

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region

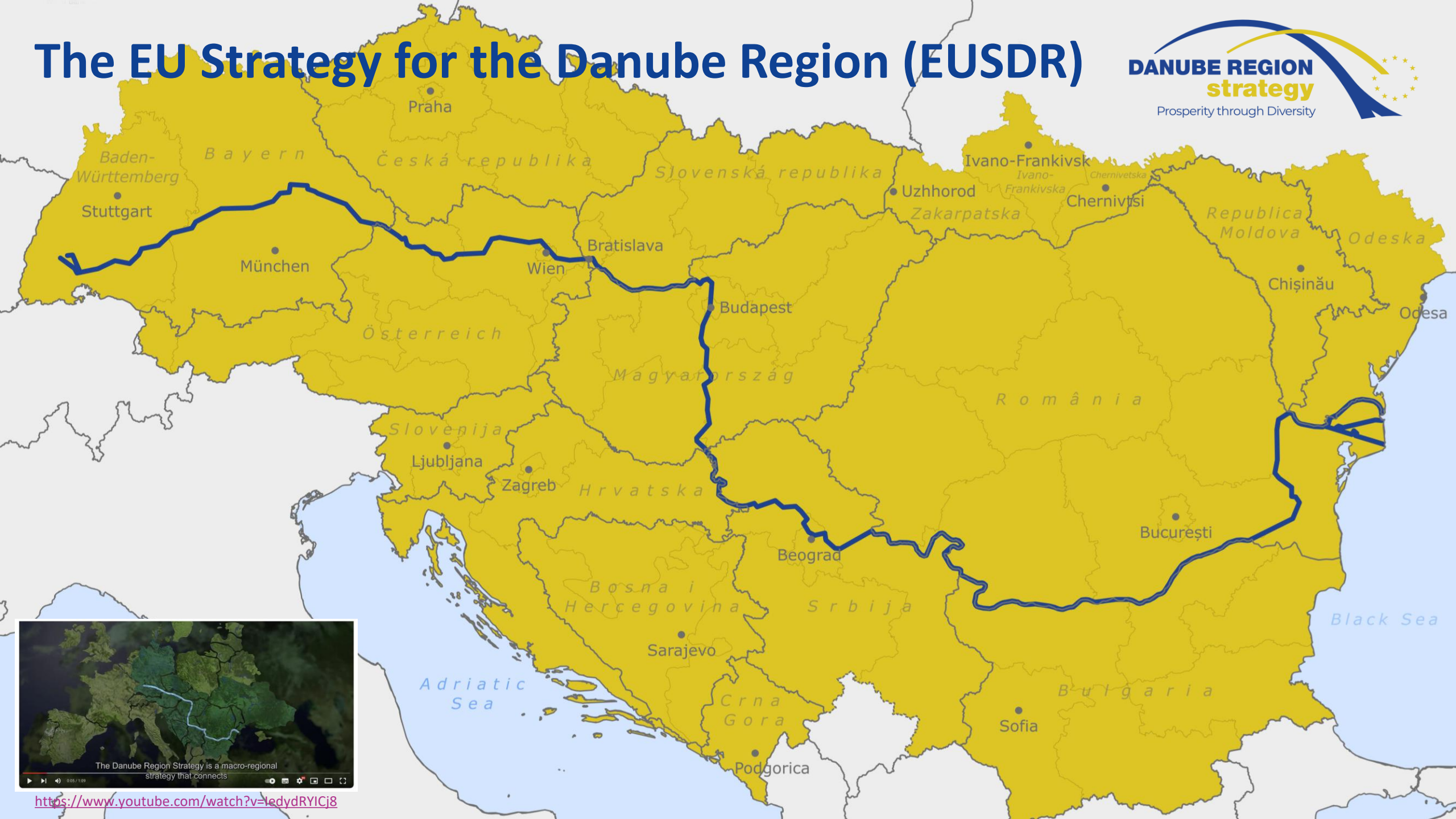
Pathway to opportunities, especially for accession countries

