



AUTOSUP

Newsletter #4

July 2026



Welcome to the AUTOSUP 4th Newsletter!

As AUTOSUP enters its final 12 months, the focus is shifting from concept development to validation, stakeholder engagement, and practical deployment pathways for autonomous multimodal supply chains.

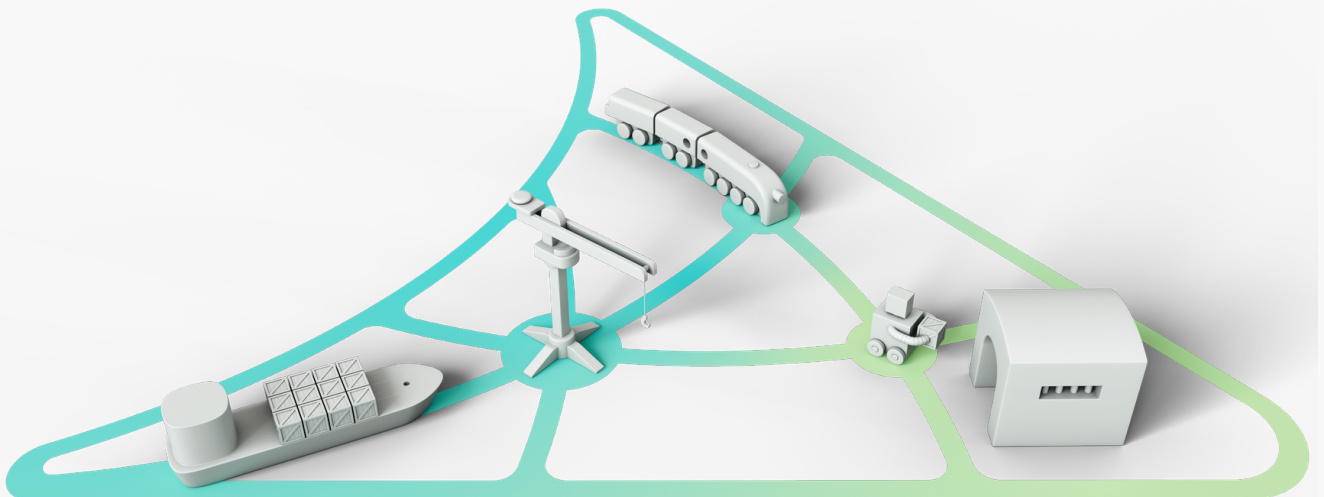
This edition highlights two major AUTOSUP achievements: the first integrated Decision Support System (DSS), now ready for stakeholder validation, and the Offline Trustee Function, an innovative governance concept that enables trusted collaboration in automated multimodal logistics networks.

We also report from Trieste, where partners, stakeholders and invited experts gathered for a joint AUTOSUP-CROSSFREIGHT event, an AUTOSUP stakeholder workshop on the Offline Trustee Function, and the project's 3rd General Assembly.

Stakeholder engagement remains central to AUTOSUP. We invite you to join the Technology Acceptance Survey and help identify opportunities, challenges, and adoption barriers for automation in multimodal supply chains.

Finally, we share highlights from dissemination and collaboration activities, including RTR 2026, TRA 2026, IPIC 2026, and joint work with CROSSFREIGHT. These events helped present AUTOSUP results and strengthen Europe's community around smarter, more sustainable logistics.

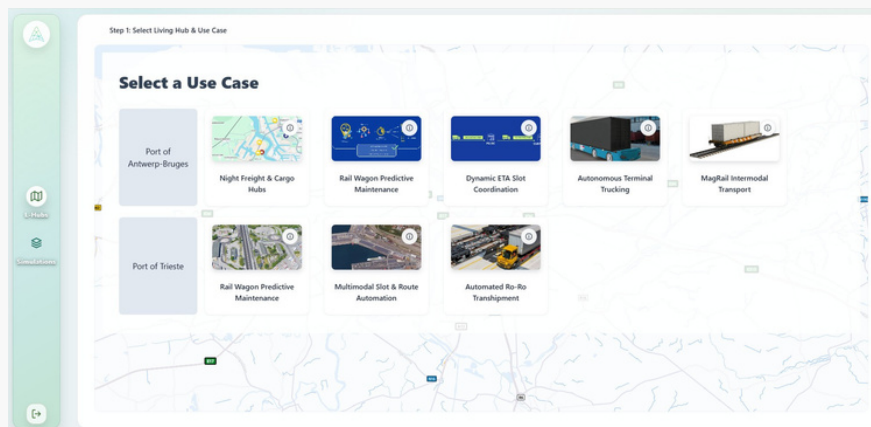
We hope this newsletter offers valuable insights into AUTOSUP's latest progress and inspires you to help shape the future of automated multimodal freight transport.



