

14th Annual Forum

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

5 – 6 November 2025

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Interreg
Danube Region

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THE 14TH ANNUAL FORUM OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION (EUSDR)

Flowing Together, Growing Together

4–6 November 2025, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Venue: Congress Centre of the Hotel Holiday, Zmaja od Bosne 4, 71000, Sarajevo

Agenda

Disclaimer: The organiser reserves the right to modify the indicated session locations based on final participant confirmations or logistical requirements. Updated details will be communicated in advance of the event.

Monday, 3 November 2025, 14.00-17.30 CET

Steering Group Meeting EUSDR PA 3

Location: Room “Una”

The EUSDR Priority Area 3 Steering Group (SG) is a relevant body of representatives from intergovernmental institutions of the EUSDR Member States. It meets at least twice a year, either online or onsite, and is coordinated jointly by the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) from Romania (Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration - MDPWA) and Bulgaria (Ministry of Tourism - MT).

The SG meeting includes an evaluation of PA 3 activities and the formulation of plans for the forthcoming period. Irina COZMA (MDPWA, Romania) together with the Bulgarian PAC representative (MT) presents an overview of recent EUSDR PA 3 activities, provides an outlook on initiatives for 2026, and introduces the EUSDR PA 3 flagship project, alongside forthcoming actions related to cultural tourism – CAST, NONA, IBC, Culinary Trail, Mystical Danube, CultHerit, COMHERITOUR, and CRAFTS, extending until the end of 2025.

The agenda further encompasses the announcement of the subsequent SG meeting and the upcoming edition of the “Danube Salon” in Berlin, organised back-to-back with ITB Berlin under the Bulgarian EUSDR Presidency. Discussions also address EUSDR PA 3’s engagement in other relevant project activities and events at both regional and macro-regional levels, the exchange of best practices across other Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS), regional initiatives such as CPMR projects, and the exploration of synergies with the EUSAIR Facility Point on horizontal themes and cooperation with the Youth Council.

Representatives of relevant projects, as well as local and regional stakeholders from the EUSDR and beyond, receive invitations to participate.

Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.

14.00-
17.30

Tuesday, 4 November 2025, 09.30-19.00 CET

	Parallel sessions:
09.30-10.00	Registration for the 12th Danube Participation Day: Local Voices, European Future - The Crucial Role of Communities in Shaping EU Policy and Driving Enlargement Location: Congress Room <i>This conference is dedicated to exploring how we can foster meaningful participation of local actors to improve the quality and sustainability of the EU accession process. We aim to learn from one another, share best practices, and develop strategies to amplify local voices in the broader European integration journey.</i> <i>Join stakeholders from across the Danube Region for a day of exchange, participation, and inspiration—including:</i> • <i>Engaging Panel Discussions</i> • <i>Interactive World Café Sessions</i> • <i>The Danube Participation Agora</i> • <i>Networking Opportunities</i> Agenda, registration and further information available under this link.
10.00-10.30	12th Danube Participation Day: Opening Session and Welcome Address ▪ <i>Midhat Džemić, Directorate for European Integration, EUSDR Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina</i> ▪ <i>Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum/Foster Europe</i> ▪ <i>Claudia Singer-Smith, EU Danube Strategy – Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity & Cooperation”/City of Vienna</i> <i>Moderation: Adla Dizdar Hodžić, Local Democracy Agency Mostar</i> <i>Interactive Exchange with the Audience</i> <i>Moderation: Andreea Prasacu, EU Danube Strategy – Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity & Cooperation”/City of Vienna</i>
10.30-12.00	12th Danube Participation Day Panel Discussion Bridging the Gap: Integrating Local Bottom-Up Initiatives into the EU Enlargement Agenda ▪ <i>Johan Magnusson, European Commission DG REGIO</i> ▪ <i>Mojca Krisper Figueroa, Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia & Herzegovina</i> ▪ <i>Aida Daguda, Centre for Civil Society Promotion</i> ▪ <i>Darko Mrvaljevic, Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)</i> <i>Moderation: Adla Dizdar Hodžić, Local Democracy Agency Mostar</i>
12.00-12.15	Danube Participation Agora: Introduction of Initiatives
12.15-13.30	<i>Networking Lunch & Agora</i>
13.30-13.45	12th Danube Participation Day: Introduction to the Danube Participation Day World Café Sessions
13.45-15.00	12th Danube Participation Day- Interactive World Café Sessions <i>Mutual Learning and Capacity Building in Local Communities for Shaping EU Policy and Driving Enlargement - Danube Participation Day World Café</i> <i>All participants have the opportunity to contribute to all themes. Each round will last 20 minutes.</i>