**Enhancing Regional Cooperation in the Danube basin:
Stronger Together**

03 April 2025, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



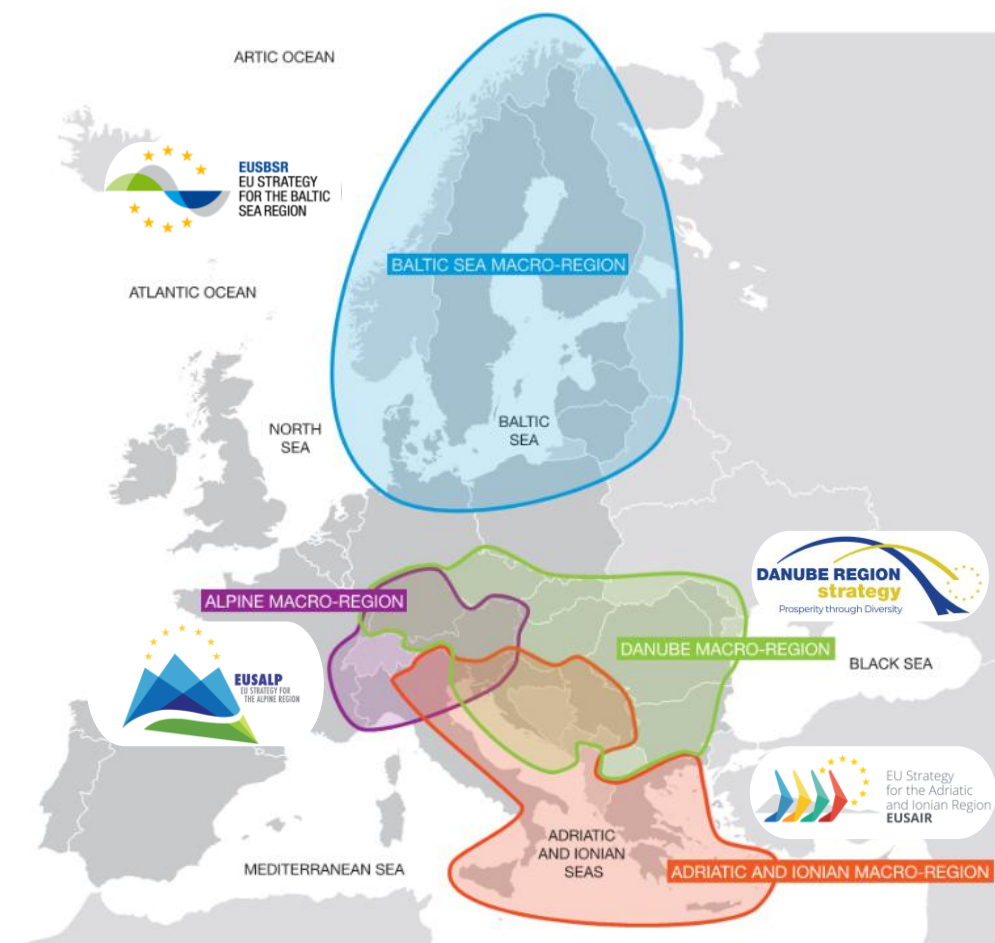
The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ledydRYICj8>

Macro-regional strategies (MRS)

- a framework to address common challenges jointly
- defined geographical area, consisting of EU Member States and third countries, which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation and the integration process



