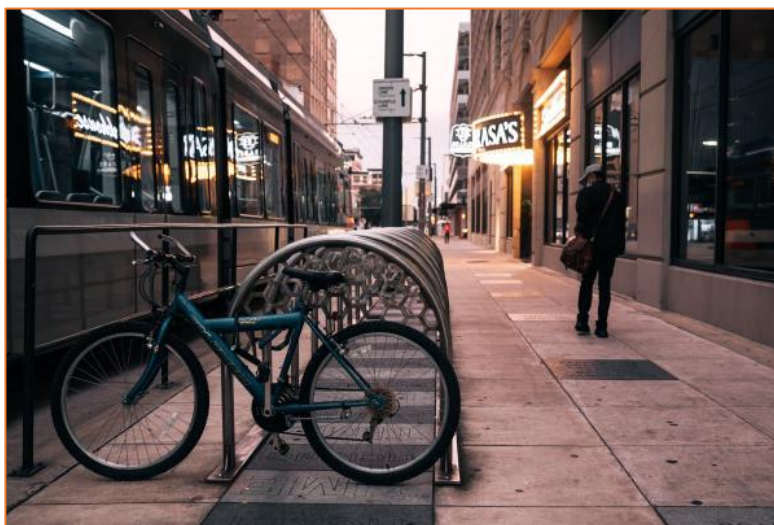




NEWSLETTER

#4





## EMBRACER



## Newsletter #4 – EMBRACER

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the **EMBRACER** project!

**EMBRACER** (interconnecting MoBility acRoss europeAn CitiEs and subURbs) is a region-driven project where seven underserved regions have committed to integrate public transport with informal modes (cycling, ride-hailing, car/bike/scooter sharing, on-demand transport, autonomous shuttles) to enhance the interconnection with urban areas and achieve seamless intelligent climate-resilient regional and local intermodal mobility.

In this newsletter, you will find **EMBRACER** latest updates!

## A few numbers



2,281,164 €  
budget



01 Mar 2023-  
31 May 2027



13 partners

[Watch our EMBRACER video!](#)

[Read our EMBRACER brochure!](#)



## Our partners





## EMBRACER

### Did you miss our “Meet the partners” campaign?

In November 2024, **EMBRACER** launched the “Meet the partners” campaign to let you know more about who is behind the project, having a crucial role in achieving key goals and mobility improvements, as well as about what cities and regions can do for their country thanks to **EMBRACER**! Did you miss it? [Check the EMBRACER library!](#)



### EMBRACER Exchange of Experience in Vilnius



The fourth **EMBRACER** Exchange of Experience (EoE) was organized by "Susisiekimo paslaugos" (JUDU), on 9 and 10 October 2024, in Vilnius. EMBRACER partners and stakeholders from municipalities, ministries, agencies, businesses, and universities participated: more than 30 people met to discuss how “Rethinking modal integration between Public Transport and shared, connected autonomous mobility”. The EoE was a great opportunity for a Joint Pilot Action Session discussing challenges, barriers and opportunities for implementing a pilot action. And EMBRACER partners were able to experience first-hand the self-driving bus that JUDU was testing within the project in the area of Užupis, discussing technical aspects and enjoying a nice ride! [Read more](#)



### EMBRACER Exchange of Experience in Leipzig



A new **EMBRACER** EoE event was held in Leipzig, Germany, on 28-29 January 2025, organised by Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH. The focus of the event was on innovative approaches to intermodal



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mobility and improving public transportation in urban and rural areas. Representatives from various European cities and regions exchanged experiences and best practices and discussed solutions for more sustainable and accessible mobility. A thematic seminar on "Regional Gaps in Infrastructure & the Design of an Intermodal Mobility Strategy" and a seminar on "Smart Regional Public Transport Ecosystems," gave the opportunity to discuss the future of public transport putting the user more and more at the centre, considering real needs and demand. Several interesting study visits took place, finding out more about MaaS in the city with Leipzig MOVE app; the on-demand shuttle service FLEXA; and discovering the Leipzig Central Station, one of the largest transportation hubs in Europe. [Read more](#)

### EMBRACER pilot successfully ended



After two months of testing, the JUDU-led pilot of an autonomously guided shuttle in Vilnius wrapped up in November, marking an exciting milestone for smart mobility in Vilnius! Operating fully electric on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on a 4 km route with 13 stops, the shuttle provided free rides and valuable insights into its potential for future urban. The route duration was approximately 50 minutes. During the test, data were collected and analyzed regarding passenger flows, the quality and suitability of the infrastructure for autonomous transport, as well as the potential effectiveness of the autonomous bus as a form of public transport and its potential integration into the city's transportation system in the future. In an exciting leap toward the future of mobility, the electric autonomous bus operated in a district near the Old Town, offering a free and futuristic mode of transport.



