

PRESS RELEASE

Three-Day European Collaboration Culminates in High-Level Conference on a Sustainable Energy Future through Hydrogen

Athens, 12 May 2025 – A three-day European scientific collaboration dedicated to **sustainable energy, green innovation, and international partnership** concluded successfully in Athens. The highlight of the activities was the high-level conference titled **“Shaping Europe’s Sustainable Energy Future through Hydrogen”**, which took place on April 29 at the Antoniadou Amphitheatre of the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB).

The international hydrogen conference brought together distinguished scientists, policymakers, and private sector representatives. **Professor Phoebe Koundouri**, AUEB & DTU, President of the World Council of Environmental and Resource Economists Associations and UN SDSN Global Climate Hub, opened the event with a keynote speech on the strategic role of hydrogen in Europe’s sustainable future. Welcome remarks followed from the Rector of AUEB, **Professor Vassilios Vasdekis**; the President of the “Athena” Research Center, **Professor Yannis Emiris**; and **Massamba Thioye** from the UNFCCC Global Innovation Hub. Opening statements were also delivered by **María Cortés Puch** (Vice Chair, SDSN), Professor **Yannis Ioannidis** (President of ACM, NKUA), and Professor **George Karydis** (AUEB).



The keynote address was delivered by **Dr. Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi**, former Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the UAE, who described hydrogen as the "final link" for full decarbonization. Specialized presentations followed by **Dr. Stavros Solomos** (Academy of Athens), Professor **Marie Münster**, PhD candidate **Theis Madsen**, and **Dr. Ioannis Kountouris** (DTU). The conference concluded with a panel discussion titled *"The European Hydrogen Ecosystem – Europe and Greece"*, where representatives from industry, research, and academia engaged in a fruitful dialogue.



The conference highlighted the importance of **multilevel cooperation and evidence-based policy in the green transition**. Hydrogen was recognized as a key enabler for achieving a sustainable, climate-neutral, and resilient energy future.

The conference was organized through the collaboration of the Research Laboratory on Socio-Economic and Environmental Sustainability (ReSEES) at AUEB, the Department of Technology, Management and Economics of the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), the Sustainable Development Unit of the "Athena" Research Center, the SDSN Global Climate Hub, SDSN Europe, the Alliance of Excellence for Research and Innovation on Aephoria (AE4RIA) network, and the European project MAIA. The event was supported by the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE) and INZEB, the National Coordinator of the European Climate Pact in Greece.





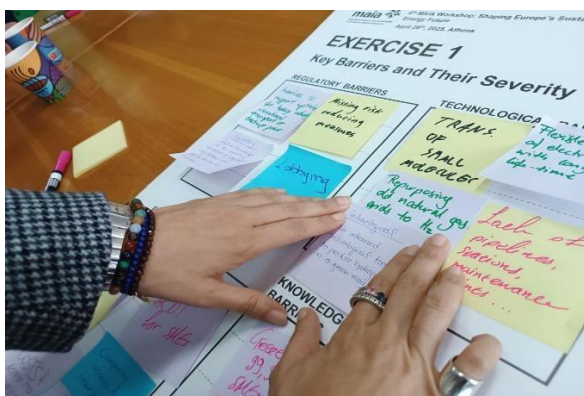
[Watch the conference recording here](#)

An interactive workshop followed, organized by the **Sustainable Development Unit of the “Athena” RC as part of the EU-funded project MAIA (Horizon Europe)**. Participants collaborated on:

- Identifying key barriers in green hydrogen technology
- Formulating a shared vision and action plan
- Mapping stakeholders through an interest-influence matrix

The discussions also built on ongoing work from related EU initiatives such as the BuildSkills Academy, including the Build Enriched Skills Methodology (Deliverable D2.3), developed with the contribution of AUEB researchers (including E. Akinsete, V. Samara, and Prof. Phoebe Koundouri), which focuses on aligning training provision with emerging green and digital skills needs.

Taking into account the conference presentations, participants recognized the importance of the high relative cost of green hydrogen technology and the need to provide economic incentives for its wider adoption, as well as behavioral inertia among producers, consumers, and policymakers.



The three-day collaboration was carried out within the framework of a close partnership between the **AE4RIA network**, **AUEB**, the **“Athena” Research Center**, and the **Technical University of Denmark (DTU)**, with the participation of researchers from the **University of Cambridge**.

On the first day, the AE4RIA scientific team, under the leadership of **Professor Phoebe Koundouri** along with DTU guests, presented research projects in key areas: energy, climate adaptation, shipping, sustainable finance, and innovation. The importance of a multidisciplinary approach was emphasized, using energy system modeling tools, social impact analysis, and ESG applications to support green policy.



The third day was dedicated to planning future synergies between partners from AE4RIA, DTU, and the University of Cambridge. On April 30, the fifth meeting of the AE4RIA Research Seminar Series also took place, with guest speaker **Professor Ali Mashayek** (Cambridge), who gave a talk titled **“History matters: how the ocean’s history informs the ongoing climate change,”** highlighting the importance of ocean history in understanding current climate change.



As **Professor Phoebe Koundouri** stated:

"The knowledge exchange and shared scientific focus achieved during this three-day collaboration serve as a model for forging alliances for the green transition. Hydrogen, backed by strong scientific foundations and international cooperation, can be a catalyst for Europe's climate neutrality."

Watch the research seminar recording here:

https://youtu.be/ZDFYD8rWm_E?si=R2cFx0KFEULYelsz