



NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026

Dear reader,

Welcome to the sixth edition of the ZEFES newsletter.

As we move closer to the final months of the project, which will conclude at the end of this year, preparations are underway for our final event. At the same time, the past few months have been filled with exciting activities, achievements, workshops, and events across the consortium.

In this edition, we bring together the key highlights and latest developments from the project. We hope you enjoy reading about our progress and look forward to sharing the final phase of the ZEFES journey with you.

Warm regards,

The ZEFES Team



The ZEFES Project is pleased to announce its Final Event, taking place on **25 November 2026** and hosted by the **CFL Multimodal Terminal** in Bettembourg, Luxembourg.

Join industry experts, stakeholders, and project partners to discover the final results of ZEFES and explore the latest innovations supporting zero-emission freight transport.

Tentive Agenda

24 November 2026

- Networking Dinner (19:00)

25 November 2026

- Presentation of final results (09:00 – 12:00) will be in Luxembourg.
- Demonstrations at the CFL Terminal (13:00 – 16:00) will take place in Bettembourg

Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and be inspired by cutting-edge developments shaping the future of zero-emission freight transport.

[Pre-register here](#)



The ZEFES consortium consists of partners from European countries. The project partners represent the entire value chain, from truck and trailer manufacturers to shippers and suppliers, research organizations and universities, as well as regulatory bodies. [Click here](#) to get an overview of all the ZEFES project partners.

Events & Workshops

- [IRU Workshop 2026](#)
- [ZEFES Third Stakeholder Symposium 2026](#)
- [Road Transport Research \(RTR\) Conference 2026](#)
- [Transport Research Arena \(TRA\) 2026](#)
- [Green Mobility Exchange 2026](#)
- [ITS European Congress 2026](#)
- [Women in Tech Summit 2026](#)



First Fuel Cell Heavy-Duty Truck Begins Operations in Italy as Part of the ZEFES Project



The ZEFES project has reached a major milestone with the launch of the first fuel cell heavy-duty truck operating in real-world conditions in Italy.

The vehicle, developed by Scania and deployed by Gruber Logistics, represents an important step forward in demonstrating the potential of hydrogen fuel cell technology for zero-emission long-haul freight transport. Its entry into service marks a significant achievement not only for the project partners involved, but also for the wider European effort to decarbonise road freight transport.

The milestone was celebrated during the Innovation Summit hosted by Gruber Logistics in Bolzano last week, where participants had the opportunity to see the Scania fuel cell truck firsthand and learn more about the technological innovations behind the vehicle.

For Gruber Logistics, the launch reflects a long-term commitment to driving innovation and sustainability in the transport and logistics sector. The company has consistently invested in solutions that support the transition towards cleaner and more efficient freight transport, and the deployment of this vehicle demonstrates how ambitious sustainability goals can be translated into practical, real-world applications.

The achievement is the result of close collaboration between Gruber Logistics, Scania, and the wider European consortium behind the ZEFES project. It also reflects the support and trust of pioneering customers who have helped bring this innovation from development to operation.

[Read more.](#)



Reflecting on a Successful Week at TRA2026 for ZEFES



From 18–21 May 2026, the ZEFES project proudly participated in the Transport Research Arena 2026 in Budapest, joining leading stakeholders from across Europe to discuss the future of sustainable and zero-emission transport.

Throughout the conference, ZEFES contributed to important discussions on the transition towards zero-emission heavy-duty road transport, highlighting both the technological progress being made and the challenges that still need to be addressed to enable large-scale deployment across Europe.

Contributing to Europe's Zero-Emission Freight Dialogue

One of the key moments for ZEFES during the conference was our contribution to Special Session 25: Towards zero-emission heavy-duty road transport in Europe | Technology State of the Art, lessons learned, and next steps.

During the session, ZEFES technical coordinator Ben Kraaijenhagen shared insights from the project's work and addressed some of the key challenges facing the transition to zero-emission heavy-duty transport. His presentation highlighted practical lessons learned within ZEFES and explored pathways to support the further adoption of zero-emission freight solutions in Europe.

Contributing to Discussions on Charging Infrastructure Deployment

In addition to the project-focused sessions, ZEFES coordinator Omar Hegazy from Vrije Universiteit Brussel also participated in a high-level round table discussion titled "Accelerating the deployment of recharging infrastructure of electric vehicles: challenges and opportunities."

The session explored the current state of charging infrastructure deployment across Europe, including public, semi-public, and private charging solutions, with a particular focus on heavy-duty and commercial vehicles operating at logistics hubs and depots. Discussions also highlighted the growing importance of smart and bi-directional charging technologies and their role in supporting Europe's future energy and mobility systems.

Collaboration Within the AEVETO Cluster

ZEFES also participated in the dedicated AEVETO Cluster session organised by ALICE – Alliance for Logistics Innovation through Collaboration in Europe. Alongside fellow Horizon Europe projects — FLEXMCS project, MACBETH Project, NextETRUCK, and ESCALATE — the session focused on the future of zero-emission freight transport and the wider ecosystem needed to support it.