	▪ <i>World Café – Civil Society: Capacity to Connect: Strengthening Civil Society for Policy Translation and Transformation</i> Explore needs, good practices and other aspects of civil society organisations. Moderation: Lisa Wolf (WWF), Igor Studennikov (Centre for Regional Studies), ▪ <i>World Café – Municipality: From Local Action to European Impact: Strengthening Municipal Capacity for Enlargement</i> Explore needs, good practices and other aspects of local public in their role of local implementers of European policies and values, as well as space for community engagement and breeding ground for participation. Moderation: Jani Kozina (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts - ZRC SAZU), Raphael Sachs (Danube Strategy Point - DSP) ▪ <i>World Café – Youth: Generation Participation – Youth in Action for a Stronger Europe</i> Explore needs, good practices and other aspects of youth involvement to create a culture of participation. Moderation: Erasmo Mancini (European Movement Italy - CIME) Mirella Sidro (Journalist, Danube Youth Organisations Network – DYON)
15.00-15.45	12th Danube Participation Day: Navigating Funding for Local Development in the Danube Region ▪ Johannes Gabriel, Danube Region Programme ▪ Dženana Dedić, Local Democracy Agency Mostar ▪ George Petrov, Citizens Participation Forum Moderation: Adla Dizdar Hodžić, Local Democracy Agency Mostar
15-45-16.00	Closing Session & Passing the Bell ▪ Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum/Foster Europe ▪ Dženana Dedić, Local Democracy Agency Mostar ▪ George Petrov, Citizens Participation Forum Closing the 12th Danube Participation Day ▪ Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum/Foster Europe ▪ Claudia Singer-Smith, EU Danube Strategy – Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity & Cooperation”/City of Vienna
	Parallel sessions:
09.00-09.30	Registration of Guests, Project Partners and Associated Strategic Partners for the EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting) Location: Room “Holiday” <i>The DECIDE project (Digital Services for Circular Economy – a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SMEs) supports the development of circular economy business models (CEBMs) through digital tools and methods tailored for SMEs and regional developers in the Danube Region. Coordinated by ZD.BB, DECIDE focuses on resource-intensive sectors, including packaging, textiles, batteries, food, and smart cities, integrating blockchain-based monitoring and simulations of ecological and social impacts. The project runs from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026, with a total budget of approximately €2.89 million, co-financed by the EU’s Interreg Danube Region Programme (~€2.31 million). Following the successful development of the DECIDE toolbox and best practice showcases in the first phase, current efforts are geared toward validation, implementation, and regional outreach. In July 2024, DECIDE was recognised as a EUSDR PA 8 Flagship Project, highlighting its strategic importance in advancing the circular economy in the region.</i> <i>Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only</i>

09.30-10.00	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): Welcome & Event Opening <i>Claus Hoffmann, Centre for Digitalisation Böblingen District – ZD.BB GmbH, Germany</i> <i>Sanela Dzevlan, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> <i>Karmen Maričić, EUSDR Priority Area 8 Competitiveness of Enterprises / Ministry of Economy, Croatia</i> Location: Room “Holiday”
10.00-11.00	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): DECIDE Pilot Cases- Business Model Pitch Session & Readiness Status (Output 1.1, Period 4) I (1) <i>Croatia: Textile - Work Integration Through Textile Waste Management</i> (2) <i>Romania: Food - Making Dehydrated Fruits and Veggies from Leftovers</i> (3) <i>Germany: Smart City - Sourcing energy from biomass</i> (4) <i>BiH: Packaging - Products Made of Recycled or Biodegradable Materials</i> (5) <i>Slovenia: Packaging: From Tomato Stems to Paper Bags</i> (6) <i>Moldova: Batteries - Household-Level Battery Recycling</i>
11.00-11.30	<i>Joint photo and Coffee Break</i>
11.30-11.50	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): DECIDE Pilot Cases II (7) <i>Hungary: Packaging: PLA filaments to replace traditional materials</i> (8) <i>Austria: Textile - Making Flags from Old Textiles</i>
11.50-12.30	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>WP 1.4.1 Pilot Documentation & WP 1.4.2 Impact Progress Report – Result Presentation</i> <i>Tomaž Kern, Tilen Medved & Eva Krhač, University of Maribor</i>
12.30.-13.00	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE - Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>WP 1.2.5 Monitoring Tool - Dashboard Content & Design Validation</i> <i>Martin Kinitzki, Centre for Digitalisation Böblingen District – ZD.BB GmbH</i>
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.00-15.30	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE- Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>WP 2.3.5 Policy Recommendations – Status & Workshop</i> <i>Paula Pop-Nistor, University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology G.E. Palade of Targu Mures</i>
15.30-15.45	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE- Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>WP 1.2.3 Digital Service Implementation Recommender – Status</i> <i>Jan Fauser, Reutlingen University, Herman-Hollerith-Centre</i>
15.45.-16.00	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE- Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>WP 2.3.3 Digital Learning Concept - Status</i> <i>Albena Antonova, Sofia University, Science and Research Department</i>
16.00-16.15	<i>Coffee break</i>