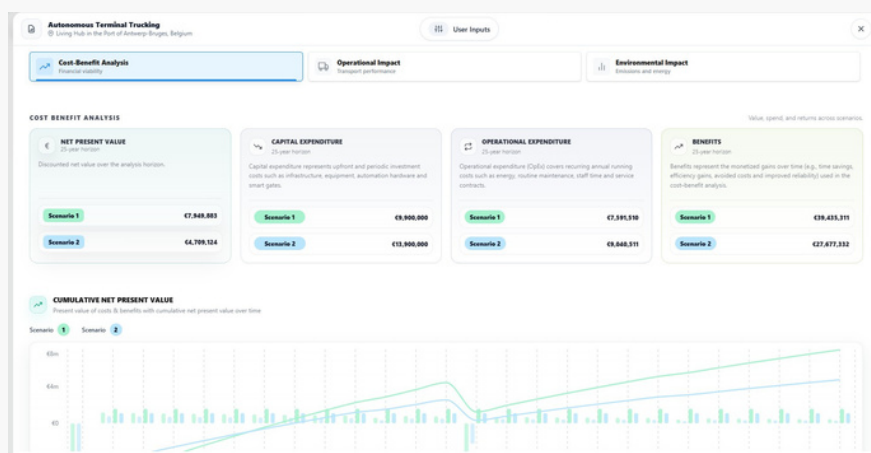
AUTOSUP reaches a major milestone with the completion of the integrated Decision Support System

The AUTOSUP project has achieved an important milestone in its mission to prepare the ground for autonomous multimodal supply chains. During the past months, project partners completed the first fully integrated version of the AUTOSUP Decision Support System, bringing together the project's key technical innovations into a single platform that helps logistics stakeholders evaluate, compare, and plan automation strategies for multimodal freight transport.

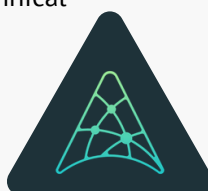
The DSS is built around the real-world needs of the Living Hubs (L-Hubs) in Antwerp-Bruges and Trieste and supports the L-Hubs' diverse use cases, including automated wagon maintenance, multimodal slot management, transshipment operations, port collaboration, and autonomous transport solutions. Through interactive scenario configuration and visualisation tools, users can explore different operational approaches, assess their impacts, and identify the most effective pathways towards greater efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness.



For each simulation, the platform provides a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis supported by graphs and tables that visualise both operational and environmental impacts. Users can compare different future scenarios against the current "as-is" situation, as well as benchmark multiple simulation results against one another, enabling data-driven decision-making and a clearer understanding of potential trade-offs.



With the integration phase completed, the platform is now entering stakeholder testing and validation. End users will be able to interact with the system, review simulation outcomes, and provide feedback to refine its functionality further. These validation activities will ensure that the DSS not only delivers robust technical performance but also addresses the practical needs of logistics decision-makers.



Key Innovation: The Offline Trustee Function

Can a neutral trustee help unlock multimodal automation?

As logistics networks become increasingly automated and data-driven, collaboration between ports, terminal operators, logistics service providers, rail operators, shippers and public authorities becomes more important than ever. Yet collaboration is often hindered by fragmented information, unclear responsibilities, concerns about data confidentiality, and uncertainty regarding costs, risks and benefits. To address these challenges, AUTOSUP is exploring an innovative governance concept: the Offline Trustee Function.

During a dedicated stakeholder workshop held at the Trieste Living Hub, participants evaluated the concept through the Automated Cross-Border Ro-Ro Transshipment use case (UC3), a complex logistics scenario requiring close coordination among port operations, inland terminals, road transport operators, rail operators, and cross-border corridor stakeholders.