#### By the Numbers:

- ✓ 1,022 passengers transported
- ✓ 1,000 km covered
- ✓ 91% autonomous operation
- ✓ 127 surveyed passengers—80% ready to embrace self-driving public transport!



The trial shed light on infrastructure challenges, traffic intensity, and illegal street parking, providing crucial insights for future deployments. Despite these hurdles, passenger feedback was overwhelmingly positive, proving that Vilnius is ready to embrace autonomous mobility! Find out more about the pilot [here](#). Now, JUDU is analyzing key data on passenger flows, infrastructure suitability, and efficiency. You can jump in into our experience with the pilot in Vilnius: hop on for one last virtual ride with a video by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Lithuania! [Watch the video!](#)







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## From Ireland to Portugal: a 100% sustainable trip!



On July 5th, 2024, Dr. Darren McAdam O'Connell set off on an extraordinary three-week slow travel adventure from Cork, Ireland, to Coimbra, Portugal, combining cycling, ferries, and trains. As the Coordinator of the Transport and Mobility Forum, Darren documented his journey, sharing the joys and challenges of sustainable travel while showcasing Europe's transport strengths—and its gaps. More than just a trip for the **EMBRACER** project, his journey was a powerful statement on the future of eco-friendly mobility. His adventure, undertaken as part of the **EMBRACER** project, caught the attention of Interreg Europe, which was eager to learn about the obstacles and solutions he encountered. This interest led to an exclusive interview, where Darren shared key insights on eco-friendly international travel. [Read the article by Interreg Europe and watch the interview!](#)

## Fourth round of Regional Stakeholders Group Meetings for EMBRACER!

## University of Aveiro/ Coimbra Region



## The Environmental Forum



**EMBRACER** LP and PP02 co-organised a successful Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting that took place in Valladolid, seizing the opportunity to collaborate with the Interreg Spain-Portugal Exchange of Experience event. The focus? "Exploring On-Demand Transport: Cross-Border Cooperation." Experts and stakeholders engaged in a lively exchange of knowledge and best practices, showcasing how on-demand transport (DRT) can enhance accessibility in underserved areas. With diverse regional approaches discussed, the meeting

Shaping the Future of Sustainable Mobility in Cork! The Environmental Forum, Cork City Council, and the Transport & Mobility Forum joined forces for the 4th **EMBRACER** Regional Stakeholder Meeting, bringing together top voices in mobility and sustainability. Under the theme "Learnings and Next Steps", participants explored successful Good Practices from **EMBRACER**, discussing how to apply them locally to advance active and sustainable transport in the Cork



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highlighted DRT's potential to revolutionize mobility.  
[Read more](#)

region. With eleven key stakeholders collaborating, the event set the stage for future improvements in urban mobility. [Read more](#)

### JUDU



JUDU organized its 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Vilnius: a productive discussion that brought out challenges and critical issues in mobility. The focus was on SUMP under development which requires to cover not only cities but also districts and surrounding areas: involving citizens in the discussion is crucial. Walkability, and how to integrate it into mobility plans, was a further topic of discussion, as well as the experiences gained from other **EMBRACER** partners, on the autonomous driving field. [Read more](#)

### Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH



Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH organised its 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Leipzig, collecting a wide array of regional needs and challenges such as the lack of skilled labour, especially regarding drivers, the challenges for Public Transport through demographic shifts in the countryside, the long-term planning struggles for infrastructure transformation and the need to evaluate the current state of mobility infrastructure as well as the inclusion of end-users in mobility management. [Read more](#)

### Municipality of Ljutomer/Development agency Sinergija



Municipality of Ljutomer/Development agency Sinergija organised their 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting, focusing on the Exchange of Experience event held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in October 2024 and on the test of the autonomous bus the city carried out within **EMBRACER**. As Ljutomer is discussing a new

### Metropolitan City of Cagliari and TTS Italia



With over 30 participants, the 4th Italian Stakeholders Group Meeting was held in Cagliari, organised by TTS Italia and Metropolitan City of Cagliari. An overview of the weak mobility areas in Sardinia was the starting point for presenting some of the most innovative Italian solutions to

