

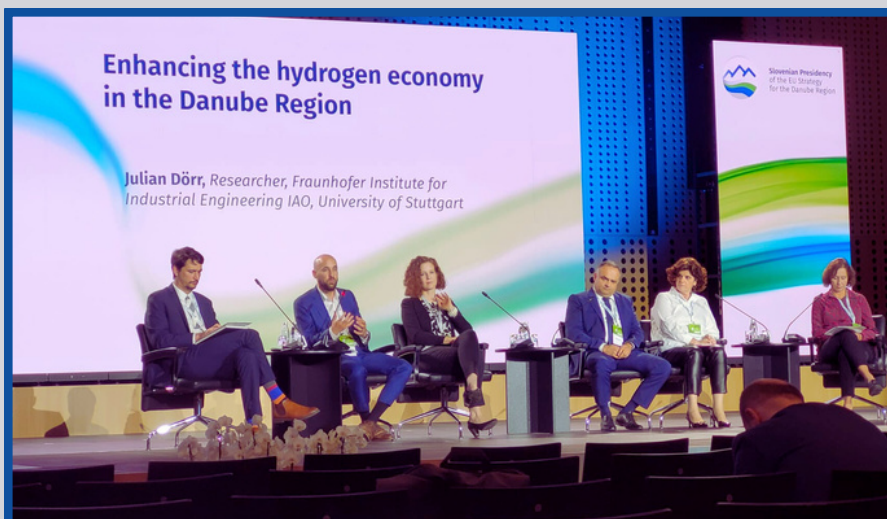


Priority Area 2 2023 NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers

We are happy to introduce you to the newsletter of Priority Area 2: Sustainable Energy of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, presenting the activities of PA2 during the year 2023. The priority area is coordinated by Czechia and Hungary.

EUSDR Priority Area 2 aims to foster the Green Energy transition in the Danube Region and coordinate regional energy policies with the focus of several key areas, such as energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy, new and innovative clean energy technologies, etc. It has launched several flagship initiatives to achieve its goals which are: Enhancing hydrogen economy in the EUSDR, Promote local low-carbon energy actions in the EUSDR and Diversification of gas supply in the EUSDR. These initiatives are helping the Danube Region to improve its energy security, reduce its environmental impact, and create new economic opportunities



Panel on Enhancing hydrogen economy

The 12th EUSDR Annual Forum took place in Brdo pri Kranju in October. The presidency was handed from Slovenia to Austria and HU PAC has organized there a panel on Enhancing the hydrogen economy. Find out more on page 3.

Workshops on district heating decarbonization

On 5th and 12th October the Hungarian coordination prepared workshops on district heating system decarbonization in Zagreb and Tuzla. Find more on page 4.



Other information

Find other information about PA 2 activities and EUSDR news in the newspaper.

- Panel at EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week on the role of macro-regional strategies in energy security and energy transition. p 2
- Steering Group meetings
- Austrian presidency agenda p 3

26th SG Meeting

This SG meeting took place on 31st May 2023 in a hybrid format and focused on in-depth exchange between SG members and PA2 Coordinators. It was agreed to organize the SG meetings in physical form in the future and at more convenient dates possibly together with other EUSDR Events. Also the activities from EUSDR and EC were presented. Meeting materials are available [here](#).



4th EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week

Since the launch of the EU MRS Week in 2020, it has become an important communication and networking platform, enhancing coordination among participating MRS countries, interactions between MRS and representatives of EU institutions and promoting horizontal issues such as the embedding process, policy learning and the exchange of good practice.

PA2 organized a workshop for the second time at the Macroregional week (first in 2022 and second time in 2023), which took place from 24th to 28th of April 2023.

In this workshop the acceleration of gas phase out in Europe was discussed with some case studies across Europe.

On the 4th EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week, PA2 has also participated in a panel “Energy security and clean energy transition: which role for the macro-regional strategies. The discussion examined the role of MRS from different points of views, where PA2 presented the case of policy approach.

12th Annual Forum

The 12th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) took place in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, on October 24-25, 2023. Over 350 people attended the two-day event, which included a Meeting of Ministers responsible for the EUSDR, a session dedicated to the Danube Youth Council, and a handover ceremony of the EUSDR Presidency from Slovenia to Austria.

The themes discussed at the forum included support for recovery and transformation in Ukraine, support for the EU accession, knowledge-driven society, mobility and multimodality, enhancing hydrogen economy in the Danube Region, current and forthcoming water challenges, strategic planning, and funding.

