

## PRESS RELEASE

# EBSCON 2025: „Creative Destruction“ – How can we recognise what is new on the horizon in the future?

The leading trade fair for the European semiconductor and electronics industry on 8 October 2025 was part of EBSCON WEEK for the first time and focused on the theme of **'creative destruction'**. As part of EBSCON 5.0, representatives of European Chips Competence Centres (CCC) signed the **'Declaration of Graz'** on **Europe-wide cooperation**.

- Creative destruction, with the central question of which 'old systems' and 'old technologies' will be replaced and how the 'new' can be recognised on the horizon in the future, was the focus of EBSCON 2025.
- The SILICON ALPS CLUSTER (SAC) initiates international cooperation: As part of EBSCON 5.0, representatives of European Chips Competence Centres (CCC) signed the 'Declaration of Graz' on Europe-wide cooperation.
- Inspiration, cooperation, creative potential, empowerment – this is how enthusiastic participants describe their experiences at EBSCON 2025.
- EBSCON is a European hot spot: with a record number of visitors, nearly 350 participants from 23 countries across Europe, and speakers from Germany, Sweden, France and the Netherlands.
- Opening by Deputy Governor Gaby Schaunig, Provincial Councillor Willibald Ehrenhöfer, Michael Jerne, Director of External Relations at NXP® Semiconductors Austria, Régis Hamelin, Coordinator of the aCCcess networking project, and Silicon Alps Cluster Managing Director Robert Gfrerer
- Keynote speeches by Henriette Hochstein-Frädlich, Maria Huffman and Bruno Paing, as well as impulse talks by industry representatives in the barcamps on the topics of 'Local Innovation' and 'European Innovation'
- Panel discussion and wrap-up 'EBSCON HI 5', hosted by Richard Sturn, Centre Director at the Schumpeter Centre in Graz, with Maria Huffman, Director at Swedish Chips Competence Centre, SCCC, Thomas Haim, 3DSE Management Consultants, Christian Ramsauer, Graz University of Technology, and Jan Preibisch, AT&S, as well as SAC Managing Director Robert Gfrerer
- International Business Mission with delegations from Sweden and the Netherlands
- Queue pitching by the 11 exhibitors, intensive networking and matchmaking throughout the event with 154 organised speed dating sessions
- EBSCON WEEK 2025: This year's EBSCON was embedded in a series of events in cooperation with the SILICON ALPS Cluster in Graz and Villach

*Graz/Villach, 10 October 2025.* Under this year's theme of **'Creative Destruction'**, leading international speakers and experts from industry, think tanks and start-ups discussed with almost 350 participants from 23 nations at EBSCON 2025 which 'old systems' and 'old technologies' are being replaced and how the 'new' can be recognised on the horizon in the future.

Even before the official opening of EBSCON 5.0, the first highlight of EBSCON 2025 took place with the signing of the **'Declaration of Graz'** – on the initiative of the SILICON ALPS Cluster, representatives from France, Czechia, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria signed this 'Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)', which sets concrete goals for European cooperation between the **27 new Chip Competence Centres** and aims to put Europe's independence and technological leadership on a concrete footing.

**Link to the 'Declaration of Graz':** <https://www.ebscon.eu/press/>

## **Southern Austria is one of the hotspots of the European ESBS and semiconductor industry.**

In their **opening statements**, Styrian Minister of Economic Affairs **Willibald Ehrenhöfer** and Carinthian Deputy Governor **Gaby Schaunig** emphasised the development opportunities and the emergence of a common economic and living space thanks to the new Koralm Tunnel, as well as the great opportunities arising from innovative developments in the industry at the location.

Deputy Governor **Gaby Schaunig**: *'EBSCON 2025 shows how important it is to have the courage to engage in creative destruction: breaking down old structures to make way for new ones. This is the only way we can ensure our competitiveness, create opportunities for our companies and guarantee high-quality jobs for the people in our region.'* Styrian Minister of Economic Affairs **Willibald Ehrenhöfer** expressed his conviction 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!"* **Robert Gfrerer**, Managing Director of the organising SILICON ALPS Cluster, stated in his opening speech: *'EBSCON 2025 is the best platform to highlight 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 technological leadership in our industry.'*

Using a tried-and-tested concept – **Joseph Schumpeter's 'creative destruction'** – leading international speakers and experts from industry, think tanks and start-ups looked ahead to future developments and technologies at EBSCON 5.0.

## **Keynote 1: 'The Magic of First Principles & Question Marks: Rethinking the Future Through Radical Curiosity'**

**Cortex, baby!** In her keynote speech, **Henriette Hochstein-Frädlich** made it clear that in an age of instability, overload and accelerated change, we no longer need ready-made answers. We need better questions. Just as Copernicus and Galileo, Florence Nightingale, Radia Perlman, Johannes Gutenberg and many other researchers did, we need people who have the courage to ask them. Because the right question can change everything. Even the world. So: Love the questions!



