

PRESS RELEASE Silicon Alps Cluster (SAC) October 2025

European hotspot in the south of Austria: SILICON ALPS Cluster initiates international cooperation

As part of **EBSCON 5.0**, the “**Declaration of Graz**” on Europe-wide cooperation was signed with representatives of European Chips Competence Centres (CCC). The leading trade fair for the European semiconductor and electronics industry will be part of **EBSCON WEEK** for the first time in 2025 and will be themed around “**Creative Destruction**”.

(Graz, 8 October 2025) More than **340 participants** from **23 countries** across Europe, including delegations from Sweden and the Netherlands, will address the central question of which “old systems” and “old technologies” will be replaced and how the future “new” can be seen on the horizon at **EBSCON 5.0**, which will take place on 8 October 2025 under the guiding theme of “**Creative Destruction**”.

The start and first highlight of EBSCON 5.0 is the signing of the “**Declaration of Graz**” – on the initiative of the SILICON ALPS Cluster, representatives from France, the Czech Republic, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria signed this “Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)”, with which the **European cooperation** of the 27 new Chips Competence Centres is to be provided with concrete goals and Europe's independence and technology leadership is to be put on a concrete footing.

Southern Austria with Styria and Carinthia is one of the **hotspots of the European ESBS and semiconductor industry**. Willibald Ehrenhöfer, Styrian Provincial Councillor for Economic Affairs, and Gaby Schaunig, Carinthian Deputy Governor, emphasise the development opportunities and the creation of a shared economic and living space through the new **Koralmb Tunnel** on the one hand, and the great opportunities arising from innovative developments in the industry at the location on the other.

Deputy Governor **Gaby Schaunig**: *“Electronics and software-based systems are not only drivers of technological innovation, they are the backbone of southern Austria as a centre of life, business, work and innovation. Styria and Carinthia have developed into a pioneering region that is recognised throughout Europe. EBSCON 2025 shows how important it is to have the courage to creatively destroy old structures in order to create something new. This is the only way we can secure our competitiveness, create opportunities for our companies and guarantee high-quality jobs for the people in our region. Key technologies such as artificial intelligence, microelectronics, robotics, quantum and photonics research and new materials give us the opportunity not only to help shape international developments, but to actively lead the way. For southern Austria, this means creating a strong basis for sustainable growth,*

future-orientated research and the innovative strength of our companies. EBSCON is precisely the place where we can visualise this new departure and shape a new era together.”

Styrian Economic Councillor **Willibald Ehrenhöfer** emphasises: *“If we are to continue to be successful as a business location in the future, we must set the pace in research and development – they are the engine for innovation. The motto of this year's EBSCON, ‘Creative Destruction’, therefore fits perfectly: creative destruction makes room for the new. Only those who leave the old behind make room for fresh ideas. I am convinced that Styria, together with Carinthia as the economic region of southern Austria, has the necessary expertise to become a pioneer of digital technologies in Europe thanks to its universities, research centres and companies. We are already Austria's Silicon Valley: 80 per cent of domestic value creation in semiconductor and microelectronics is generated here. The Koralm Tunnel will further expand this strong axis. It remains crucial that we work together across national borders in order to survive the fiercely contested global competition.”*

Michael Jerne, Director External Relations at NXP® Semiconductors Austria, explains how the company can benefit from the SILICON ALPS Cluster and the European Chips Competence Centres: *“At NXP, we firmly believe that strong cooperation across organisational and national borders is the key to success – in line with our motto ‘Brighter Together’. The cluster and the emerging Chips Competence Centre will further strengthen the already very successful Austrian microelectronics ecosystem and at the same time intensify European networking. For us, this means that we will be able to build on even more powerful partnerships in the future in order to develop leading global innovations, such as NFC (Near Field Communication) or disruptive approaches in the field of cybersecurity, in Austria. To ensure that microelectronics continues to be an Austrian success story, performance-friendly framework conditions and increased competitiveness of the location are essential.”*

Régis Hamelin, coordinator of the aCCcess networking project and co-signatory of the “Declaration of Graz”: *“With this declaration, the competence centres, together with the aCCcess consortium, reaffirm their commitment to building a strong, open and future-oriented semiconductor ecosystem in Europe, thereby making an important contribution to Europe's technological sovereignty and global competitiveness. The network of competence centres coordinated by the aCCcess project will serve as the enabling infrastructure for this ambition, fostering collaboration across Europe. Each Competence Centre will act as a local entry point to the full range of services, technologies and training opportunities available, thus strengthening and consolidating the European semiconductor value chain.”*

