

Toxic Free Metallization process for plastic surfaces

8th Press Release FreeMe's Final Event Coatings 2026 Conference

7th May 2026

The FreeMe Project project successfully completed its final event during the **Coatings 2026 Conference**, held between 20–22 April 2026 in Athens, Greece. The conference was co-organised by FreeMe partner **EXELISIS** and **MDPI**, bringing together researchers, industrial stakeholders, policy representatives, and experts in the field of safe and sustainable surface treatment and coating technologies.

A central activity of the event was the workshop “SSbD in Practice: Current Status, Critical Barriers

and Success Cases”, co-organised by the FreeMe project and the EU-funded project **PROPLANET**. The workshop also marked the completion of FreeMe’s second and final external training activity.

The workshop focused on the practical implementation of Safe-and-Sustainable-by-Design (SSbD) approaches in industrial and regulatory contexts. The programme included presentations from representatives of academia, industry, and several EU-funded projects, covering topics related to regulatory readiness, scientific foundations

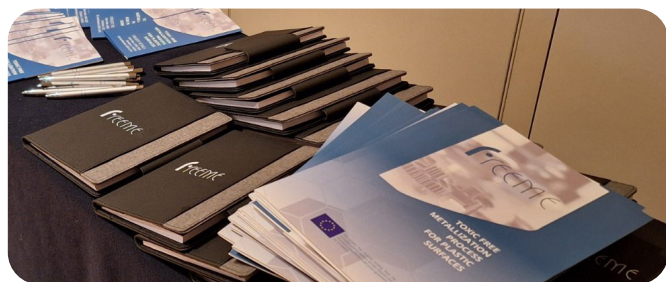


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of SSbD, industrial success stories, and current research and development challenges.

The event concluded with a roundtable discussion chaired by Prof. Kostas Pyrgakis ([University of West Attica](#)), where participants exchanged perspectives on the future implementation of SSbD principles and the remaining barriers to

industrial adoption. FreeMe was represented in the discussion by its coordinator, [Gruppo Gaser](#). The SSbD workshop provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement, reinforcing the importance of collaboration between research, industry, and policy actors in supporting the transition towards safer and more sustainable materials and processes.



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Throughout the conference, dissemination activities played a key role in increasing the visibility of the FreeMe project. The booth of **EXELISIS**, the partner responsible for FreeMe's dissemination and communication activities, featured a wide range of project materials available to participants. The booth attracted strong interest from visitors, generating discussions around the project's technologies, the **Decision Support Tool (DST)**, and the potential impact of FreeMe innovations on the surface finishing industry.



During the final day of the conference, FreeMe partners participated in dedicated technical sessions titled "Phasing out substances of concern from the surface finishing industry" and "AI tools and simulations", where they presented key scientific and technological developments achieved throughout the project.

In Session 9 on AI tools and simulations, Prof. Kostas Pyrgakis from **University of West Attica** presented the POPEYE framework (Plating On Plastics Equation-based sYstems Engineering),

focusing on unit operations and predictive models for emerging plating-on-plastics technologies. Francisco Daniel García Romero from **IDENER** presented a multiscale modelling framework addressing adhesion, etching, and nickel deposition in Cr(VI)-free metallisation of polymers, further demonstrating FreeMe's modelling capabilities in support of sustainable process development.



Session 10, dedicated to phasing out substances of concern from the surface finishing industry, featured several contributions from FreeMe partners. Michalis Kartsinis from **Creative Nano** presented advancements in Cr(VI)- and Pd-free metallisation of plastics, while Luca Magagnin from the **Politecnico di Milano** showcased self-activating sprayable resins enabling more sustainable plating solutions.



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The final event highlighted FreeMe's multidisciplinary approach, combining materials development, greener metallisation processes, modelling tools, sustainability assessment, and industrial validation. It also reflected the strong collaboration established among project partners throughout the implementation of the project.

Throughout its duration, FreeMe has worked towards eliminating hazardous substances traditionally used in plating-on-plastics processes while maintaining industrial performance and supporting the adoption of Safe-and-Sustainable-by-Design solutions.

The successful completion of the final event and training activities further strengthened collaboration between research organisations, industrial stakeholders, and sister projects, contributing to the dissemination and long-term impact of FreeMe technologies.



More information about the:
[FreeMe Project](#) | [Coatings 2026](#) | [SSbD Workshop](#)

