



10th EUSAIR Forum

Georgioupolis, Crete **6-7 May 2025**

Bridging Horizons: Strengthening Cooperation, Resilience and Cohesion in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

DETAILED PROGRAMME



Strategic project "EUSAIR FACILITY POINT – Supporting the EUSAIR governance for improved cooperation" is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg IPA Adriatic Programme 2021-2027.



Bridging Horizons: Strengthening Cooperation, Resilience and Cohesion in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

Conference Venue

Pilot Beach Resort,
Georgiopolis, Crete

**All Hours are provided in local time.*

Working language: English

**Should translation be available, an appropriate reference will be included in the titles of the respective sessions*

Programme version: 02 May 2025 (The Programme is subject to change; please check the EUSAIR website for updates)



Bridging Horizons: Strengthening Cooperation, Resilience and Cohesion in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

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MONDAY, 5 MAY 2025

14:00 – 18:00 **Registration**

15:30 – 17:30 **Shaping the future of the Adriatic – Ionian Region: Cooperation, Innovation and Sustainability (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

The event will present key projects focused on green and blue growth, sustainable procurement, digitalization, and regional resilience. It promotes dialogue on aligning regional efforts with the EU Green Deal and future policies. Key topics include synergies in environmental innovation and the blue economy, challenges and opportunities in aligning regional priorities with EU Green Deal objectives and pathways for cooperation. Interreg IPA ADRION and Interreg Euro-MED projects will share best practices and results. The session aims to co-create knowledge and drive sustainability in the Adriatic-Ionian region.

15:30 – 15:45 **Registration of the Participants**

15:45 – 16:00 **Key Speaker, Mr. Fokion Zaimis**

Deputy Governor of Achaia of the Region of Western Greece, Vice-President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission and President of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission

16:00 – 16:45 **Session 1: Driving Green Innovation & Procurement: Leveraging the Potential of Public Authorities and SMEs**

Dr Konstantina Marousi (moderator)

- GPP2ADRION - Dr. Alessandro Manzardo, University of Padua
- ProcuraMED - Em. Prof. Yorgos Stephanedes, University of Patras
- GREENSMES - Mr. Davide De Nicolò, TECNOPOLIS Science & Technology Park
- Dialogue4LivingAreas - Dr. Marina Kouta, University of Patras
- Roundtable discussion



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16:45 – 17:30 Session 2: Fostering Blue Economy sectors: Boosting circularity in aquaculture, addressing skill gaps and enhancing waste management

Dr Thanasis Koukounaris (moderator)

- AZA4ICE - Dr. Erika Porporato & Dr. Veronica Santinelli, IMC Foundation – International Marine Centre
- GROWTH4BLUE - Mrs. Sandra Peric, Chamber of Economy of Montenegro
- INNOVABLUE - Dr. Aliko Karousou, Region of Crete
- EASY WASTE - Prof. Vassilios Loukopoulos, Patras Science Park

19:00 – 19:30 Art exhibition "Living without Leaving" (LOCATION: *FOYER*)

This is the opening of the exhibition for the art competition "Living without Leaving", dedicated to the perspectives of young artists in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region regarding migration, identity and belonging. During the exhibition opening, a short video screening (tbc) will be followed by greetings from the following speakers:

Speakers:

- **Mr Gilles Kittel**, Team Leader –South – East Europe, DG REGIO, European Commission
- Representative of the Hellenic Presidency (tbc)
- **Mr Konstantinos Mema**, winning artist

Also, short interviews will be held involving members of the EUSAIR Youth Council. The event will be complemented by posts on the website <https://www.livingwithoutleaving.eu/>. The exhibition will stay open till 7 May.

19:30 – 21:00 Light Buffet (*PILOT BEACH RESORT*)



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TUESDAY, 6 MAY 2025

08:30 – 11:00 **Registration**

08:30 – 10:30 **Collaborating for a Common Future: The launch of the IPA
ADRION 2nd Call for Proposals and the EUSAIR Policy Goals
(VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

In this event, the Managing Authority of Interreg IPA ADRION, Regione Emilia-Romagna, will introduce the 2nd Call for Proposals in the framework of the Interreg IPA ADRION Programme. The call concerns the allocation of over EUR 21 mil across a number of critical objectives related to the enlargement of the European Union, namely smart specialization, green transformation, climate resilience, carbon neutrality and improved connection. Applications are welcome from all interested and eligible participants.