Objectives of the “Declaration of Graz”

Robert Gfrerer, Managing Director of the SILICON ALPS Cluster and initiator of the declaration (see enclosure for details): *“With the ‘Declaration of Graz’, we are expressing our joint intention to promote cross-border cooperation and jointly contribute to a sustainable semiconductor ecosystem in Europe. We want to and must bring the planned projects to life.”* The goals that the signatories have set themselves are:

- *Ensure fair, open and non-discriminatory access to infrastructure, expertise and funding for all relevant stakeholders, especially SMEs and start-ups.*

- *Maximising efficiency and impact of resources:* With the support of the aCCcess consortium, the centres will establish common procedures for monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices to ensure effective use of resources and infrastructure.

- *Promoting skills development and training across Europe:* The centres will coordinate education and skills programmes, facilitate talent mobility across Europe and actively address the skills gap in the semiconductor industry.

- *Strengthening Europe's strategic independence:* Regional and European value chains, pilot plants and key technologies will be developed to strengthen Europe's resilience in the semiconductor sector.

- *Enhancing trust and visibility:* The aCCcess consortium will support the centres in communicating transparently, reporting on successes and conducting outreach initiatives.

EBSCON 2025 – Programme highlights

At EBSCON, Maria Huffman from the Swedish Chips Competence Centre will speak at a BarCamp about the role of **European Chips Competence Centres** and their challenges in the face of the geopolitical situation and rapid technological progress. Bruno Paing, representative of a pilot line from France, will present those extended **pilot lines** that bridge the gap between laboratory demonstrations and large-scale production.

During EBSCON, there will not only be content-related impulses, but also a dialogue and active participation between the international industry representatives and experts and the participating decision-makers from the audience. This is ensured by the two **BarCamps “How Disruptive Methods Drive Local Transformation, hosted by NXP”** and **“European Innovation, powered by AT-C3”**. The concluding panel discussion **“EBSCON HI 5”** with Cluster Managing Director Robert Gfrerer, Maria Huffman, Thomas Haim, 3DSE Management Consultants, Christian Ramsauer, TU Graz, and Jan Preibisch, AT&S, led by **Richard Sturn**, Centre Director at the Schumpeter Centre in Graz, will once again dive deep into this year's main theme of **“Creative Destruction”**. This year's EBSCON 2025 will once again feature an **exhibition of innovative companies** and the tried-and-tested **Match Making Session** from previous years.

European Network of Chips Competence Centres (ENCCC)

The new **“European Network of Chips Competence Centres (ENCCC)”** of the 27 European Chips Competence Centres with the platform and networking project **aCCcess** will also be presented in Graz. The active role of the **Austrian centre AT-C³** Austrian Chips Competence Center will also be presented in detail. The main focus will be on the thematic interaction of the new European centres and the concrete **support of SMEs and start-ups** – and which electronics and chip developments can be launched as a result.

New extended overall framework: The EBSCON WEEK 2025

This year's EBSCON is embedded in a series of events in cooperation with the SILICON ALPS Cluster: On 6 and 7 October (Mon/Thu), there was the **"Hack2BRIDGE_Austria"** in Graz, a hackathon at Unicorn, the University of Graz's start-up centre, with an award ceremony as part of EBSCON, and on 9 and 10 October there are the **"Incoming Delegation Days"** in Styria with delegations from Sweden and the Netherlands. The first Incoming Delegation Day will conclude with a networking dinner in Villach, before company visits in Carinthia are on the programme for the delegations on the final day. The fall conference of **ESBS-Austria** will also take place in Graz on 9 October.

Robert Gfrerer, Managing Director of the organising SILICON ALPS Cluster: *"EBSCON 2025 is the best framework to underline the pioneering role of Austrian companies in the ESBS and semiconductor industry. With the **Declaration of Graz**, we want to work together with our European partners to help Europe significantly strengthen its independence and technology leadership in our industry."*

Website: <https://www.ebscon.eu/>
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Press photos from EBSCON 5.0 in print quality for download:
<https://www.ebscon.eu/press/>

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Supplements:

- **Declaration of Graz** (Memorandum of Understanding)
- **Winners** of the hackathon at the Unicorn