

Newsletter #3

2026 January

What's new?

X-HuLog4.0 Showcased
at ICIL 2025 in Tokyo

Hands-on Trainings

Human-Centered

Insights

From Research to

Practice

Contact Info



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the European Union**

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The X-HuLog4.0 Project

The X-HuLog4.0 project was presented at the International Conference on Industrial Logistics (ICIL 2025) in Tokyo, where the consortium showcased its advances in human-centered automation and Industry 5.0 logistics. Prof. Dr. Aurelija Burinskiene introduced the project's methodology for strategic decision-making in implementing collaborative mobile robots, while strategic meetings with international partners opened new avenues for joint research and future doctoral exchanges.

Michael Bauer and Prof. Eric Grosse were recently featured in *Saarbrücken Zeitung*, the largest daily newspaper in the Saarland region, where they discussed human-centered management concepts, the challenges of digital transformation, and the importance of employee involvement in technology adoption. The interview also highlighted their work within the X-HuLog4.0 consortium, reinforcing the growing public interest in responsible, human-centric approaches to Logistics 4.0.

In December 2025 and January 2026, the X-HuLog4.0 consortium strengthened its internal capacities through two hands-on training workshops on Horizon Europe proposal preparation and project implementation. Held by the NTNU EU Research Support Office in cooperation with VILNIUS TECH, TU Darmstadt and Saarland University, the trainings covered the full project lifecycle – from proposal development and consortium building to project execution and reporting. The workshops enhanced the consortium's shared understanding of procedures and roles, supporting more effective preparation and coordination of Horizon Europe projects.

From research to action, X-HuLog4.0 continues to translate human-centred logistics concepts into real-world impact. Recent activities ranged from industry-oriented workshops at the 11th IFAC Conference on Manufacturing Modelling, Management and Control (MIM2025), to active engagement with practitioners at the Logistics Management 2025 Conference in Milan and hands-on workshops in Saarbrücken and Darmstadt. Across these settings, the consortium shared research insights, tested human-centred technologies in practice, and engaged directly with industry experts to discuss implementation challenges and opportunities. Together, these activities demonstrate how X-HuLog4.0 moves beyond theory, fostering meaningful exchange between research and practice and supporting the practical adoption of Industry 5.0 principles in logistics and warehousing.

What's new?



Let's explore together

Recent activities

Showcasing
Human-Centered
Logistics at ICIL

Human-Centered
Management
Insights Featured
Publicly

Hands-on
Trainings from
NTNU IV EU
Research Support
Office

Human-
Centered
Insights

From
Research to
Action

X-HuLog4.0 Showcased at ICIL 2025 in Tokyo

The X-HuLog4.0 project was prominently represented at the International Conference on Industrial Logistics (ICIL 2025) in Tokyo, Japan, gathering global experts in logistics, digital transformation, and sustainable supply chains. During the event, Prof. Dr. Aurelija Burinskienė introduced the project's methodology for strategic decision-making in implementing collaborative mobile robots (CMRs) in warehouse environments. Her presentation demonstrated how human-centered automation and structured evaluation frameworks developed within X-HuLog4.0 can support safer, more efficient, and future-ready logistics operations.

Beyond the scientific contributions, ICIL 2025 served as a platform for strengthening international cooperation. Prof. Burinskienė engaged in strategic meetings with academic partners from Ritsumeikan University to explore joint publications and new project opportunities. Discussions with representatives from the Universities of Zagreb, Vaasa, and Maribor focused on doctoral mobility and the upcoming X-HuLog4.0 Doctoral School 2026, reinforcing the project's role in nurturing young researchers in human-centered logistics.

Dr. Arūnas Burinskas added to the project's visibility by presenting his research on productivity, growth, and ROI dynamics in Estonia's logistics sector, contributing important insights into performance measurement and sectoral development. His participation also facilitated further dialogue on innovation-driven logistics practices and potential collaborations. Overall, the presence of X-HuLog4.0 at ICIL 2025 underscored the consortium's commitment to advancing Industry 5.0 principles, promoting sustainable logistics solutions, and fostering global partnerships in human-technology interaction.



Share your thoughts on the future of human-centered logistics and join the discussion under our LinkedIn update about X-HuLog4.0's participation at ICIL 2025:

👉 Community discussions: <https://shorturl.at/Ed1dj>

Human-Centered Management Insights Featured in *Saarbrücker Zeitung*

X-HuLog4.0 gained strong public visibility through an interview in *Saarbrücker Zeitung*, the largest daily newspaper in Saarland, featuring Michael Bauer and Prof. Dr. Eric Grosse. The article explored their research on human-centered management concepts, highlighting why successful digital transformation depends on understanding employee needs, reducing resistance, and ensuring psychological readiness for technological change.