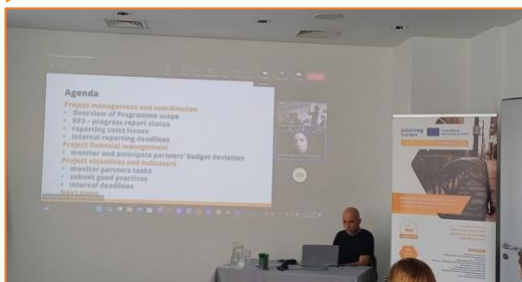


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integrated transport strategy, with several measures under approval, the introduction of an autonomous bus is being considered as an additional solution for connecting short routes within the municipality, in an attempt to modernize the public transport. [Read more](#)

bridge the gap between urban centres and underserved areas. The following debate, underlined the importance of a strategic and coordinated approach to ensure the sustainability of projects in the long term, with an eye on replicability. [Read more](#)

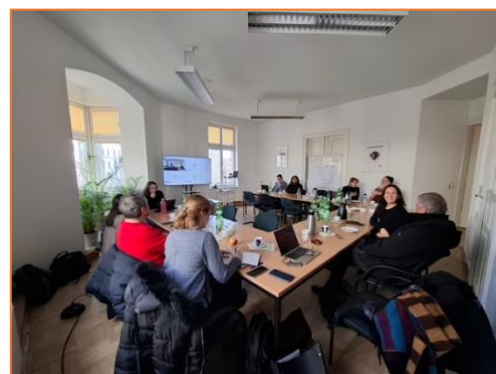
### Steering Group Committee



In conjunction with the last two **EMBRACER** EoE, Steering Group Committee meetings were also held.

These are important moments in which to take stock with all partners of the status of the project and the next steps. Different topics were

covered and discussed with the partnership, focusing on a strong commitment to the project and its goals.



### Stakeholder interview

A new interview in this semester focusing on one of the hottest topics for mobility: autonomous driving! Enjoy the interview to the **EMBRACER** stakeholder!



**Tampere University** interviewed **Tatu Nieminen**, the Co-founder and CEO of Remoted Oy. An interesting focus on technical challenges and operational successes when dealing with autonomous driving as well as replicability, especially referring to the Vilnius pilot carried out within **EMBRACER**, and in which Remoted Oy was directly involved. [Read the interview!](#)

### EMBRACER Good Practices

**EMBRACER** is happy to share two Good Practices experts approved:







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**Ir e Vir: Enhancing Public Transport Coverage in Viseu Dão Lafões Region.** An effective flexible Public Transport service was developed and implemented through taxi collaboration operating in the region as a complement to Public Transport network. Passenger requests a journey until noon of the previous business day through a free phone call to the central. At the agreed hour, the taxi arrives at the selected stop. [Read more](#)

**FLASH - Driverless Automated Shuttle arrives in Northern Saxony.** Rural areas often lack reliable and well-developed public transport. FLASH addresses this gap by providing an automated shuttle service in northern Saxony, offering sustainable transport options even in rural areas. [Read more](#)

But recently **EMBRACER** partners shared many more! [Read more](#)



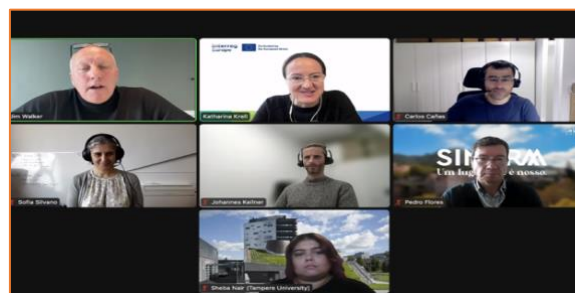
### EMBRACER at events

**EMBRACER active participation in PLP peer review - Empowering Rural Mobility Solutions!**



How can rural communities embrace new forms of sustainable mobility? Join us as we highlight the recent online peer review hosted by the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform on February 6-7, 2025. Leitrim County Council in Ireland sought insights from peers in similarly thinly populated areas across Europe to enhance sustainable mobility and community acceptance. **EMBRACER** partners, including The Environmental Forum/Transport & Mobility Forum and the Coimbra Region Intermunicipal Community, shared valuable experiences and successful examples of innovative mobility solutions. Together, they crafted actionable recommendations to foster community buy-in. Discover how we can drive change in rural mobility! [Read more](#)

**EMBRACER at the webinar on Integrating walking into mobility policy**



On 26 November 2024, the Policy Learning Platform hosted the second episode of the 'Active Mobility' webinar series, attracting 100 participants eager to explore "Integrating Walking into Mobility and Transport Policy." The session highlighted Interreg Europe good practices, featuring **EMBRACER** and its insights from Sheba Nair of Tampere University, Finland. Sheba shared how Tampere is actively promoting walking within its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and transforming its transport system to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Join the movement toward sustainable mobility! Catch the highlights! [Read more](#)

