



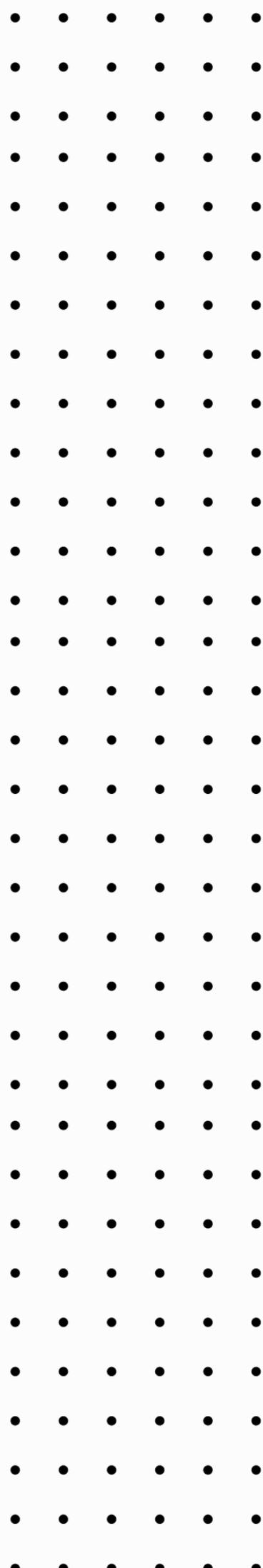
Report

# E-MOBILITY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

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## REPORT: E-Mobility: An OPPORTUNITY for Central & Eastern Europe

On 17th October 2022, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy co-organized a conference *E-Mobility: An OPPORTUNITY for Central & Eastern Europe*. Together with the co-organizers, the Czech E-mobility Platform and the Central & Eastern Europe Green Transport Initiative, key stakeholders gathered at the premises of the European House, Prague, and online to discuss the challenges and opportunities of e-mobility transition in the region.

### Key takeaways

CEE countries are sometimes referred to as an integrated periphery of the automotive industry. Production moved into this region in last decades and, currently, there is a significant production per capita – Slovakia and Czechia producing the largest numbers of passenger cars per capita in the whole EU. Electric vehicles already amount to a significant share of this production between 10% and 15% in both countries. However, sales of BEVs and PHEVs for local market are low. Romania and Hungary are leading the way in terms of sales share of the electric vehicles, with a considerable support of their governments. Throughout the region, there is not a very dense charging infrastructure, yet Poland seems to be lagging behind other CEE countries.

The transition to e-mobility is happening more slowly in CEE than other parts of Europe and even faces resistance from some quarters, which was heavily debated at the conference. Although some CEE policymakers might pretend as if this path is not yet decided – especially challenging since leadership is one of the characteristics most needed to seize the e-mobility opportunity – the private sector realizes the opposite. Long term investment decisions and innovation cycles mean no more new generations of ICE engines will be produced in the future. The countries of CEE must not remain a dwindling island of ICE production but must seize the opportunity presented by the transition to e-mobility or risk losing out and being left behind.

In the following days after the event presented the position of the region's stakeholders, the European Parliament adopted its position on the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) and is ready to start negotiations with the Member States. Moreover, the first file from the Fit for 55 package has been approved. The Council and the European Parliament reached a political agreement on stricter CO2 standards for new cars and vans under the Czech Presidency, leading up to the 2035 milestone.

### Declaration signed at the conference

An 8-point declaration, *E-Mobility: An OPPORTUNITY for Central & Eastern Europe (CEE): A Call to Action*, was signed by leaders of the Czech E-mobility Platform, Polish Alternative Fuels Association, and Slovak EV Association, concluding the conference. Together, these three regional associations represent 253 member companies, research institutes and organizations working actively across the e-mobility value chain in their respective markets. These companies are seizing the opportunity, and the time is now for the governments of CEE to do the same.

The *Call to Action* outlines what countries of CEE and the EU must do in order to seize the opportunities presented by the e-mobility transition and the clean industrial revolution underway. The conference was especially timely with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine, a related energy crisis, and the worsening climate crisis. The declaration calls for:

- 1) Political leadership and ambition
- 2) Public education and role modelling
- 3) Evolution of workforce and industry
- 4) National regulatory frameworks fit for purpose
- 5) Getting EVs on the roads
- 6) Support for the deployment of charging infrastructure
- 7) Updating the electricity distribution system
- 8) Funding schemes to help the transition of Central and Eastern European countries

The full declaration can be accessed [here](#).

### Messages from stakeholders

Many distinguished speakers and guests delivered the message of how important the automotive industry is to local economies and what important next steps should be taken. The introductory remarks were given by Monika Ladmanová, Head of the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic, and Eduard Muřický, Deputy Minister for Industry, Entrepreneurship and Construction at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. They highlighted the changing mobility landscape and new opportunities in the battery value chain, e-mobility and digitalised economy, as well as the urgency to tackle this twin transition against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations and Foresight, European Commission, encouraged the participants and Member States: *“The transition will need a massive and sustained investments, new technologies and related infrastructure. I encourage Member States to use European funds, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility, to support investments made by private actors.”* He also highlighted the work of the European Battery Alliance: *“We are now using the experience gained from the battery alliance to secure the supplies of the critical raw materials needed for our decarbonized and digitalized economy.”*

Tomáš Dzurilla, Chairman of the Board at the Czech E-mobility Platform, shared his view on automotive jobs: *“If we don’t do anything, we will probably lose.”* Yet, *“we are positioned to gain approximately 25 thousand jobs in the upcoming years. That’s the target we should aim for.”* Lukáš Folbrecht, Secretary of the Czech E-mobility Platform, added: *“Not only gigafactories for the production of batteries but also the entire supply chain is being transformed, new industries and jobs are being created. The opportunities that e-mobility offers must be actively seized.”*

Patrik Křižanský, Director of the Slovak EV Association, added: *“It’s moving, but slowly and the EU can help further by helping to bring EVs to market via the CO2 standards regulation, fleet electrification proposal and setting high early targets in AFIR for charging infrastructure to help people overcome their fear of “where will I charge?”*

Aleksander Rajch, Deputy Director of the Polish Alternative Fuels Association, noted that there are many obstacles to overcome: *“The Polish national grid is inflexible and overburdened, problems also shared by other CEE countries. We need to address this urgently by updating DSO regulations, improving connection times, and opening up more suitable locations. Working together with our neighbouring countries via our joint declaration to resolve these twin issues will significantly accelerate the electrification of road transport for the entire EU and support the efficient implementation of AFIR – hopefully in as ambitious a way as possible.”*

Other distinguished speakers and representatives of organizations and companies such as Škoda Auto, AVERE European Association for Electromobility, Transport & Environment, European Investment Bank, GreenWay and EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy shared their views on the challenges and opportunities currently seen in the CEE region for a successful e-mobility transition.

### Next steps

The *Call to Action* should signal the CEE governments that companies, research institutions and organizations working actively across the e-mobility value chain, such as energy utilities, are ready to lead the e-mobility transition and to advocate uniformly, as well as to support the governments on the pathway towards 2035. Knowledge-sharing, best practices and joint cooperation is expected from all the stakeholders to successfully transform the automotive industry in the region while competing with global e-mobility competitors.

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