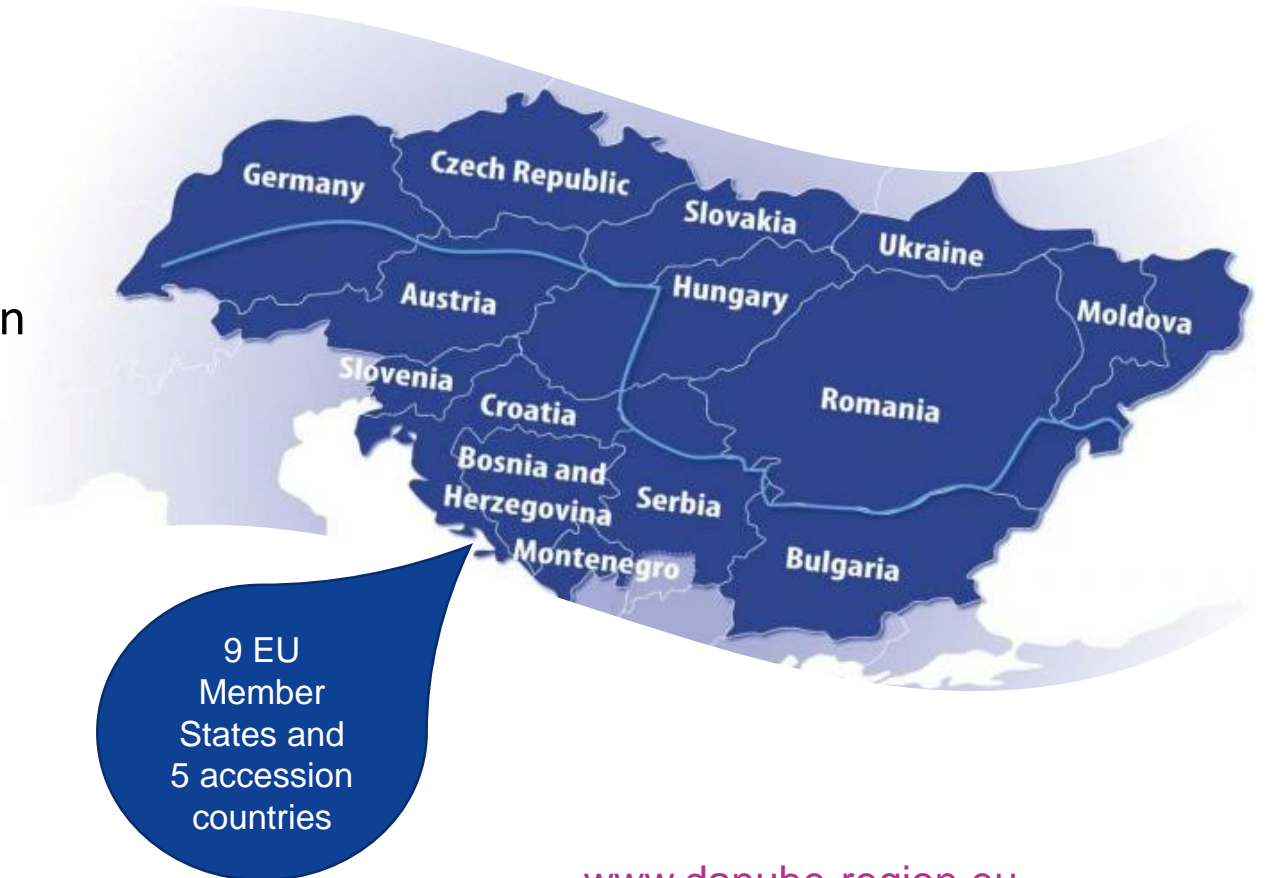
The Danube Region

- 14 EU and non-EU countries, more than 60 regions and thousands of municipalities covering one-fifth of the EU area:
home to 115 million inhabitants.
- From the Black Forest to the Black Sea, the Danube's 2.850 kilometres flow through ten countries and additional four riparian states: the most international river in the world
- Challenges which know no borders, like water pollution, droughts, floods or cross-border transport links, are worked on in cooperation across countries and national interests. The policies and the investments made have an impact on the livelihoods of all citizens in Europe
- The Danube needs a specific Strategy as political commitment needs to be translated into action and actions need to be coordinated and carried out together



The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

- A number of challenges in the Danube Region **require working together, across borders** and national interests – supranational, national, regional, local – **cooperation!**
- **Political commitment** to be translated into action – **ownership & trust!**
- Actions need to be **carried out together** – **alignment & coordination!**
- Absorption and generation of – **EU, national, regional and other public and private funds!**



EUSDR Added Value EU and Non-EU Cooperation

- EU and non-EU actors collaborate on equal grounds, fostering trust and shared ownership of initiatives
- Integration through cooperation
 - ❖ Gradual integration of non-EU countries:
 - ✓ Joint decision-making: Inclusive processes involving all stakeholders
 - ✓ Policy cooperation: Aligning goals to create cohesive Region
 - ✓ Mutual exchange: Sharing knowledge, best practices, and innovations
 - ✓ The EUSDR support in preparing candidate countries for EU membership through active contribution to integration frameworks
 - ❖ Embedding EUSDR priorities into EU programmes - Funding
 - ❖ MA Networks (ERDF/CF, ESF+, IPA/NDICI)



Added Value

Together, EU and non-EU cooperation strengthen regional stability, policy coherence, and mutual growth, creating a stronger Region

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

The EUSDR addresses a wide range of issues and topics divided among four Pillars and 12 thematic Priority Areas (PA):

[PA 1a Waterway Mobility](#)

[PA 1b Rail-Road-Air Mobility](#)

[PA 2 Sustainable Energy](#)

[PA 3 Culture and Tourism](#)

[PA 4 Water quality](#)

[PA 5 Environmental Risks](#)

[PA 6 Biodiversity and landscapes, quality of air and soils](#)