16.15-16.40	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE- Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>Communication Management Updates</i> <i>Igor Kovačić, Technology Innovation Centre Međimurje Ltd.</i>
16.40-17.00	EUSDR PA 8 Event (DECIDE- Digital Services for Circular Economy - a Toolbox for Regional Developers & SME- project meeting): <i>Lead Partner / Project Management Updates</i> <i>Severine Dommer, Centre for Digitalisation Böblingen District – ZD.BB GmbH</i>
17.00	<i>Event Closing & Joint Dinner (optional)</i>
	Parallel sessions:
17.00-19.00	Danube Transfer Centre Network Ceremony (EUSDR PA 8, RAIS, SERDA) Location: Room “Neretva” <i>Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, in collaboration with the Culinary Trail Project, invites you to the Danube Transfer Centre (DTC) Network Ceremony. The DTC Network is a flagship initiative under EUSDR PA 8 “Competitiveness” promoting innovation and technology transfer across the Danube Region. The event also supports cross-sector collaboration between EUSDR PA 3 “Tourism and Culture” and EUSDR PA 8 stakeholders as part of the Culinary Trail Project activities. The ceremony highlights successful cooperation models while also reflecting on regional contributions to tourism, education, skills, and labour market development. New DTC members are welcomed, including RAIS and SERDA from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event aims to strengthen partnerships and foster regional innovation and it aligns with the broader goals of the EUSDR Annual Forum. Participants can expect networking, knowledge exchange, and strategic collaboration opportunities.</i> <i>Moderation: Daniela Chiran, Senior Project Manager, Regional Transformation in Europe, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Danube Transfer Center Network Coordinator, Germany</i> <i>Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.</i>
17.00-17.20	Danube Transfer Centre Network Ceremony Welcome Speeches: <i>Prof. h.c. Dr. Jonathan Loeffler, CEO, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Germany,</i> <i>Ms. Carmen Hawkins, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, EUSDR PA8 Coordinator, Germany,</i> <i>Ms. Cristina Cuc, Pillar Officer (Pillars 2 & 3), Danube Strategy Point, Romania.</i>
17.20-17.40	Advancing Integration and Innovation in Heritage and Green Transition in the Danube Region: Strengthening Skills, Connectivity, and Sustainable Development <i>Niombo Lomba, Head of Service unit Danube region, State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg,</i> <i>Culinary Trail, Interreg Danube Project, Preservation and promotion of culinary heritage, Virtual Reality (VR) glasses to enable users to engage with culinary content interactively, Prof. Dr. Borut Rončević, Dean, School of Advanced Social Studies, DTC Knowledge Hub in Slovenia,</i> <i>Presentation of the Priority Area 3 Culture and Tourism, Ms. Irina Cozma, EUSDR PA3 Coordinator, Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, Romania</i>
17.40-17.50	Presentation of the Interreg Danube Region Programme and Opportunities for Funding <i>Ms. Mirjam Zillober, National Contact Point for the Interreg B Danube Region Program, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, Germany</i>

17.50-18.00	DTC Network in a Nutshell: Past Year of our Collaboration Ms. Daniela Chiran, Senior Project Manager, DTC Network Coordinator, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Germany
18.00-18.30	Festive Signing: Enlargement of the DTC Network (5mn presentation per organisation – RAIS; SERDA; POMURJE TP) Bosnia and Herzegovina - Letter of Intent for DTC Policy Hub Bosnia and Herzegovina - DTC Policy Hub, RAIS - City Development Agency East Sarajevo, represented by Ms. Anja Krsmanović, Director DTC Network Coordinator, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, - Letter of Intent for DTC Policy Hub Bosnia and Herzegovina - DTC Policy Hub, SERDA - Sarajevo Economic Regional Development Agency, represented by Ms. Sanela Dževlan, Director - DTC Network Coordinator, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Slovenia - Letter of Intent for DTC Business Hub Slovenia - DTC Entry Point Slovenia, University of Maribor - DTC Business Hub, Pomurje Technology Park – Murska Sobota, represented by Mr. Marko Močnik, Director - DTC Network Coordinator, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum
18.30-19.00	Danube Transfer Centre Network Ceremonial Reception & Networking, Family Photo
19:00 - 21:30	Welcoming Reception for All Participants (Hotel Holiday, entrance hall)

DAY 1: Wednesday, 5 November 2025, 09.30-17.00 CET

08.00-09.30	Registration
09.30-11.00	MINISTERIAL MEETING: MEETING OF DANUBE REGION FOREIGN MINISTERS Location: TBD Traditionally, the political high-level meeting of ministers is part of the EUSDR Annual Forum. A ministerial declaration / joint statement will be adopted at the meeting. Closed meeting, upon invitation only.
	Parallel sessions:
09.30-11.00	EUSDR PA 2 event (plus results SECW 2025): Affordable, secure and sustainable energy for the Danube Region Location: Room "Congress Room" <i>To support the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target, EUSDR PA 2 focuses on reducing fossil fuel dependence, enhancing energy efficiency, and increasing the use of local renewables. Given the region's outdated energy systems, especially in non-EU countries, the session explores how energy diversification and efficiency – particularly in heating, cooling, and industry – can strengthen resilience and accelerate the green transition.</i> Speakers:

