**IDM Conference: Cooperation & Integration in the Danube Region**

**Date: 5 December 2024**

**Location: tbc & online webinar**

What role does cooperation continue to play in the Danube Region? How do post-war countries deal with integration into the EU? This year’s Danube Conference will look back at the Austrian Presidency of the EUSDR as well as exploring some of the specific challenges facing Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans.

**17:00-17:30**

**Greeting words**

* Christian Wigand, Acting Head of Representation of the European Commission in Austria (tbc)
* Friedrich Faulhammer, Chairman, Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM)

**Kick-off Presentation of Project “Central Europe and Future EU Enlargement”**

The project aims to support the processes of EU integration by working with think tanks from across the region to create an active network that can share expertise, stimulate common understanding and develop joint solutions.

Project partners:

* Association for International Affairs (AMO), Czechia
* Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA), Hungary
* Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), Poland
* Institute for Public Affairs (IVO), Slovakia
* European Policy Center (CEP), Serbia
* Ukrainian Institute for International Politics (UIIP), Ukraine

The project is co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from the International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

**17:30 – 18:45**

**Panel discussion: EUSDR and the Future of European Integration**

As Austria reaches the end of its Presidency of the EUSDR, we will look back at a year of transition in the Danube Region. Economic uncertainty, climate change and growing social imbalance have all made their mark on the region, accentuating the need for European integration. Due to the ongoing war, Ukraine faces specific challenges when it comes to accession into the EU. Yet it is not the only country in the region that has been shaped by conflict: even though the Yugoslav wars are no longer raging, the effects continue to be felt and to hinder integration. What can Ukraine and the Western Balkans learn from each other in view of their specific experiences? How can the region achieve resilience, security and prosperity in the face of these challenges? And what role can the EUSDR play in the process of EU integration? The discussion will also look ahead to next year’s Bosnian presidency.

Panelists:

* Nadija Afanasieva, Director, Ukrainian Institute for International Politics (UIIP) Kyiv, Ukraine
* Almina Bešić, Assistant professor, Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria (tbc)
* Robert Lichtner, Coordinator, Danube Strategy Point, Vienna, Austria
* Ambassador Harald Stranzl, National coordinator of the EUSDR, Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

Moderator: Sebastian Schäffer, Director, Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM)

**18:45-19:00**

**Outlook – ARGE Donauländer and its activities in the region**

* Simon Ortner, Head of Department International and European Affairs, Lower Austrian Federal Government   
  OR/AND
* Teresa Stummer, Policy Officer, Department International and European Affairs, Lower Austrian Federal Government

**From 19:00 Reception** (tbc)