The interview emphasized that many companies still introduce AI, automation, or VR/AR tools without involving their workforce early enough, which often results in delays, higher costs, or failed implementation. Bauer and Grosse presented the idea of Digital Transformation Coaching as a structured and human-focused approach to increase acceptance and foster trust in new technologies.

Their perspectives, rooted in the ongoing work of the **X-HuLog4.0** consortium, underscored the importance of aligning technological progress with human well-being and organizational culture. By reaching a broad regional audience, the publication strengthened awareness of human-centered logistics and contributed to a wider conversation on responsible industry transformation.

For your reading

Discover the recent Saarbrücker Zeitung feature with Michael Bauer and Prof. Eric Grosse, exploring human-centered management, employee-oriented digital transformation, and the role of coaching in supporting technology adoption. The article highlights perspectives closely aligned with the X-HuLog4.0 mission and offers valuable insights into responsible, people-focused innovation. Visit the X-HuLog4.0 project website to read more about the project and its latest activities.



Read here

Hands-on trainings from NTNU

Two dedicated workshops on Horizon Europe project proposal and implementation were organised in December 2025 and January 2026, in close cooperation between VILNIUS TECH, NTNU, TU Darmstadt and Saarland University.

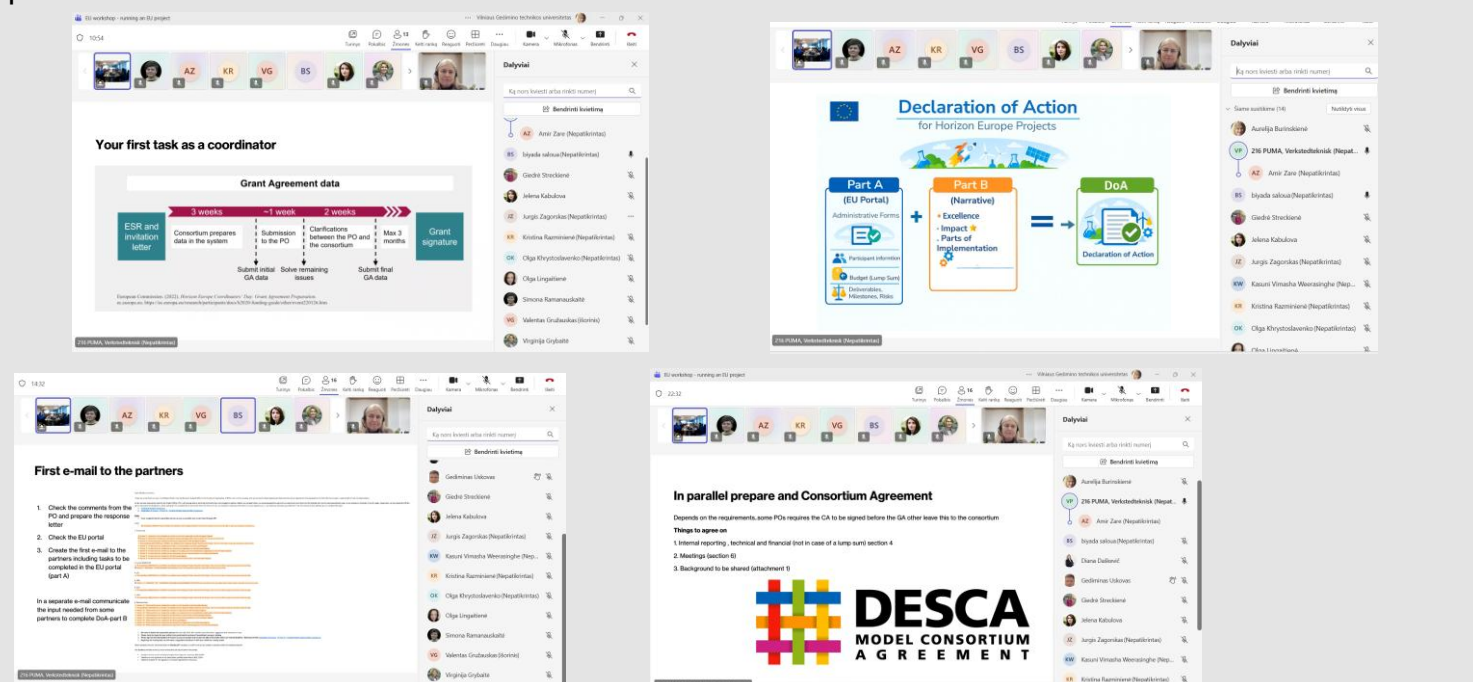
1st Workshop – “Hands-On Management of the HE Application Phase” (5 December 2025)

This workshop focused on the proposal preparation stage. Participants were guided through the structure of Horizon Europe and the application framework, including call analysis, use of Part A and Part B templates, internal planning of deadlines and workflows. A second block covered consortium building and management: partner identification, division of roles, administrative set-up and budget management principles. The final block dealt with crafting Part B, from writing strategy and coordinating inputs across partners to version control and cross-checking before submission. The workshop ended with an action-oriented wrap-up, where participants defined next steps for their own proposals.