	• <i>Introduction: EUSDR challenges (Annamária Nador, EUSDR PA2 – 5 mins)</i> • <i>Keynote1: Gas phase out and energy diversification in EUSDR countries (Márton Sipos, KPMG Hungary – 15 min)</i> • <i>Keynote 2: Energy efficiency state-of-art and challenges in the EUSDR (Léon Kamenický, GATUM speaker - 15 min)</i> • <i>Keynote 3: Energy sovereignty key challenges in the Danube Region based on the experiences of the Sarajevo Energy and Climate Week (Sanja Kapetina /Viktorija Musa - 15 min)</i> • <i>Panel discussion + interactive discussion with the audience: 40 min</i> • <i>Panel members: Marton Sipos, Léon Kamenický, Sanja Kapetina/Viktorija Musa, Irina Apostol), moderator: Annamária Nador</i>
09.30-11.00	EUSDR PA 11 Event: Impacts for the Danube Region of the war in Ukraine in regards of security Location: Room “Una” <i>The Danube Region is a dynamic space of security and prosperity. Cooperation between the members of this region is essential to tackle current challenges in Europe. The Munich Police Department presents the measures currently undertaken to illustrate how EUSDR PA 11 supports law enforcement in safeguarding the Danube Region. The presentation covers initiatives designed to enhance international police cooperation and information exchange, as well as case studies that highlight the ways in which the EUSDR actively promotes collaboration.</i> <i>The session is delivered by a representative of the Munich Police in partnership with a representative of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime.</i>
09.30-11.00	Steering Group Meeting EUSDR PA 8 Location: Room "Neretva" <i>The EUSDR PA 8 Steering Group (SG) is a stable body of representatives from relevant intergovernmental institutions of the EUSDR Member States. It meets regularly twice a year and is coordinated jointly by the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) from Baden-Württemberg and Croatia.</i> <i>The SG meeting includes a mid-term evaluation of EUSDR PA 8 activities and outlines planning activities for the future period. Carmen HAWKINS (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, Baden-Württemberg) and the Croatian PAC representative (Ministry of Economy) presents an overview of EUSDR PA 8 recent activities, an outlook on 2026 initiatives, and proposed minor project revisions until the end of 2025.</i> <i>Further agenda items include announcing the next SG meeting and the upcoming edition of the “Danube Region at the Turn of Times” event in Ulm. Discussions also cover EUSDR PA 8 participation in the Mediterranean and MRS Week in Izola, in September 2025, exploring synergies with the EUSAIR Facility Point on horizontal themes such as bio/ circular economy, digitalisation, and Youth Council cooperation.</i> <i>Additionally, the EUSDR PA 8 Working Group Coordinators presents updates, including a concept for a thematic exchange and site visit in the first half of 2026, subject to DRP Managing Authority / Joint Secretariat approval.</i> <i>Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.</i>
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>

11.30-12.30	OPENING OF THE 14th EUSDR ANNUAL FORUM Location: Congress Room <i>Opening remarks: Elvira Habota, Director of the Directorate for European Integration, Elmedin Konaković, Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Commissioner(s)</i>
12.35-13.00	Handing-over ceremony • Bosnian and Herzegovinian EUSDR Presidency • Bulgarian EUSDR Presidency Location: Room TBC
12.30-14.00	Danube Region Programme Annual Event: From Vision to Cohesion: Funding Pathways for EU Integration in the Region Location: Congress Room <i>The first part of the session explores the modernisation and territorial focus of the EU Cohesion Policy beyond 2027, emphasising its role in supporting regional development and integration. Discussions cover the link between accession and cohesion instruments, and the growing importance of cooperation between macro-regional strategies (MRS) and transnational cooperation on one side and on key contributions to better regional integration, lessons learned, and opportunities aligned with future Cohesion Policy goals on the other side. The role of improved governance mechanisms, along with the unique position of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the Interreg Danube Region Programme (DRP) in driving continued regional integration, will also be tackled.</i> <i>The second part of the session is dedicated to the discussion of key topics for the region: demographic change and water availability.</i> • <i>Territorial aspects of the modernization of the cohesion policy: Moray Gilland, Head of Macro-regions, Transnational/Interregional/External Cooperation, Enlargement, Unit D1, DG Regio (online),</i> • <i>Integration of the Danube Region: past, present and future: Imre Csalagovits, Head of Managing Authority, Danube Region Programme</i> <i>Moderator: Simona Ene, DRP Head of JS</i> • <i>Water scarcity and drought panel discussion. Moderator: Gusztav Csomor, Priority officer, Danube Region Programme</i> - <i>Ms Birgit Vogel, ICPDR Executive Secretary</i> - <i>Mr Gheorghe Constantin, EUSDR PA5 Priority Coordinator (Deputy General Director, General Directorate for Waters - Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests of Romania)</i> - <i>FAO Representative (TBC)</i> - <i>Dr. Zsolt Kozma, Associate Professor, Budapest University of Technology and Economics – representing Danube Water Balance project</i> • <i>The Demographic Challenge & Competitiveness. Moderator: Stephen Halligan, Priority officer, Danube Region Programme</i> - <i>Professor Adnan Efendic, University of Sarajevo</i> - <i>Mr. Jörg Mirtl, Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection European Strategy for the Danube Region</i> - <i>Professor Martin Zagar, Rochester Institute of Technology, Croatia</i> - <i>Danube Region Programme – cooperation opportunities: Simona Ene, Head of Joint Secretariat, Danube Region Programme</i>
14.00-15.30	Lunch break