On the second day of the Annual Forum, the Hungarian coordination team organized a panel dedicated to enhancing the hydrogen economy in the Danube Region. The keynote presentation was held by Mr Ádám Balog from Energy Community, who set the scene for the discussion by providing an outlook about the production and utilisation of the hydrogen and by presenting its advantages and its costs compared to other sustainable energy sources. He also summarized the EU context including the presentation of the most important international organizations in the hydrogen field and the EU legislative background.

The panel discussion was moderated by Ms Annamária Nádor, Hungarian PAC. The panelists represented a wide range of stakeholders in the field of hydrogen from Germany, Slovenia and Hungary and presented various project examples from different sectors. More information about the panel is available [here](#).

Austrian presidency

Austria has taken the presidency from Slovenia and will lead the EUSDR in the timeframe from 1st November 2023 to 31st December 2024. For its presidency Austria chose the slogan "Shaping Transformation, Creating Opportunities: A Prosperous, Resilient and Secure Danube Region". And under this slogan, there are three priorities:



Austria has taken the presidency from Slovenia and will lead the EUSDR in the timeframe from 1st November 2023 to 31st December 2024. For its presidency Austria chose the slogan "Shaping Transformation, Creating Opportunities: A Prosperous, Resilient and Secure Danube Region". And under this slogan, there are three priorities:

- 1) Contributing to Stability and Security, and a clear European Perspective for the whole Danube Region**
- 2) Fostering Innovation, Skills and Business Opportunities in the Danube Region**
- 3) Enhancing the Danube Region Ecosystem, Water and Green Transition Management.**

Across all these priorities, Austria will pursue the participation and involvement of youth, civil society and regional and local stakeholders.

District heating decarbonization workshops in Zagreb and Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 5th and 12th October 2023, the 'Sustainable Energy' Priority Area (Priority Area 2) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the Association of Hungarian District Heating Enterprises (MATÁSzSz) organized two workshops in the topic of the decarbonization of the district heating systems in Zagreb and Tuzla.

The overall aim of the events was to contribute to the decarbonization of the economies of the Danube region countries by promoting the use of geothermal energy in the district heating systems, where there is significant available, but still unused geothermal potential. At both events high-level representatives of national energy ministers presented energy policy aims related to RES-based district heating systems. The workshops also provided opportunity to B2B discussions among companies from Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The high number of participants showed that there is a great interest for sustainable solutions in the field of district heating.



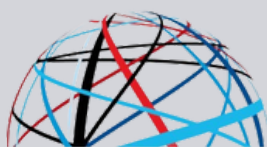
27th SG Meeting

The 27th SG meeting took place in Budapest on 28th November 2023 with high attendance in person and online. At the beginning of the official agenda, the Hungarian side of PA coordination presented its achievements and events during 2023, while the Czech side presented its plans for the upcoming year.

The SG meeting was also enriched with the presentation of Ms Heidelinde Adensam on the policy updates in the field of energy efficiency which has introduced changes to the Energy Efficiency Directive and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in the context of the REPowerEU plan.

Pécs integrated hydrogen project was also introduced by Mr Zsolt Bedő from Pécs University mentioning the significant potential of complex hydrogen projects but also missing legislation concerning hydrogen. Together with the presentation of winning energy projects of the 1st DRP call, the SG meeting has successfully ended the event calendar of PA2 in 2023.

CONTACT INFORMATION



MINISTERSTVO
PRŮMYSLU A OBCHODU

CZ Priority area coordinator:

Ms. Zuzana Šimicová

simicova@mpo.cz

Advisor of CZ PAC

Mr. Vít Fencl

fencl@mpo.cz

Assistant to CZ PAC

Mr. Tomáš Vondra

Vondra@mpo.cz



MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
OF HUNGARY

HU Priority area coordinator:

Ms. Annamária Nádor

annamaria.nador@mfa.gov.hu

Senior Advisor of HU PAC:

Ms. Zsuzsa Bálintné Vörös

ZsVoros@mfa.gov.hu

Advisor of HU PAC:

Ms. Ágnes Barber

agnes.barber@mfa.gov.hu

Stay updated on EUSDR activities on website or use our mobile app!

<https://energy.danube-region.eu/>



This newsletter was supported as part of Project PA02 Energy (DRP-PAC-PA2) that is co-funding by the European Union and the Interreg Danube Region Programme