The workshop was part of AUTOSUP's validation activities to assess whether governance, information-sharing mechanisms, and stakeholder collaboration models are sufficient to support future automation-driven logistics services.

The Offline Trustee is not an operational control tower and does not manage trains, slots, delays or daily transport operations. Instead, it acts as a neutral strategic and tactical support function that helps stakeholders structure collaboration, aggregate or validate information when direct sharing is difficult, and create a shared basis for decision-making.

By providing governance mechanisms and trusted information handling processes, the concept aims to facilitate cooperation without requiring companies to disclose commercially sensitive information.



The validation exercise compared two situations: a scenario without an Offline Trustee and a scenario in which a neutral trustee supports strategic and tactical collaboration. Stakeholders worked across four key domains: organisational collaboration and decision rights, information and data exchange, legal and contractual aspects, and costs, benefits and risk-sharing arrangements.

What happens without a neutral trustee?

The workshop revealed several barriers that currently limit collaboration in multimodal freight transport. Participants highlighted fragmented responsibilities, unclear decision-making authority, limited trust between organisations, and reluctance to share commercially sensitive information. Data was often described as incomplete, unreliable or difficult to exchange due to incompatible standards and a lack of validation procedures. Questions also emerged around liability, contractual responsibilities, investment ownership, and the distribution of costs and benefits.

What value could the Offline Trustee provide?

Stakeholders viewed the Offline Trustee as a neutral facilitator capable of improving coordination across the logistics ecosystem while preserving commercial neutrality. Rather than managing day-to-day operations, the trustee would support collaboration before implementation or scaling by aggregating information, validating assumptions, clarifying governance structures, and facilitating collective decision-making. Participants identified several potential benefits, including improved transparency, common data standards, better interoperability, more reliable planning, workforce capacity building, and support for automation adoption and freight decarbonisation.

Key takeaway

- Successful automation depends on trusted governance and technology.
- Trust must be built into both the governance framework and the Offline Trustee.
- Demonstrable neutrality and clearly defined responsibilities are essential.
- Aggregation and anonymisation help protect sensitive information.
- Common data standards, quality assurance and contractual safeguards are key.
- Transparent risk- and benefit-sharing supports stakeholder collaboration.
- The Offline Trustee can enable strategic and tactical multimodal collaboration.
- Trusted governance supports evidence-based decision-making.
- Fair and transparent collaboration is essential for wider automation adoption.



Understanding the Human Side of Automation: Participate in the AUTOSUP Technology Acceptance Survey

Successful automation in multimodal logistics depends not only on technology but also on trust, perceived value, organisational readiness and adoption barriers. Understanding these factors is essential to develop solutions that are both feasible and accepted by the logistics community.

To gather stakeholder insights, the Technical University of Munich has launched a Technology Acceptance Survey. The results will support AUTOSUP's validation activities and help shape future recommendations for automation deployment in Europe's logistics.

Participation is open to logistics stakeholders, transport operators, infrastructure managers, technology providers, researchers, policymakers and industry experts. The questionnaire takes less than 10 minutes, and all responses are confidential.

By participating, you help us build automation solutions that reflect real operational needs and market expectations.

Have your say

We warmly invite you to participate and share your expertise.

What to expect

- Questions about your organisation, role, and experience
- Your views on automation technologies in freight transport
- A few background questions on your professional profile
- Participation is voluntary and confidential

Your input will help AUTOSUP identify key drivers and barriers for automation adoption and develop more practical, acceptable and scalable solutions for Europe's multimodal supply chains.



SHARE YOUR INSIGHTS!

[Participate in the AUTOSUP Technology Acceptance Survey.](#)



News and events

The first half of 2026 has been an exciting period for AUTOSUP, with project partners actively contributing to major European conferences, stakeholder events, and collaborative initiatives focused on the future of automated and multimodal freight transport. These events provided valuable opportunities to present AUTOSUP results, exchange knowledge with industry leaders, and strengthen cooperation with sister projects working towards a more digital, sustainable, and automated logistics ecosystem.