**EMBRACER at the webinar on Promoting Cycling in Cities and Regions**

**The EMBRACER self-driving at the Vilnius GreenTech Forum**





On 19 November 2024, the Policy Learning Platform kicked off its 'Active Mobility' webinar series with an engaging session on "Promoting Cycling in Cities and Regions," attracting over 90 participants! **EMBRACER** proudly featured Joana Sobral from Coimbra Municipality, Portugal, who shared insights on the participatory approach used to co-design the Coimbra Cycling Network. Joana highlighted the importance of citizen involvement and initiatives like European Mobility Week in fostering cycling mobility. By prioritizing public engagement in policy-making, we can build trust and ensure community support for public investments. It was a great opportunity to **EMBRACER** PPs to share their experience in shaping a more sustainable future! [Read more](#)



On 7 November 2024, **EMBRACER** was presented at the Vilnius GreenTech Forum!

JUDU took part in the Forum, promoting a green transformation of the economy and business of Lithuania. Elonas Saparnis, Public transport traffic organization engineer at JUDU, participated in the session on "Urban and real estate market decarbonisation" focusing on "Autonomous Transport: How Far Will It Take Us?". A general overview of **EMBRACER** was shared with the audience along with details about the pilot Vilnius is implementing and testing until the end of November thanks to the funds received through the Interreg Europe Program in **EMBRACER**.

[Read more](#)

## EMBRACER at the "Connecting Romania" event



**EMBRACER**, on 10 October, was presented at the event "Connecting Romania: Key Transport Developments and Strategic Objectives," organized by the British Romanian Chamber of Commerce, in Bucharest, Romania. **EMBRACER** was presented thanks to a keynote speech by Vlad Stoicescu, president of the Romanian Sustainable Fuels Association - ACS Center for Sustainability, one of the project regional stakeholders. ADRBI's (Agenția pentru Dezvoltare Regională București-Ilfov) efforts were especially highlighted to advance sustainable urban transportation and logistics for both public and private sectors, thanks to the direct involvement in **EMBRACER**. [Read more](#)

## EMBRACER at the European Mobility Week in Cagliari



Within the European Mobility Week, the Metropolitan City of Cagliari organised, on 20 September, the conference on 'Shared spaces and urban quality'. The City Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS), its evolutions and progress were discussed, focusing on the monitoring of sustainable mobility measures adopted in the territory. In this context, **EMBRACER** was illustrated as an example of good practice aimed at introducing innovative solutions for improving sustainable mobility, especially for interconnecting urban and rural areas. [Read more](#)

## EMBRACER self-driving bus at two major events in Lithuania!



## EMBRACER at the Storytelling training workshop



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## Technical Storytelling

How to Explain, Convince and  
Inspire others with technical  
information



On September 19, Kaunas hosted the 2nd Sustainable Mobility Conference, organized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications. This dynamic event brought together representatives from municipalities, urban planning experts, and sector specialists to exchange ideas and insights on the current state of mobility. Jonas Damidavičius from JUDU took the stage to present "Autonomous Public Transport: Opportunities and Challenges," highlighting the innovative pilot project implemented in Vilnius as part of the **EMBRACER** initiative. Curious about the future of transport? Stay tuned for more updates! [Read more](#)

On 11 September and 16 October, **EMBRACER** took part in the online workshop on "Storytelling training" organized by Interreg Europe. Crafting simple and relatable communication is never obvious, especially when talking about more complex subjects. It's easy and common to get lost in technical jargon, long paragraphs and too much information. However, it's important to communicate clearly and effectively about your project's activities and achievements, not only to your peers but also to a wider audience. [Read more here](#) and [here](#)



### EMBRACER in the spotlight!

Did you catch the [November Interreg Europe newsletter](#)? The main focus theme was **CONNECTED**, perfectly aligning with the **EMBRACER** project's mission! **EMBRACER** was widely featured, showcasing its efforts to enhance sustainable mobility in rural areas. Strengthening rural-urban connections is key to boosting economic growth, fostering social equity, and tackling climate goals. Want to see how EMBRACER is making a difference?



### EMBRACER in the press

**EMBRACER** is disseminating objectives and results through the local press of his partners. [Read more](#)



### Interested in the EMBRACER Policy Instruments? [Find out more!](#)



### What's next?

On 9-10 April, a new Exchange of Experience will be organized in Cork, Ireland, exploring **Innovative governance and cooperation models to future-proofing seamless intermodality in the EMBRACER regions**. Stay tuned!



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