

12th

Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

24–25
October
2023

Brdo pri Kranju,
Slovenia

EUSDR Entering the Decade of the Future



Slovenian Presidency
of the EU Strategy
for the Danube Region



Interreg Programme
Danube Region



Co-funded by
the European Union



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

AGENDA

24 October 2023

10:00–11:30

Splendens hall

Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking the Danube's Potential with Emerging Voices

The panel organised by the Danube Youth Council will provide an opportunity to exchange views on how the future of the Danube Region and its "power of youth" is seen by different stakeholders and generations.

Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Zdravko Kačič, Rector, University of Maribor, Slovenia

Elisa Cocco, Programme Assistant, DG REGIO, European Commission

Nataliia Pokhlyiuk, ABLE NGO, Germany

DYC communication winner of the POPRI challenge (22-23 October 2023)

Moderator: **Urška Jež**, CEO, Transformation Lighthouse, Slovenia & **Maty Mihaľko**, Danube Youth Council (DYC)

9:30–12:00

Brdo Castle

Meeting of Ministers responsible for the EUSDR (invitation only)

11:15–13:00

The Lobby

Lunch

13:00–13:30

Grandis hall

Official Opening of the 12th EUSDR Annual Forum

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Aleksander Jevšek, Minister of Cohesion and Regional Development, Slovenia

Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms (*video message*)

13:30–15:00

Grandis hall

High-level plenary panel: The EU Enlargement Process & EUSDR

The Danube macro-region has entered the second decade of its existence, and its political map has changed significantly. In the same year that Ukraine, former EUSDR Presidency, continues to face unprovoked fullscale invasion by the Russian Federation, all non-EU countries participating in EUSDR were granted EU-candidate status. This makes the perspective of Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia much clearer and puts the cooperation within EUSDR on a new level.

The panel will be an opportunity for the exchange between ministers and other high-level speakers about the renewed momentum of the EU enlargement process and to follow the discussion on the role of regional cooperation within the EU enlargement process.

Panelists:

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Alexander Schallenberg, Minister of European and International Affairs, Austria

Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia

Elmedin Konaković, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ana Novaković Đurović, Minister of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism and Coordinator of the Ministry of European Affairs, Montenegro

Tanja Mišević, Minister of European Integration, Republic of Serbia

Eugeniu Harabara, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Moldova

Andrii Taran, Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Slovenia

Moderator: **Igor E. Bergant**, journalist and TV news presenter

15:00–15:15

Grandis hall

Handover Ceremony of EUSDR Presidency to Austria

Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovenia

Alexander Schallenberg, Minister of European and International Affairs, Austria

15:15–15:30

The Lobby

Break

15:15–15:45

Glass hall

Press Conference

15:30–16:30

Grandis hall

Danube Region Programme – A new beginning for cooperation and EU integration

Discussion on the future of cooperation and development in the Danube Region and the role that the new Danube Region Programme can play in supporting these efforts, focusing on Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, but not forgetting the Balkan countries.

Panelists:

Moray Gilland, European Commission (*online*)

Simona Ene, Head of Danube Region Programme Joint Secretariat, Hungary

Gusztáv Csomor, Danube Region Programme Joint Secretariat, Hungary

Jasna Gabrič, Member of the Group of high-level specialists on the future of Cohesion Policy, Slovenia (tbc)

Ion Gumene, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Moldova (*online*)

Rostyslav Tomenchuk, Director of Department for International Technical Assistance Coordination, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Moderator: **Stephen Halligan**, Danube Region Programme

16:30–17:45
Grandis hall

Bottom-up recovery and transformation of Ukraine – Supporting Ukraine and Moldova on their way to the EU

The panel will be an opportunity to explore the role of local and regional stakeholders and non-state actors (civil society and NGOs) in the recovery of Ukraine and its path towards the EU. The focus of the panel will be on how the EUSDR can build an environment where all these actors could help generate the biggest yields in terms of their contribution to the accession process.

Panelists:

Eugeniu Harabara, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Moldova

Oleksandr Nikolaiev, Deputy Head of the Department of International Cooperation and European Integration, Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development, Ukraine

Igor Studennikov, Executive Director, Centre for Regional Studies (Odessa), Ukraine

Stefan August Lütgenau, Founding Director of Foster Europe Foundation, Danube Civil Society Forum

Nina Čepon, Executive Director, Centre for European Perspective, Slovenia

Moderator: **Nadija Afanasieva**, Ukrainian Institute for International Politics

17.45–18:30
The Lobby

Break

18.30–19:00
Grandis hall

Concert by the Slovenian and Ukrainian Youth Orchestra

19:00
The Lobby

Networking dinner

25 October 2023

09:30–11:00
Grandis hall

Knowledge-driven society: a regional search for the competences and skills of future professions

The panel will provide an opportunity to explore the key issues and offer possible recommendations for policymakers, focusing on the knowledge, skills and competences needed in the professions of the future.