Caption: EBSCON HI5 – Panel Discussion with Robert Gfrerer, Jan Preibisch, Thomas Haim, Maria Huffman, Christian Ramsauer, moderated by Richard Sturn (from left to right) ©: Podesser

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Two **pitching sessions** rounded off the morning programme. At the **BRIDGESMEs Electronic Hackathon** on 6 and 7 October, creative, technically sophisticated and often surprisingly humorous solutions to three industry challenges from ams OSRAM, E-Lugitsch and FH JOANNEUM were developed in just one and a half days. The winners of the HACK2BRIDGE Hackathon pitched to an enthusiastic EBSCON audience: HTL Saalfelden & WSH | Smart Sensor Challenge by ams OSRAM, HelloWorld | HTL Leoben | Startup Team | Challenge by FH Joanneum and AAA Gigerl | Startup Team | AI Challenge by E-Lugitsch. Eleven innovative exhibitors presented themselves using the tried-and-tested **queue pitching** method: NXP Semiconductors, chipsconnect, wirecube, Scoprixai, DIH Süd, Brave Analytics, Materials Center Leoben, BABEG, JOANNEUM RESEARCH, beeproduced and Cleanroom Technology Austria.

In ‘**How to “Schumpeter” the ESBS (Electronic and Software-Based Systems) Industry,**’ Maria Huffman, Director at Swedish Chips Competence Centre (SCCC), and Bruno Paing, VP Europe at CEA-Leti and representative of the FAMES Pilot Line, outlined their ideas on how European competence centres and pilot lines can contribute to achieving European sovereignty within the framework of the European Chips Act.

## **Key Note 2: 'Navigating the semiconductor ecosystem: opportunities, challenges and risks'**

**Maria Huffman** advocates for higher qualifications and retraining! To combat the shortage of skilled workers in the industry, Huffman proposed a point plan that begins with children and extends into late working life: Get young people excited about the semiconductor industry, align university curricula with the needs of the industry, offer attractive retraining programmes ('reskill') and address global talent competition. At the same time, she said, there is an urgent need to invest in meeting sustainability requirements by increasing energy efficiency and strengthening the circular economy.

**Bruno Paing**, representative of a pilot line from France, explained how the industry has led to an ongoing reduction in the number of manufacturers in the past through 'non-creative' destruction. But how can we close the gap between laboratory demonstrations and large-scale production? The 'creative destruction' of the future requires groundbreaking architectures and technologies to meet the challenge in the energy sector, and sustainable semiconductor manufacturing requires radical changes in circuit design and EDA tools, processes, equipment and infrastructure, as well as recycling and automation.

During EBSCON, there were not only substantive discussions, but also dialogue and active participation between international industry representatives and experts and the participating decision-makers from the audience. This was ensured by the two BarCamps, **'How Disruptive Methods Drive Local Transformation, hosted by NXP'**, which focused on **local innovation**, and **'European Innovation, powered by AT-C3'**, which addressed **the role of European Chip Competence Centres** and the challenges they face in light of the geopolitical situation and rapid technological progress.

The concluding panel discussion **'EBSCON HI 5'** with cluster managing director **Robert Gfrerer**, **Maria Huffman**, **Thomas Haim**, 3DSE Management Consultants, **Christian Ramsauer**, Graz University of Technology, and **Jan Preibisch**, AT&S, chaired by **Richard Sturn**, centre director at the Schumpeter Centre in Graz, once again delved deeply into this year's main theme, 'Creative Destruction'. All panellists agreed that, in view of the major social and ecological challenges, it will be important for Europe to be aware of its pioneering role in areas such as climate protection and sustainability, and that the ESBS industry should see this focus as a competitive advantage in line with the concept of 'Creative Destruction'. The discussion concluded with a plea for greater self-confidence on the part of Europe: the people and culture of Europe are an outstanding asset.

Once again, EBSCON 2025 featured an **exhibition of innovative companies** and the **matchmaking session**, which has proven successful in previous years.

## **New expanded overall framework: EBSCON WEEK 2025 – a model for success!**

This year's EBSCON was embedded for the first time in a series of events in cooperation with the SILICON ALPS Cluster: **'Hack2BRIDGE\_Austria'**, the **'Incoming Delegation Days'** in Styria with delegations from Sweden and the Netherlands, the presentation of the new **'European Network of Chips Competence Centres (ENCCC)'** of the 27 European chips competence centres with the platform and networking project **aCCcess**, **company visits in Styria and Carinthia** with a networking dinner in Villach, and the **autumn conference of ESBS-Austria**.

## Networking and speed dating

Networking was once again at the heart of EBSCON in 2025: during the 154 organised B2B meetings, inspiring conversations led to new potential business partners being found and the foundations for new collaborations being laid.

*"With almost 350 participants from 23 countries, we can celebrate a record number of visitors on the 5th anniversary of EBSCON. EBSCON has confirmed and further expanded its role as the leading event for the European semiconductor and electronics industry and can rightly be considered a beacon of the Silicon Alps network. With the theme of "Creative Destruction", we have struck a chord in view of the current challenges. In light of the major changes brought about by AI and the transformation of the economic landscape, we will once again find a similarly exciting theme for 2026 – very much in the spirit of Henriette Hochstein Frädrieh – to rethink the future through radical curiosity", concluded Cluster Managing Director **Robert Gfrerer**.*

**ECSCON 2026 will take place on 7 October 2026 at the Graz Exhibition Centre.**

Website:

<https://ebscon.eu/>

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