	Parallel sessions:
15.30-17.00	EUSDR PA 10 Event: Masterclass- How local participation reinforces EU enlargement Location: Congress Room <i>The session Masterclass ‘Enlargement in Action: Civil Society and Municipalities Shaping the Future’ aims at showcasing and discussing the contributions of civil society organisations and municipalities to the EU enlargement process, how their empowerment can be facilitated, and how macro-regional cooperation can support this endeavour.</i> <i>The session presents the results from the Danube Participation Day 2025 and sets those results into the context of EU Enlargement and academic findings.</i> <i>Proposed agenda:</i> • <i>Welcome & Introduction. Driving Enlargement – Local Voices for a European Future: Results from the 12th Danube Participation Day: Claudia Singer-Smith, PAC 10,</i> • <i>Interactive Survey with Participants (Slido): Andreea Prasacu, PAC 10,</i> • <i>How do local communities back up the accession process and what do they need to thrive? Thomas Prorok, Centre of Public Administration Research,</i> • <i>Q&A (Slido)</i> • <i>How local participation reinforces EU enlargement and how we can facilitate it: Aida Daguda, Centre for Civil Society Promotion,</i> • <i>Cohesion Policy – A Tool for Enlargement? Johan Magnusson, European Commission – DG REGIO,</i> • <i>Q&A (Slido)</i> • <i>Interactive survey with participants (Slido),</i> • <i>Summary and Closing: Claudia Singer-Smith, PAC 10.</i> <i>Moderators: Claudia Singer-Smith, Andreea Prasacu (EUSDR PA 10).</i>
15.30-15.35	EUSDR PA 8: Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Supply Chains & Finance (as part of the EUSDR PA 8 Study “Identification of Lighthouse Projects in the Danube Region”): Introduction by moderation and greetings by EUSDR Priority Area 8 Location: Room “Neretva” <i>Drawing upon insights from a study commissioned by EUSDR PA 8 and carried out by Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Pannon Business Network (Hungary) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, this session examines how resilient supply chains and accessible funding mechanisms – particularly for SMEs – can enhance competitiveness across the Danube Region.</i> <i>During the workshop, three representatives of selected projects present their results and engage with participants in a discussion on the essential elements of robust supply chain structures and effective, practical financing tools. In line with the priorities of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian EUSDR Presidency, the workshop encourages the exchange of ideas, mutual learning, and inspiration for future applications, concluding with the presentation of project awards and the official release of the final study publication.</i> <i>Speakers:</i> • <i>Robin Schenk, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum,</i> • <i>Carmen Hawkins, Coordinator of EUSDR Priority Area 8</i>
15.35-15.45	Presentation of the EUSDR Priority Area 8 Identification of Lighthouse Projects Study • <i>Robin Schenk, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum</i>

15.45-16.35	Presentations: Danube Region Lighthouses in Supply Chains & Finance • <i>Speaker 1: Dr. Birgit Meyer, RETHINK-GSC</i> • <i>Speaker 2: Jannik Struss, global verantwortlich BW</i> • <i>Speaker 3: Dr. Klaus Friesenbichler, Supply Chain Intelligence Institute Austria</i>
16.35-16.55	Panel discussion with the speakers and audience questions • <i>Moderation: Robin Schenk</i>
16.55-17.00	Closing words and handing out certificates “EUSDR Priority Area 8 Lighthouse” by EUSDR Priority Area 8
15.30-17.00	EUSDR PA 8: Working Group meeting on Circular Economy and Bioeconomy Location: Room “Una” <i>This meeting provides a dedicated platform for structured exchange among national and regional stakeholders committed to advancing the circular and bioeconomy agenda in the Danube Region. The programme includes contributions from members presenting recent developments and ongoing initiatives in the fields of circular economy and bioeconomy. Additionally, Working Group members participate in interactive workshop sessions designed to explore shared challenges, identify synergies, and develop ideas for future cooperation. The meeting also aims to reflect on the strategic direction of the Working Group and discuss priorities for upcoming activities in alignment with the goals of EUSDR PA 8 and the overall EUSDR framework.</i> <i>Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.</i>
19:00	Social event, dinner offered by Bosnian and Herzegovinian EUSDR Presidency: Youth Centre, Skenderija, Terezije bb (https://skenderija.ba/dom-mladih/)

DAY 2: Thursday, 6 November 2025, 09.30-16.00 CET

08.00-09.30	<i>Registration</i>
	Parallel sessions
09.30-11.20	Joint Meeting EUSDR and EUSAIR National Coordinators I Enhancing EU Accession Support for Candidate Countries in EUSDR and EUSAIR Closed meeting, upon invitation only. Location: Room “Holiday”
09.30-11.00	Digitalisation, boost for competitiveness, sustainability and growth (EUSDR PA 8, IDDEEA) Location: Congress Room <i>The event explores the transformative power of digitalisation in the private sector, with a special focus on SMEs in the Danube Region. It highlights investment opportunities in cutting-edge technologies such as AI, IoT, robotics, and e-commerce systems, while also addressing the potential side effects of digital transformation. Additionally, the event emphasises the crucial role of digital infrastructure development within the public sector, recognising it as a key enabler for businesses to fully leverage the benefits of digitalisation. By fostering discussions among industry leaders, policymakers, and investors, the event aims to accelerate digital adoption, enhance competitiveness, and drive sustainable economic growth.</i> Organisers: EUSDR Bosnian and Herzegovinian EUSDR Presidency in cooperation with Bosnian