Panelists:

Katarína Cséfalvayová, Executive Lead of the Danube Tech Valley Initiative, Slovakia

Prof. Dr. Dieter Hertweck, Research Professor at Reutlingen University, Baden-Württemberg and former Leader of Work Group Digital Danube of PA 8 EUSDR, Germany

Mitja Jermol, UNESCO Chair on Open Technologies for Open Educational Resources and Open Learning at Jozef Stefan Institute, Slovenia

Viktor Nedović, Director, Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth, Entrepreneurship (SAIGE) Project, Serbia

Ildikó Pathóová, Director of the Lifelong Learning Unit at the Secondary Education and LLL Division, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Slovakia

Duška Rakin and Tamara Živanović, 2022 POPRI award winners for "VeYo", Serbia

Moderator: **Prof. Dr. Zdravko Kačič**, Rector, University of Maribor, Slovenia

09:30–11:00

Heros hall

Danube Region Programme 2nd call for proposals

The panel will focus on presenting the 2nd call's main features as well as how it differs from the 1st call for proposals. Additionally, the presenters will provide examples of best practices in terms of transnational approach.

Panelists:

Simona Ene, Head of Danube Region Programme Joint Secretariat

Katalin Kovács-Kacza, Danube Region Programme

Natália Liholot, Danube Region Programme

Stephen Halligan, Danube Region Programme

Horst Schindler, Danube Region Programme

Johannes Gabriel, Danube Region Programme

Moderator: **Mirjana Vidanović**, Danube Region Programme

09:30–11:00

Splendens hall

Mobility & Multimodality: The Impact of Large Projects for Improved Connectivity

Transport infrastructure is a key ingredient in the economic development, supporting personal well-being and economic growth. In addition, goals such as efficient, safe, resilient and sustainable multimodal network should not be neglected when the transport network is planned and expanded.

The main aim of the panel is to look at some of many great projects in the Danube region that contribute or will contribute to improved mobility, connectivity, accessibility and cohesion and explore their implications related to environmental, economic and social issues.

Panelists:

Helmut Adelsberger, Consultant Engineer for Civil Engineering, InfraConceptA, Austria

Zoran Andrić, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Goran Legac, Project director, Hrvatske ceste d.o.o., Croatia

Kristijan Novak, Expert associate for EU funds, The Second railway line Koper-Divača, Ltd., Slovenia

Miodrag Poledica, Director of the Department for Strategy, Design and Development, PE "Roads of Serbia", Serbia

Moderator: **Vlasta Kampos-Jerenec**, Head of Unit, Ministry of Infrastructure, Slovenia

11:00–11:30

The Lobby

Break



11:30–13:00
Grandis hall

Enhancing the hydrogen economy in the Danube Region

Hydrogen provides excellent opportunities for the EUSDR countries to move their energy systems further along the decarbonisation pathways. The discussion will focus on the key challenges for the development of the hydrogen economy in the Danube Region and provide some examples of good practice.

Keynote address:

Ádám Balogh, Senior Energy Infrastructure Expert, Energy Community

Panelists:

Marko Bahor, Executive Director for Development and Investments, Slovenian Power Plants Holding, Slovenia

Teodóra Diána Bakk, Chief Operating Officer, University of Pécs, National Laboratory for Renewable Energy, Hungary

Julian Dörr, Researcher, Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, University of Stuttgart

Vlasta Krmelj, Director of Climate and Energy Agency of Podravje, AMETHyST project partner, Slovenia

Moderator: **Annamária Nádor**, EUSDR Priority Area Coordinator 2 - "Sustainable Energy"

11:30–13:00
Splendens hall

Entering the decade of future - current and forthcoming water challenges

A panel will provide an opportunity to explore the forthcoming challenges in water management in the Danube Region, which stem from extreme weather events related to climate change, such as heatwaves, floods, drought and water scarcity. Panelists will according to their expertise discuss possible recommendations for policymakers dealing with water management in the Danube Region.

Keynote address:

Birgit Vogel, Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Austria

Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Chari Tjaša Giessler Bulc, Regional Chair, Global Water Partnership CEE – Nature Based Solutions, Slovenia

Dario Masante, Joint Research Centre of European Commission, Disaster Risk Management Unit E.1 – European Drought Observatory for Resilience and Adaptation

Márton Pesel, Priority Area Coordinator Hungary, EU Strategy for the Danube Region PA 4 "Water Quality" - Danube Water balance, Hungary

Kálmán Szanyi, Project Manager, For the Nature and Environmental Protection – PAPILIO, Ukraine

Danka Thalmeinerová, Priority Area Coordinator Slovakia, EU Strategy for the Danube Region PA 4 "Water Quality" – Climate and migratory fish, Slovakia

Moderator: **Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper**, Priority Area Coordinator Hungary, EU Strategy for the Danube Region PA 4 "Water Quality", Hungary

13:00–14:30
The Lobby

Lunch

14:30–16:00
Grandis hall

Strategic planning and budgeting – Funding through and beyond IPA III/NDICI in the Danube Region

The panel will explore the IPAIII/NDICI programming framework and how MRS/EUSDR is displayed therein. Based on an open discussion the recommendations for further improvements shall be made to stakeholders at the EU, macro-regional and national level, as well as regional initiatives in the Danube Region.

