



# AUTONOMOUS e-MOBILITY FORUM

## Can Innovation Diplomacy End the Climate Gamble?

By Simon Voß and Khristo Ayad

With today's global challenges urging equally global responses, an overlooked subset of diplomacy emerges as potentially pivotal: [innovation diplomacy](#), a discipline related to the [overarching](#) concept of science diplomacy. Characterized by particularly collaborative prerequisites, science diplomacy, though lacking a precise definition, is usually understood across [three dimensions](#), which could work similarly for innovation diplomacy:

Firstly, 'science in diplomacy' informs foreign policy by contributing empirical data and scientific advice to the decision-making process. Secondly, 'science for diplomacy' offers scientific knowledge as a soft power asset to build transnational bridges and advance relations between two or more nations. Lastly, 'diplomacy for science' exercises diplomacy to enable scientific cooperation between countries, be it research exchange programs, or the setup of entire cross-border R&D architectures and projects.

That covers the science, which stands at the onset of innovation ultimately leading to the implementation of real-life solutions to certain problems or needs. In short, innovation is the ready-for-market translation of research into new services or products.

What often stands in the way of collaborative innovation on a global scale however, is the formation of silos due to political and commercial competition. This is not to debate opposing objectives of corporations or political thought. The evaluation must rather be, whether current agreement processes, drawing sustainable paths to socio-economic wealth while preserving socio-ecological health, are good enough to make the needed, meaningful, and global impact.

### The Gamble with the Globe

Today's climate crisis presents a grim state of affairs. Decisive stakeholders in governments, academia, and the private sectors, seem to struggle rather than progress on humankind's probably most pressing mission. The growing urgency of addressing these issues, however, underscores the need for perhaps unconventional yet game-changing approaches, where multilateral diplomacy and technology leaders align to catalyze innovation for the global good.

To achieve carbon neutrality and wealth, socio-ecological health must lie at the heart of the endeavor. To be clear, we are facing the threat, not nature, which has the ability to adapt. Our challenge lies in averting the likely scenario of a planet uninhabitable to humans. The globe is warming, putting serious strain on food security, healthcare, and other elements of civilization. We must adapt reactively, by implementing measures that enhance our resilience to harsher

Organizer

Host & Strategic Partner

Content Partner





# AUTONOMOUS e-MOBILITY FORUM

conditions, and actively, by reducing further damage to nature. The encouraging message here is, with ever-increasing scientific advancements, innovating and implementing novel technologies could bring solutions on time if we can be more effective.

As per the International Energy Agency's Net-Zero Emissions Scenario (NZE), we are losing the game by missing the 1.5 °C target. Stagnating or even [rebounding CO2 emissions](#) for the transportation sector following the pandemic are real. While technological innovations to mitigate these dynamics are yet to be developed at scale, intellectual property quarrels, patent mining, and resource battles, create friction beyond healthy rivalry for best solutions. Sadly, this seems to also set the tone in the political domain. We simply are not on track.

## Moving Towards an Electrifying Future?

While the discourse on still-to-be-solved technological and policy challenges in this innovation area is ongoing, the future of transport will likely look electric. Electric vehicle (EV) sales show exponential growth, jumping [one order of magnitude every five years](#). In 2023, starting with an annual revenue of [half a trillion USD](#), nation states and companies are engaging in a race for e-mobility dominance, gradually reshaping the global automotive market spanning [2.5 trillion USD](#). Likewise, the battery industry provides new entrepreneurial grounds, growing from 100 billion to [a trillion USD](#) this decade.

The sheer size and societal magnitude of this transformation bring great responsibilities to all actors. While politicians set the rules and fence the field, for instance through the [US Inflation Reduction Act, or the EU Net-Zero Industry Act](#), corporates and their R&D departments have to operate within these boundaries. The EU's [battery passport](#) is a motivating example of how regulatory initiatives can support. Market participants shall receive a more even playing field, but also incentives to foster sustainable innovation.

But besides such yet-to-be-proven initiatives, is the overall playing field set up right? Can players perform at their best? Today, the answer must be No. Looking behind the day-to-day in the EV and battery sector, it is evident that while progress is made, potentials are lost along the way. Even in traditional automotive nations, initiating support to enable innovation is debilitating. Political and bureaucratic inertia hinder building a performative innovation chain.

## Playing the Innovation Diplomacy Card

This is where innovation diplomacy must take place. Similar pointers have appeared before, but little has followed. Innovation diplomacy must be equipped with definitions and scope to be effectively leveraged by state and non-state actors. To accelerate innovation, innovation

Organizer

Host & Strategic Partner

Content Partner





## AUTONOMOUS e-MOBILITY FORUM

diplomacy can build bridges to enable transparent knowledge-exchange on neutral grounds, open up positive dialogue between otherwise competing stakeholders, and build trust beyond unilateral interests. This must combine the perspectives of research, industry, and states, in a systematic, forward-facing exchange.

Various platforms, including exchange programs, conferencing to social media, can facilitate innovation diplomacy. Multilateral events such as the coming Autonomous e-Mobility Forum in Qatar can spur knowledge-exchange and partnership across borders and competitive lines, held together by the common interest in much needed innovation to tackle global warming. Leveraging such initiatives and resources can maximize impact, streamline efforts and grow international know-how.

The urgency to accelerate innovation meanwhile is calling new players onto the field. To include new perspectives and approaches, logical candidates could be states that have not been classic research-based economies or technology manufacturers.

Such can indeed be seen in the Middle East, where the most dynamic Gulf states continue to make notable strides to advance research and innovation out of the region. This momentum, on the one hand, is rooted in energy wealth, yet on the other, in comparable national visions mapping these nations' transition away from carbon to knowledge-based economies. These frameworks emphasize contributions to topics of global significance, especially highlighting environmental challenges, and a commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Innovation diplomacy offers a pragmatic frame for addressing the very complex, but pressing challenges facing our global community. By fostering safe dialogue, and prioritizing common over unilateral interests, it can drive meaningful action where progress is urgently needed. As we navigate an uncertain future, leveraging it together, may eventually prove literally vital.

**-Ends-**

Organizer



Host & Strategic Partner



Content Partner





# AUTONOMOUS e-MOBILITY FORUM

## About the authors:

**Simon Voß** is an engineer, researcher and consultant in the field of e-mobility and battery technology. He currently serves as the managing director of the E-Mobility Office at RWTH Aachen University in Germany.

**Khristo Ayad** is a strategic communications consultant and public diplomacy analyst based in Doha. His focus lies on the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as soft power diplomacy in wider contexts, including the European Union.

## About AEMOB:

The Autonomous e-Mobility Forum, taking place in Doha, Qatar from 30 April – 02 May 2024, hosted and strategically partnered by the Ministry of Transport of the State of Qatar and held under the patronage of His Excellency, Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti, Minister of Transport, is set to become the pioneering multilateral platform focusing on driverless e-Mobility, a topic of global significance and urgency

Organized by Just us & Otto Marketing & Event Services in collaboration with InStrat, a department of 4th Dimension, the three-day event will provide a timely occasion for international stakeholders to further know-how and develop recommendations toward the implementation of autonomous e-Mobility in a real-world setting.

The AEMOB Forum is set to assemble a global network of senior officials, policy and technology experts, including speakers and representatives from government, industry, academia, the media, and hundreds of attendees. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased through the AEMOB Forum website [www.aemobforum.com](http://www.aemobforum.com).

For inquiries, please contact:

Autonomous e-Mobility Forum - General Inquiry

Email: [info@aemobforum.com](mailto:info@aemobforum.com)

Organizer



Host & Strategic Partner



Content Partner