	and Herzegovinian Agency for Identification Documents, Registers, and Data Exchange (IDDEA), European Commission, EUSDR PA 8 – Competitiveness of Enterprises and EUSDR PA 1b – Rail-Road-Air Mobility. Proposed agenda: <i>9:30 – 9:35 Welcome speech by EUSDR Presidency and BiH IDDEEA</i> <i>9:35– 11:00 Panel: Digitalization - Boost for competitiveness, sustainability and growth</i> <i>Moderator: Mr. Balázs Barta, CEO of Pannon Business Network</i> Speakers and topics: • Mr. Almir Badnjević, director of IDDEEA; topic: E-signature and Digital Wallet: Enhancing security & accessibility, • Dr. Claus Hoffmann, CEO, Center for Digitization Böblingen District; topic: Sustainable digital transformation of business, • Mr. Robert Sever, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia; topic: Digitalisation of public services (online), • Mr. Tomislav Vazdar, Croatian CroAI association; topic: Bringing Artificial Intelligence towards business, • Mr. Igor Žula, Slovenian Logistics Association; topic: Digitalisation of business service (online).
09.30-09.40	EUSDR PA 8 - Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy (as part of the EUSDR PA 8 Study “Identification of Lighthouse Projects in The Danube Region”): Introduction by moderation and greetings by EUSDR Priority Area 8 Location: Room “Neretva” <i>This workshop spotlights pioneering projects in Green Tech, Circular Economy, and Bioeconomy from across the Danube Region—highlighting how sustainable innovation can drive both environmental progress and economic resilience. Commissioned by EUSDR PA 8 and implemented by Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Pannon Business Network, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, the accompanying study identifies initiatives that combine circularity and green technologies with practical business impact. In alignment with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian EUSDR Presidency’s focus on an accelerated green transition, the session will feature project presentations, a panel discussion, and the awarding of “EUSDR Priority Area 8 Lighthouse” certificates – fostering exchange, inspiration, and replication across the region.</i> <i>Speakers:</i> • <i>Carmen Hawkins and Karmen Maričić, EUSDR Priority Area 8</i>
09.40-09.50	EUSDR PA 8 - Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy. Presentation of the EUSDR Priority Area 8 Identification of Lighthouse Projects Study • <i>Robin Schenk, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum</i>
09.50-10.20	EUSDR PA 8 - Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy. Presentations: Danube Region Lighthouses in Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy • <i>Speaker 1: Paulina Leiman, CCUBIO Baden-Württemberg</i> • <i>Speaker 2: Mathieu Morival, Neo-Eco Ukraine</i> • <i>Speaker 3: Roman Bahnaru, e-Circular Moldova</i>
10.20-10.50	EUSDR PA 8 - Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy. Panel discussion with the speakers and audience

	questions
10.50-11.00	EUSDR PA 8 - Workshop on Lighthouse Initiatives from the Danube Region: Green Tech, Circular Economy and Circular Bioeconomy. Closing words and handing out certificates “EUSDR Priority Area 8 Lighthouse” by EUSDR Priority Area 8
	Parallel sessions
09.30-11.00	EUSDR PA 4, 5, 6 Event: Increasing Water Security: A key to achievement of SDG Location: Room “Una” <i>This side event is to bring attention to the SDG Agenda, recognising water as a connector to all goals of sustainable development. Examples will comprise good practices in the protection of water quality, measures to adapt to climate change (flood forecasting, mitigation of drought impacts), and the importance of vital ecosystems dependent on water.</i> <i>Proposed agenda (include presentations and interactive part with audience):</i> • <i>Water Goals in the SDG Agenda: where do we stand? Keynote speech Danka Thalmeinerová, EUSDR Priority Area 4 coordinator, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia</i> • <i>Water for people: An interactive discussion on safeguarding drinking water supply and wastewater treatment</i> • <i>Flash Floods in the Danube Basin: Strengthening Water Security through Resilience and Preparedness: László Balatonyi, EUSDR Priority Area 5 coordinator, Hungary</i> • <i>Restoring Nature– Water-Driven Solutions for Resilient Ecosystems: Ana Kobašić, EUSDR Priority Area 6 coordinator, Croatia and Matej Marusic, DANUBEPARKS Secretary General</i> • <i>Q&A</i>
	Parallel sessions
09.30-11.00	Meeting of the Danube Youth Council I Location: Room "Caffee Inn" <i>In this session, members of the Danube Youth Council (DYC) will meet among themselves to discuss and streamline their activities. Each Working Group within the DYC reports on their activities. Plans for the upcoming year, potential collaboration with the Bulgarian EUSDR Presidency 2026, and the inclusion of new members will be discussed.</i> <i>The meeting is continued after the coffee break, in the same room.</i> <i>Closed meeting, for DYC members only.</i>
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
	Parallel sessions
11.50-13.00	Joint Meeting EUSDR and EUSAIR National Coordinators II Enhancing EU Accession Support for Candidate Countries in EUSDR and EUSAIR Closed meeting, upon invitation only. Location: Room “Holiday”
11.30-13.00	EUSDR PA 9 Event - Closing the Skills Gap: Green and Digital Skills for a Competitive Europe Location: Congress Room <i>Widening skills gaps and the need for more and better skills pose significant challenges within</i>