CEO ROUND TABLE: FROM TECHNOLOGY TO REALITY



In December 2025, VIL and imec organised a high-level CEO Round Table entitled “Automated transport solutions: building the bridge between technology and reality.” The discussion brought together industry leaders to explore how automation technologies can create practical value for logistics operations.

Participants agreed that the future of automation is not about achieving full autonomy overnight, but about identifying realistic applications that improve safety, efficiency, and sustainability. A key conclusion was that future progress requires stronger alignment between technology, companies, and regulatory frameworks.

AUTOSUP JOINS FORCES WITH EUROPEAN SISTER PROJECTS AT RTR 2026

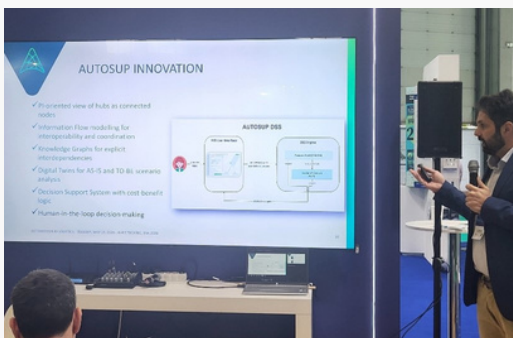
In February 2026, AUTOSUP participated in the RTR Conference in Brussels, where the project co-organised the session “Future-proof freight transport: autonomous multimodal, freight flow integration and low-energy operations” together with the AUTOMOTIF, ADMIRAL and TRACE projects.

The session explored how Europe can move beyond isolated innovations and accelerate the transition towards integrated multimodal freight transport through automation, interoperability, digital twins, and data-driven decision-making.



The event highlighted the importance of collaboration across projects and sectors to reduce fragmentation and support scalable deployment of innovative logistics solutions across Europe.

SHOWCASING LOGISTICS AUTOMATION AT TRA 2026



AUTOSUP was also present at the Transport Research Arena (TRA) 2026 in Budapest, one of Europe's leading transport research and innovation events. Together with the AUTOMOTIF, MODI and SEAMLESS projects, AUTOSUP organised the session “Automation in Logistics: Where Do We Stand?”.

The discussion provided participants with practical insights into the current state of logistics automation across different transport modes and operational environments.

The project was additionally represented at the ALICE Automation Corner, where project partners engaged with stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges of autonomous and multimodal logistics.



AUTOSUP CONTRIBUTES TO KEY DISCUSSIONS AT IPIC 2026

In June 2026, AUTOSUP was presented at the International Physical Internet Conference (IPIC) in Bordeaux, one of the leading international events dedicated to the future of interconnected and sustainable logistics.

The transition towards the Physical Internet requires supply chain hubs such as ports and terminals to become increasingly automated, connected, and collaborative. AUTOSUP contributes to this transformation by helping logistics hubs evolve towards highly automated multimodal operations. The project addresses key challenges that currently hinder large-scale deployment, including fragmented automation solutions, limited interoperability between systems, insufficient coordination between stakeholders, and regulatory gaps.

At IPIC, project partners highlighted how AUTOSUP's work on automation, Digital Twins, Decision Support Systems, and collaborative governance models can support the development of more efficient, interconnected, and sustainable freight transport networks across Europe.



Key takeaway: Achieving the Physical Internet requires more than technology alone. Automation, interoperability, collaboration, and supportive governance frameworks must work together to create truly connected logistics networks.

AUTOSUP PROJECT PARTNERS GATHER IN TRIESTE FOR THE 3RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND JOINT EVENT WITH CROSSFREIGHT

On 1–2 July 2026, AUTOSUP partners, stakeholders, and invited experts gathered in Trieste, Italy, for a three-part event combining the CROSSFREIGHT Closing Event, an AUTOSUP stakeholder workshop, and the 3rd AUTOSUP General Assembly.

The first part of the event was dedicated to the closing activities of the CROSSFREIGHT project. Participants reflected on the project's achievements and discussed future opportunities for digitalisation, collaboration, and innovation in freight transport.

Bringing together stakeholders from industry, research, and public authorities, the event fostered valuable exchanges on how European projects can contribute to more integrated, efficient, and sustainable logistics networks.

The second part of the event focused on stakeholder engagement and validation activities through a dedicated workshop on the Offline Trustee Function, one of AUTOSUP's innovative governance concepts.