Keynote address:

Besiana Ninka, Interact Programme

Panelists:

Sanda Šimić Stambolić, Acting Assistant Minister, Ministry of European Integration, National IPA Coordination, Republic of Serbia

Eugeniu Harabara, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Moldova

Bojan Vujović, Director General for EU Funds in the Ministry of European Affairs and National Coordinator for the EUSDR, Montenegro

Rostyslav Tomenchuk, Director of Department for International Technical Assistance Coordination, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Zara Halilović, Assistant Director, Directorate for European Integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Moderator: **Andreja Jerina**, former National Coordinator for EUSDR, EUSAIR and EUSALP, Slovenia

16:00–16:30
Grandis hall

Closing of the 12th Annual Forum 2023

SIDE EVENTS

20 October 2023

19:00–20:00

Hotel Lipa, Šempeter pri Gorici

2nd Danube Youth Camp

During a reflection workshop on Saturday, 21 October 2023, the 28 NYC members will look back on their NYC mandate, jointly reflect on experiences, challenges and lessons learnt, discuss the future developments of the NYC and formulate recommendations for its future work, moving from the one-year Pilot Action to a long-term implementation format.

21 October 2023

09:30–16:00

Hotel Lipa, Šempeter pri Gorici

2nd Danube Youth Camp

During a reflection workshop on Saturday, 21 October 2023, the 28 NYC members will look back on their NYC mandate, jointly reflect on experiences, challenges and lessons learnt, discuss the future developments of the NYC and formulate recommendations for its future work, moving from the one-year Pilot Action to a long-term implementation format.

22 October 2023

12:00–21:00

Primorska Technology Park, Šempeter pri Gorici

POPRI Start-up Challenge: From talents to the Danube Region's strengths

The POPRI Start-up challenge, an event that uses the capacity-building method for enhancing entrepreneurial and leadership skills, will focus on the importance of young talents and possible ways to tackle the brain drain in the Danube Region.

23 October 2023

08:00–17:00

Primorska Technology Park,
Šempeter pri Gorici

POPRI Start-up Challenge: From talents to the Danube Region's strengths

The POPRI Start-up challenge, an event that uses the capacity-building method for enhancing entrepreneurial and leadership skills, will focus on the importance of young talents and possible ways to tackle the brain drain in the Danube Region.

09:00–15:00

Grand Hall, Faculty of
Social Sciences, Ljubljana

10th Danube Participation Day

The 10th Danube Participation Day, under the slogan “Ukraine’s recovery towards EU membership,” will aim to explore how the EUSDR can strengthen civil society and local actors for a sustainable recovery towards EU membership and what can we learn for Moldova.

24 October 2023

10:00–12:00

Heros hall, Brdo Congress
Centre

Danube Transfer Centre Network Ceremony - Strengthening regional transformation by boosting the competitiveness of the enterprises and turning the knowledge into value for regions, economy and society *(invitation only)*

Steinbeis Europa Zentrum cordially invite to the Official Ceremony for the Danube Transfer Centre Network. The Danube Transfer Centres (DTC) Network, a flagship project of the EUSDR Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness” (PA 8), Working Group “Innovation and Technology Transfer”, contributes to enhanced networking and capacity building within the Danube macro-region in the field of innovation and technology transfer. During the Official Ceremony of the DTC Network on 24th of October 2023, 10:00 – 12:00, we would like to celebrate the introduction of new members to the DTC Network and the reinforcement of existing alliances. We are particularly pleased to be able to further contribute to the development and unity of the Danube region and generating a transnational added value, through the initiation and implementation of various projects.

25 October 2023

11:30–17:00

Glass hall, Brdo Congress
Centre

C2Lab – Kick-start your next project

SMEs, clusters, research organisations, social and public entities are invited to join an interactive workshop to meet, network, exchange ideas, and initiative new project proposals. Guided by experts on project creation and management, you have the possibility to forge new alliances and project consortia for the topic of your interest, for example mobility, energy, skills, or networks. You can either join with a concrete project idea, or offer your skills and knowledge in new areas. This workshop is offered by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and is open to participants from the EU and SMP/COSME countries. For more info and registration, click here.

26 October 2023

09:00–15:00

Austria Trend Hotel,
Ljubljana

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