	<i>the Danube Region. The loss of young people through outward migration and skilled labour shortages hinders economic development, innovation, and social progress. Targeted and inclusive education, skills and labour market policies can help build attractive offers to attract and retain talent in the region. Building skills for life through strong educational foundations and a focus on green and digital skills are essential to meet the rapidly changing skill demands and employment needs in the green and digital transition. Promoting these skills through cooperation can help bridge the skills gap, foster economic growth, retain talent in the region, and contribute to a sustainable and more competitive Danube Region.</i> <i>Following the keynotes that provide context and strategic direction, the panel discussion brings together experts who share insights on EU strategies, trends in education and labour market systems in the region, and good practice examples on international cooperation in the fields of education and labour market policy. Panellists discuss key challenges around brain drain and the growing skills gap, showcase current initiatives addressing these issues, and highlight the role of transnational cooperation and the promotion of green and digital skills. The audience have the opportunity to ask questions and share experiences.</i> Keynote speakers: Maryna TVERDOSTUP, Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) – Findings of the Danube Region Monitor, Nathalie LAHIRE, Senior Economist for Education, World Bank - Assessment of green skills, foundational skills and skill gap profiles for the green transition in the Western Balkans Moderators: Jörg MIRTIL, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria and Jürgen SCHICK, Federal Ministry of Education, Austria, Coordinators of EUSDR Priority Area 9 – People & Skills.
11.30-13.00	EUSDR PA 3 event- Eco-Culture in Motion: Green Tourism Initiatives as Part of the Sustainable Danube Network Location: Room “Neretva” <i>The event promotes sustainable mobility by integrating travel into the tourist experience and supports inclusive tourism for all social groups.</i> <i>Develop new ecotourism services focused on nature-based solutions that protect the environment and enrich visitor experiences.</i> <i>Highlight cultural heritage as a driver of the green transition and emphasise local cuisine as an authentic part of sustainable tourism development.</i> <i>Planned topics under the theme:</i> • <i>Cultural heritage as a driver of green transition and sustainable development,</i> • <i>Sustainable mobility – travel as a destination,</i> • <i>New ecotourism services with a special focus on nature-based solutions in tourism,</i> • <i>Inclusive tourism, blue tourism opportunities,</i> • <i>Local cuisine: a gastronomic journey.</i> Moderator: Jelica Grujic- Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina Keynote speaker: Ms. Bozena Kaltak, Head of UNDP office in Mostar <i>Speakers:</i> - <i>Cultural heritage provider for green transition and sustainable development: Ciprian Șerban, General Manager of Astra Museum –Romania,</i> - <i>TOURAL project, CPMR policy work and projects focusing on the Adriatic- Ionian and the wider Black Sea region: Stavros Kalognomos, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission, ,</i> - <i>Local cuisine: a gastronomic journey: Marko Radic, Head of the Tourism Promotion Department,</i> - <i>New ecotourism services: focused on nature-based solutions that protect the environment and enrich visitor experiences Dragan Glavas, Head of the tourism development department,</i>

	<i>Agency for Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage and Development of Tourist Potential of Town Jajce,</i> - EUSBSR Presidency – regenerative tourism& relevant initiatives: Andreas Sepp, diplomat, Estonia, - Irina Cozma, PA3-EUSDR, MDPWA-RO, - Slovenia –inclusive tourism: Urska Dolinar.
11.30-11.45	Public Conference on EUSDR PA 8 DECIDE project: Welcome Words & Project Introduction Location: Room “Una” <i>The Danube Region comprises 14 countries and is characterised by a wide variety of economies and cultures. While this diversity is advantageous, it also presents specific challenges in coordinating sustainability efforts between countries. In recognition of the need for a coherent, sustainable development strategy, 10 countries participating in the EUSDR launched the DECIDE project: 'Digital Services for the Circular Economy: A Toolkit for Regional Developers and SMEs'.</i> <i>The DECIDE solution provides a comprehensive toolbox of digital services and methods, offering access to best practice examples from various sectors, as well as training programmes to build capacity and knowledge. By promoting the adoption of circular economy business models (CEBMs), DECIDE ensures that sustainable practices become the norm in the Danube Region. The DECIDE Public Conference presents the initial results and provide an opportunity for knowledge exchange and discussion with the DECIDE project team.</i> <i>Speakers:</i> • Claus Hoffmann, Centre for Digitalisation Böblingen District – ZD.BB GmbH • Sanela Dzevlan, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency • Carmen Hawkins, EUSDR Priority Area 8 Competitiveness of Enterprises / Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism Baden-Württemberg
11-45-12.00	DECIDE Toolbox in a Nutshell Overview presentation of the solution developed jointly by the project partners. Jan Fauser, Reutlingen University, Herman-Hollerith-Centre
12.00-12.10	DECIDE Service Catalogue Introduction & Demonstration Demonstration of a selected tool as a low-barrier entry point for users. Tamara Korovin, Reutlingen University, Herman-Hollerith-Centre
12.10-12.25	DECIDE Pilot Business Model Pitches: Presentation of three selected pilot cases as real-world examples of circular business models. (1) Products Made of Recycled or Biodegradable Materials (Packaging / BiH): Faruk Cerić / Sanela Dzevlan, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency (2) Making Dehydrated Fruits and Veggies from Leftovers (Food / Romania): Liviu Ciucan-Rusu, Alumni Association of Petru Maior University (3) Sourcing energy from biomass (Smart City / Germany): Jan Fauser, Reutlingen University, Herman-Hollerith-Centre
12.25.-12.35	Pilot Documentation & Impact: Overview of key findings and highlights concerning economic, environmental, and social impacts: Tomaž Kern, Tilen Medved & Eva Krhač, University of Maribor
12.35-12.55	DECIDE Policy Recommendations: Paula Pop-Nistor, University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology G.E. Palade of Targu Mures
12.55-13.00	Farewell & Conference Closing: Sanela Dzevlan, Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency Claus Hoffmann, Centre for Digitalisation Böblingen District – ZD.BB GmbH