2nd Workshop – “Hands-On Management of the Horizon Europe Project Management Phase” (6 January 2026).

The second workshop was about running project. It started with the grant preparation stage, clarifying the coordinator's role, the relationship between the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement, and key deadlines and payment responsibilities. A dedicated session on kick-off meetings and agreements addressed agenda design, role allocation, internal procedures and practical tools for collaboration. The third block focused on Work Plan implementation – setting up monitoring systems, handling internal progress reports, preparing communication and dissemination activities, and managing amendments and changes. The final session covered reporting to the European Commission, including types of reports (technical and financial), ethics and security issues, and how to report progress against objectives, deviations and risks.

Together, these two workshops significantly strengthened VILNIUS TECH's internal capacity to prepare competitive Horizon Europe proposals and professionally coordinate funded projects, creating a shared language and toolkit for researchers, project managers and administrative staff across all partner institutions.



Human-Centered Insights on the Future of Logistics

The digital revolution in manufacturing and logistics has transformed entire industries over the past decade. However, increasingly, there is talk not only about the power of technology, but also about how it should serve a person. A new trend - human-centred logistics is changing the way we approach the implementation of technology in warehouses, transport management and supply chains.

Today, we understand that progress must strengthen people, not replace them. Human-centric logistics means that robots, artificial intelligence or automated systems become partners that help employees work safer, more creatively and more efficiently.

From Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0: Human at the Centre

Studies show that the technologies implemented in the Industry 4.0 period - artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, automation significantly increased productivity, but often did not consider human well-being. This led to employee stress and lower efficiency gains than expected (Passalacqua et al., 2024). For its part, the European Commission has set out to shape the vision of Industry 5.0, a direction that combines technological progress with sustainability, resilience and human well-being (Breque et al., 2021). In such companies, people do not compete with machines but work together: collaborative robots (cobots) adapt to the human rhythm, workplaces become more ergonomic, and artificial intelligence helps solve tasks rather than dictate them. Hermawati et al. (2024) note that human centricity refers to the development of systems according to human abilities and needs, and not the other way around. It is both a psychological and organizational change that involves employees in decision-making, helps them feel safe and motivated.

Why is this relevant today?

Statistics show that as many as 85% of European manufacturing companies plan to increase their investments in automation and digital technologies by 2026 (Eurostat, 2024), but more than half of them indicate that the main challenge is the readiness of employees to work with new systems.

In today's logistics chain, technologies work only when they are understood and accepted by people. Therefore, a human-centric approach becomes a competitive advantage which allows business to combine efficiency with employee satisfaction and sustainability.

It is predicted that by 2026, as many as 70% of logistics companies in Europe will implement at least one form of "human-machine" collaboration (McKinsey, 2024). This will also include so-called "green logistics", where sustainability, safety and human well-being become indicators of business alongside profitability. Technology is developing at an incredible speed, but only when we involve people in the development of solutions can we talk about real progress.



From Research to Practice: X-HuLog4.0 in Action



At the Logistics Management 2025 Conference (LM25), hosted by Politecnico di Milano School of Management from September 17–19, we shared key insights from the EU project X-HuLog4.0 with an international audience of researchers and practitioners. A particular highlight was Michael C. Bauer's presentation on Digital Transformation Coaching in Warehousing 5.0, which sparked strong interest from industry participants. The conference once again demonstrated how close collaboration between academia and practice helps shape impactful, future-oriented logistics research.



See highlights and reflections from LM25 on LinkedIn:

<https://shorturl.at/Bu5PN>

At a hands-on X-HuLog4.0 workshop at Universität des Saarlandes, industry and academic experts explored how human-centred logistics can be translated into real workplace solutions. A key highlight was the live demonstration of the AI-powered EXIA exoskeleton by German Bionic, showing how technology can actively support safer, healthier, and more sustainable work in warehousing and logistics.



Read more and see impressions from the workshop on LinkedIn: <https://shorturl.at/e24C0>



As part of X-HuLog4.0, industry-focused workshops were delivered during The 11th IFAC Conference on Manufacturing Modelling, Management and Control (MIM2025), bringing together researchers and practitioners to explore human-centred logistics in manufacturing and logistics systems. Building on themes introduced in our earlier industry communications, the sessions fostered practical discussions on digital transformation, workforce well-being, and real-world implementation challenges.



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