The session featured project presentations, discussions on the draft white paper on energy infrastructure presented by Thomas Geury from Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and an engaging panel discussion involving:

- Omar Hegazy (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, coordinator of ZEFES)
- Andrea Condotta (GRUBER Logistics)
- Frances Sprei (Chalmers University of Technology)
- Mats Rosenquist (Volvo Group)
- Federico Cartasegna (Iveco Group)

A clear takeaway from the discussion was that while battery-electric and fuel-cell technologies are advancing rapidly, supporting infrastructure, energy systems, logistics operations, and policy frameworks must evolve simultaneously to enable widespread adoption of zero-emission freight transport.

[Read more.](#)



From Fragmentation to Competitiveness: A Europe-Wide Call for Collaboration to Scale Zero-Emission Freight



While European road freight is beginning its transition to zero-emission (ZE) technologies, moving from isolated pilot projects to a scalable, cross-border system remains a significant challenge. This white paper, prepared within the context of the ZEFES project, argues that **regulatory, technological, and operational fragmentation** are currently the primary constraints on Europe's industrial competitiveness in this sector.

Key Insights from the ZEFES Stakeholder Survey

Drawing on a survey of 53 key stakeholders across the freight ecosystem, the paper highlights a clear consensus on the barriers

and the path forward:

- **Tangible Benefits Already Exist:** Among those who have trialed ZE trucks, nearly **90% reported energy or fuel-cost reductions**, alongside positive driver feedback and better access to low-emission zones.
- **Fragmentation as a Primary Barrier:** **79% of respondents** identified regulatory fragmentation across Europe as a major hurdle to scaling.
- **Top Deployment Hindrances:** The most significant frictions cluster around **charging infrastructure rules (60%)** and **vehicle certification and approval (59%)**, followed by road access and EMS (European Modular System) rules (34%).
- **Preferences for Governance:** Stakeholders expressed a strong preference for **EU-level leadership (51%)** to set the direction, but combined with **multi-actor execution (38%)** through joint public-private taskforces.

[Read more.](#)

ZEFES 3rd Stakeholder Symposium



On the 25th of February 2026, the ZEFES consortium brought together industry leaders and stakeholders at ECS Zeebrugge for a dedicated Symposium titled *"Celebrating a Milestone in the Electrification of Intermodal Cross-Border Long-Haul Transport."* The event highlighted major advancements within the European Union-funded ZEFES project, which aims to accelerate the decarbonisation of long-distance and cross

boarder freight through large-scale deployment and testing of zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles with megawatt charging.

Hosted by Procter & Gamble (P&G) in collaboration with ECS, the Symposium brought together logistics operators, technology providers, vehicle OEMs, infrastructure developers, and policy stakeholders to examine Europe's readiness for electrified heavy-duty transport. Attendees had the opportunity to observe first-hand news on the latest status of the ZEFES project and a series of technical demonstrations.

Interview videos from the ZEFES Symposium and the slides from the morning programme are available [here](#).

ZEFES, Sesé and Scania Launch Electric Duotrailer Pilot in Spain



ZEFES, together with Sesé and Scania Group, has officially launched Spain's first electric duotrailer trial, marking a major step forward in the decarbonisation of heavy road freight. The project will begin in February on a 90-kilometre route between Martorell and Maçanet, operating twice daily to assess performance and operational efficiency.

The pilot aims to demonstrate the duotrailer's ability to reduce journeys by up to 50% while cutting emissions and supporting the competitive integration of electrification in heavy road transport. The consortium will also evaluate charging infrastructure and the requirements for scaling up this solution.

In a second phase, the vehicle will operate on an intermodal route between Spain and Germany, using the MCS charger in Vilamalla, near the Spanish border. The long-term goal is to promote cross-border electric freight corridors and regulatory changes to enable the wider use of duotrailers across Europe.

Previous tests by Sesé have shown emissions reductions of up to 30% compared with conventional vehicles, rising to as much as 90% when combined with renewable energy sources.

The ZEFES coffee break: get to know Joan Carles Artigau from Applus+IDIADA



Joan Carles Artigau holds a degree in Electronic Engineering from the University of Tarragona, Spain. As Innovation and Heavy-Duty Project Manager in IDIADA Automotive Technology's EV Charging department, he brings over seven years of automotive expertise. His specialization encompasses interoperability, conformance testing, and certification of charging infrastructure for both light and heavy-duty vehicles, positioning him as a key technical lead in the electrification of transport solutions.

What was your original motivation to become a researcher/project manager?

What originally motivated me to become a researcher was the opportunity to drive innovation, not just for technical advancement, but to be part of something bigger. Working on projects that directly shape my company's evolution is deeply rewarding. There's real motivation in knowing that the charging technologies we develop today will define sustainable transport tomorrow.

[Read more.](#)

The ZEFES partners



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