	Parallel sessions
11.30-13.00	Meeting of the Danube Youth Council II Location: Room "Caffee Inn" <i>In this session, members of the Danube Youth Council (DYC) meet among themselves to discuss and streamline their activities. Each Working Group within the DYC reports on their activities. Plans for the upcoming year, potential collaboration with the Bulgarian EUSDR Presidency 2026, and the inclusion of new members are discussed.</i> <i>Closed meeting, for DYC members only.</i>
13.00-14.30	Lunch break
	Parallel sessions
14.30-16.00	Youth Engagement and Active Citizenship in the Danube Region Location: Congress Room <i>This workshop focuses on empowering young people as active contributors to the present and future of the region. Addresses challenges and opportunities for youth, including mobility, housing, employment, and trust in institutions, while tackling issues such as disinformation, lack of cooperation, and societal polarisation.</i> <i>Participants explore the youth perspective on Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU candidate status, the EU enlargement process in the Western Balkans, and aspirations for integration. Additional topics include brain drain, entrepreneurship, capacity-building, and engaging youth in consultations and decision-making.</i> <i>The interactive workshop also showcases good practices and youth-led initiatives to foster dialogue and cooperation across the Danube Region.</i> <i>Opening remarks: PA Coordinator welcomes the participants and explains the workshop format</i> <i>Opening Pitches: Each project delivers a short, engaging presentation (each max 10 minutes).</i> <i>Each pitch ends with few clear, thought-provoking questions to guide discussion. It can be a single strong question, broad enough to invite ideas; a challenge the project faces and are looking for solutions; or a prompt with 2-3 discussion points to get ideas.</i> <i>Interactive World Café Session: Each project hosts a dedicated circle where participants rotate in 10 mins intervals. Participants contribute ideas, solutions, and creative input to the posed question. Inputs will be collected on post-it notes on a flipchart, fostering brainstorming and visual collaboration.</i> <i>Final Consolidation: At the end, all contributions from each table are gathered and summarized by the project representatives. Projects leave with practical insights, diverse perspectives, and innovative concepts generated during the session.</i> <i>Thank you and final remarks: PA10 Coordinator wraps up and thanks the participants for the engagements.</i>
15.00-17.30	Steering Group Meeting EUSDR PA 9 I Location: Room "Una" <i>The EUSDR Priority Area 9 "People and Skills" (PA 9) Steering Group consists of delegated members from ministries and other institutions that are active in the fields of labour market and education policies from all Danube Region countries. It meets twice a year with the aim of sharing updates on education and labour market developments in each country and on opportunities for cooperation within the region. Key partners of the EUSDR PA 9 also participate in the meeting and brief the Steering Group members about their current activities.</i> <i>The 29th EUSDR PA 9 Steering Group Meeting will be held as a side event of the 14th EUSDR Annual Forum in the form of a closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.</i>

Friday, 7 November 2025, 08.30 – 16.00 CET

08.30-16.00	Training – EUSDR Policy analysis and advocacy skills Location: Room “Holiday” <i>This training is the second in a series of training sessions that Danube Strategy Point delivers for EUSDR core stakeholders, following the Capacity Building Needs Analysis that has been conducted.</i> <i>The primary aim of these training modules is to support further enhancing the skills and competencies of new and/or existing EUSDR core stakeholders, such as National Coordinators (NCs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs), and Steering Group (SG) members, to respond to their expressed needs and contribute to the Strategy's effective implementation.</i> <i>This training session aims to improve skills for effective policy analysis, design, advocacy, and communication. It also focuses on enhancing advocacy skills that may help involve decision-makers and gain support for policy initiatives.</i> <i>As a horizontal theme, “Cross-cultural administrative contexts” is incorporated into all trainings, ensuring that cross-cultural administrative perspectives are consistently addressed and integrated as a fundamental aspect.</i> <i>Closed meeting, attendance by invitation only.</i>
09.00-12.00	Steering Group Meeting EUSDR PA 9 II Location: Room “Una”