During the interactive session, logistics operators, infrastructure managers, researchers, policymakers, and project partners explored how a neutral trustee could support collaboration in increasingly automated and data-driven multimodal supply chains.

Participants discussed challenges related to information sharing, governance, decision-making, trust, and the distribution of costs and benefits between stakeholders.

The event concluded with the 3rd AUTOSUP General Assembly, where project partners reviewed progress across all work packages and aligned on the activities planned for the final phase of the project.

Key discussions focused on the validation of the six AUTOSUP use cases, the integrated Decision Support System (DSS), and the Digital Twin models developed for the Living Hubs in Antwerp-Bruges and Trieste.

AUTOSUP AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT RESEARCH 2026

In July 2026, AUTOSUP was represented at the 17th World Conference on Transport Research (WCTR 2026) in Toulouse, France.

Organised every three years by the World Conference on Transport Research Society, the conference is one of the world's leading events in transport research, bringing together around 1,500 researchers, engineers, policymakers, and industry experts from across the globe.

AUTOSUP partner FIT Consulting presented AUTOSUP during the Freight Transport and Logistics poster session, showcasing how the project is addressing the challenges and opportunities of automation in multimodal supply chains.



The presentation highlighted AUTOSUP's work on Digital Twins, Decision Support Systems, governance models, and the validation of automation scenarios in the Living Hubs of Antwerp-Bruges and Trieste.

Participation in WCTR 2026 provided an excellent opportunity to position AUTOSUP within the international research community, exchange knowledge with leading transport experts, and connect the project's findings with the latest developments in sustainable, digital, and automated transport systems worldwide.

LOOKING AHEAD

The coming months promise to be equally exciting for AUTOSUP.

Project partners will continue presenting results and engaging with stakeholders at key European events, including [the Port of Antwerp-Bruges Autonomous Summit](#), [Connecting Europe Days](#), the ALICE Logistics Innovation Summit, and [the European Transport Conference](#).

We invite you to meet the AUTOSUP team at our booth during upcoming events to discover the latest project results, discuss automation challenges, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

In the coming year, AUTOSUP will continue expanding its stakeholder community and validating the project's automation concepts, governance models, and decision support tools through dedicated workshops and Living Hub activities. Join us on 14 September 2026 in Antwerp for a workshop on the Offline Trustee function. Interested? Contact dirk.staelens@vil.be for registration.



Over 70 experts have already joined the AUTOSUP Stakeholder Community

Stakeholders are central to the AUTOSUP project. We depend on a diverse group of partners, industry experts, technology providers, policymakers, and researchers to shape the project's outcomes and promote innovation in logistics automation. As a stakeholder, your role is vital in identifying key requirements, pointing out gaps, and influencing the future development of autonomous logistics solutions.

STAKEHOLDER ACTIVITIES

AUTOSUP is committed to engaging stakeholders through a series of interactive activities, such as:

- Workshops and strategic consultations: Engage in interactive discussions with industry experts to enhance insights on automation technologies and address any identified gaps.
- Surveys and interviews: Participate in surveys and interviews to share your expertise, capturing diverse perspectives that ensure a thorough analysis of the requirements and challenges in automated cargo transport.
- Living lab demonstrations: Join us at key hubs such as the Port of Antwerp-Bruges and the Port of Trieste to observe and provide feedback on innovative solutions being tested in real-world environments.
- Technical working groups: Collaborate to establish technical standards, operational guidelines, and regulatory recommendations to shape the future of multimodal freight transport.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR STAKEHOLDERS?

By joining the AUTOSUP stakeholder community, you will:

- Shape the future of logistics: Influence the development of next-generation autonomous solutions that will set new benchmarks for the industry.
- Gain early access to innovations: Be the first to explore and test cutting-edge technologies that boost efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness.
- Network with industry leaders: Connect with key players in logistics, technology, and policy to exchange knowledge, build partnerships, and explore new business opportunities.

INTERESTED TO JOIN?

<https://www.autosup-project.eu/stakeholder-community/>



Project details

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Funding: 3.999.812,50€

Partners: 17 (+1 AE)

Project Coordinator: Inlecom

Communication & Dissemination: VIL

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