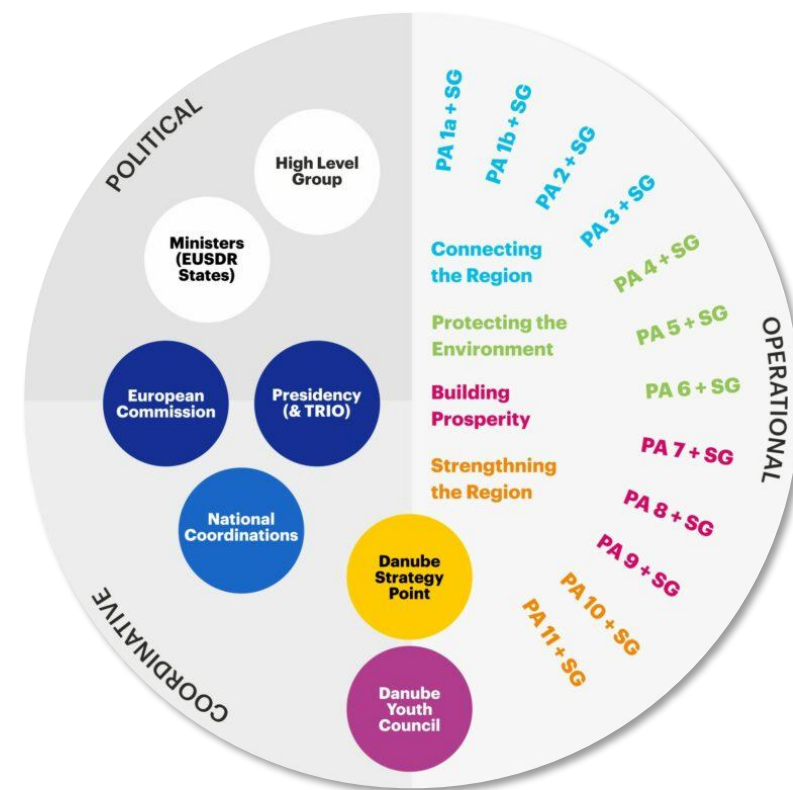
[PA 7 Knowledge society](#)

[PA 8 Competitiveness](#)

[PA 9 People and Skills](#)

[PA 10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation](#)

[PA 11 Security](#)



Cross Priority Areas cooperation

- Better coordination → leads to efficient resource use and impact
- Strengthening synergies between different PAs → improves outcomes
- Efficient use of resources through joint actions
- Stronger regional partnerships for development
- Innovation through interdisciplinary collaboration
- Increased funding opportunities for cooperative projects



Examples of cross Priority Areas Cooperation

➤ Sustainable Transport and Environment

- PA 1a / PA 4 / PA 5 / PA 6
- Development of green transport solutions

➤ Flood Management and Environmental Risks

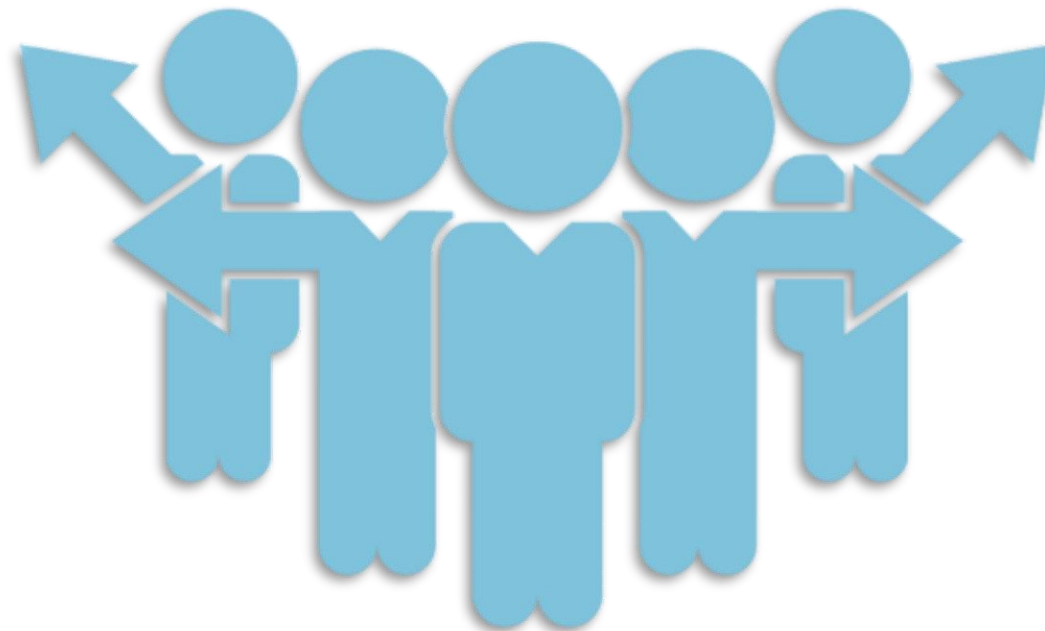
- PA 4 / PA 5 / PA 6
- Flood risk management, pollution control, nature based solution in the water management sector

➤ Digitalisation and artificial intelligence

- PA 7 / PA 8 / PA 4
- Increase awareness and visibility of science and innovation in the Danube Region
- Networks development and implementation

How candidate countries can engage?

- Join regional projects under EUSDR
- Exchange expertise and best practices
- Develop partnerships with EU stakeholders
- Leverage available EU funding and support mechanisms





Thank you for your attention!

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