He also highlighted the potential for cross-ecosystem collaboration, specifically between the **energy and mobility sectors**, as a promising area for synergy. With the shift towards electromobility, electric vehicles (EVs) and their batteries could play a crucial role as a buffer for the energy grid. Pascal Strobel also underlined the innovative efforts of enterprises operating at the intersection of the energy and automotive sectors, focusing on the production of charging systems and solutions that facilitate energy transactions between the energy supplier and EVs. This approach should be part of a broader strategy aimed at achieving a significant level of autarky, where each household can potentially generate and manage its own energy. Jean-Baptiste Hahn aligned with the emphasis on supporting European transport stakeholders in becoming more independent from fossil fuels, specifically through the adoption of electricity and green hydrogen.

Regarding the needed **speed in digitalisation**, Rudolph Aunkofer said that industries like rail tech and transportation, which have traditionally lagged in digital adoption, are now embracing this trend. The transition pathway is seen as a crucial tool and strategy, providing a clear roadmap to increase the pace and dynamism of innovation in these sectors. He also pointed out a significant **competitive advantage for European companies in the railway industry**: the retention of a complete value chain within Europe. This intact value chain in the transportation and railroad industry presents a unique opportunity to strengthen and maintain the ecosystem within Europe.

Libor Dobeš spoke about the importance of **long-term planning and agreement on strategic focuses** to ensure the consistent production capabilities needed to compete globally. We need reliable raw material supplies and strategic partnerships, as seen by the recent chip crisis and the subsequent OEM and tier supplier collaborations. Success in this competitive landscape depends on a combination of factors: energy availability, raw material supplies, innovative technologies, and skilled personnel. He advocated for long-term programmes to support gradual transitions, emphasizing evolution over revolution to minimize risk and ensure sustainable progress. As the competition is global, there is pressure to innovate and develop products very quickly. The automotive industry needs to reduce the design and development timeline of new models from over four years to as little as 24 months, as demonstrated by leading competitors like Tesla and Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers. This shift necessitates a more agile and efficient innovation ecosystem capable of rapidly transforming ideas into market-ready products, illustrating the profound changes required to stay competitive in today's fast-paced global market.

Rudolf Aunkofer illustrated how innovation often requires a **leap of faith and the willingness of the consumers** to challenge prevailing norms. He drew the analogy with the market introduction of button-less phones. He argued that the mobility ecosystem is undergoing a similar transformation, becoming increasingly smart and responsive to user feedback. This shift entails not only the ability of companies to gauge reactions but also their responsibility to demonstrate what is possible through innovation. This perspective highlights the dual role of the industry: to innovate within the confines of regulatory frameworks and to engage with the public, showcasing advancements that may initially seem unconventional but have the potential to significantly enhance the mobility ecosystem.



Libor Dobeš welcomed the inclusion of mobility alongside automotive reflects a broader understanding of the sector's evolution, indicating a strategic shift towards encompassing a more extensive range of mobility solutions. Jean-Baptiste Hahn expressed appreciation for the **inclusion of the bicycle industry in the transition pathway**, noting that this sector often lacks representation in European institutions and associations. This is a significant step towards increasing its visibility at the European level, especially concerning funding programmes. The speaker hopes for more direct support and open calls for financing to aid this ecosystem. His cluster CARA has already integrated the cycling industry into the cluster, and he noticed a strategic consolidation in France to effective structure and animate the cycling ecosystem, demonstrating a mature approach to integrating cycling into the full mobility spectrum. He furthermore discussed the unique origins and evolution of the bicycle ecosystem compared to other transportation sectors. Initially fuelled by activism and citizen-driven initiatives, the **cycling ecosystem has grown significantly**, marking a distinct foundation rooted in community and environmental advocacy. The industry is now adopting more traditional economic frameworks to strengthen its position and influence. Guiseppa Marotta underscored a broader commitment to diversifying the mobility ecosystem, acknowledging the cycling industry's potential to contribute to sustainable transportation solutions and economic growth within Europe. This evolution from grassroots activism to industry recognition highlights a maturing perspective on cycling's role in the mobility landscape, aligning with broader objectives of sustainability, innovation, and economic development.

Dario Bazargan concluded that the discussion highlighted the need for advancing the green transition within a globally competitive and rapidly evolving framework, necessitating urgent actions in a **comprehensive analysis and support for the transition process** (including access to raw materials, supply chains, or skills development), the **acceleration of innovation and technology development**, and **building synergies across and within sectors**. The next phase of the transition pathway aims to bring stakeholders together, facilitating exchanges and sharing of best practices to support these goals. We need to continue the close dialogue with stakeholders to leverage the collective expertise and resources of all involved parties.

## 4. Funding opportunities

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shared the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. [Effects of disruptive changes in transport: towards resilient, safe and energy efficient mobility](#); deadline 5 September 2024
2. [Advanced digital development tools to accelerate the development of software defined vehicles that enable zero-emission mobility \(2ZERO Partnership\)](#); deadline 18 April 2024
3. [Strategic Business Alliance for Urban Mobility \(EIT Urban Mobility\)](#); Cut-off dates: 20 May; 20 November 2024
4. Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters; published on [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)