08:30 – 08:50 **Institutional Greetings**

Maria Nezeriti, Head of Greek Managing Authority Interreg 2021 – 2027

Lodovico Gherardi, IPA ADRION Managing Authority

08:50 – 09:05 **ADRION and IPA ADRION contribution to EUSAIR goals**

Barbara Di Piazza, Head of IPA ADRION Joint Secretariat

09:05 – 09:20 **Key features of the 2nd Call for Proposals**

Adela Franja, IPA ADRION Joint Secretariat

09:20 – 09:35 **Project content requirements**

Lucia Calliari, IPA ADRION Joint Secretariat

09:35 – 09:50 **Project budget requirements**

Marco Zecchinato, IPA ADRION Joint Secretariat

09:50 – 10:05 **Programme support for potential beneficiaries**

Koralia Branioti, IPA ADRION Joint Secretariat

10:05 – 10:30 **Q&A**



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- 11:00 – 11:15** **Coffee Break**
- 11:15 – 12:00** **Official Opening of the 10th EUSAIR Forum - Welcome Speeches (VENUE: *ATHENA*, interpretation will be available in both Greek and English)**
- 12:00 – 12:05** **EUSAIR Hellenic Presidency 2024-2025 (video) (VENUE: *ATHENA*, interpretation will be available in both Greek and English)**
- 12:05 – 12:10** **10 Years Anniversary - Achievements and Lessons Learnt (video) (VENUE: *ATHENA*, interpretation will be available in both Greek and English)**
- 12:10 – 13:30** **Panel of Ministers responsible for European Funds (VENUE: *ATHENA*, interpretation will be available in both Greek and English)**
- “Social cohesion: a tool to accelerate inclusion to the EU via the fifth Pillar in the Revised Action Plan of EUSAIR”*
- 13:30 – 13:40** **Handover Ceremony of EUSAIR Presidency: Greece to North Macedonia (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**
- 13:40 – 14:00** **Press Conference (Greece and North Macedonia) (VENUE – *APOLLON*)**



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11:15 – 14:15 EUSAIR POPRI: Youth Business Model Competition (VENUE: *ARTEMIS*)

The EUSAIR POPRI competition is a remarkable opportunity for young visionaries to showcase their ideas and drive positive change. It champions sustainability, embraces the circular economy, and inspires innovative solutions to real-world challenges. These bright and ambitious participants are not just future leaders—they are changemakers whose voices deserve to be heard. Every business idea they bring forward carries personal, national, and global potential, shaping a more prosperous and sustainable future for all.

11:15 – 11:30 Moderators' welcome notes and motivational introduction

- **Tanja Kožuh** (moderator), Director of Primorska Technology Park
- **George Papamichail** (moderator), Director of Science and Technology Park of Crete of the Foundation of Research and Technology, Greece
- **Ernesto Sigalas**, young POPRI ambassador, Trash Feaster Vessel.

11:30 – 12:30 Presentation of business ideas – EUSAIR High School students

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, San Marino, Slovenia

12:30 – 12:45 *Short Break*

12:45 – 14:15 Presentation of business ideas – EUSAIR University students

Albania, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, San Marino, Slovenia

13:40 – 14:50 Lunch



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14:50 – 15:00 **Presentation of the 2025 EUSAIR Action Plan (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

Gilles Kittel, Team Leader –South – East Europe, DG REGIO, European Commission

15:00 – 16:00 **EUSAIR Pillar 1 (Blue Growth): Sustainable Development of Coastal Communities through Blue Upskilling of Local Populations (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

This session focuses on enhancing sustainable development in Adriatic-Ionian coastal communities by upskilling local populations in Blue Economy sectors (e.g., tourism, port services). It emphasizes addressing vulnerabilities in fisheries-dependent groups, leveraging natural resources like lagoons and lakes, and fostering job creation through specialized skills. The discussion aligns with EUSAIR Pillar 1 (Blue Growth), EU Blue-Growth Strategy, and post-2027 priorities, aiming to balance ecological preservation with socio-economic growth. Key themes include integrating green transition, climate resilience, and regional cooperation.

Chair / Moderator:

- **Dr Michael Chatziefstathiou**, EUSAIR Pillar 1 (Blue Growth) Coordinator, Greece

Panellists:

- **Prof. Drosos Koutsoubas**, Professor of Marine Biology (Dept. Marine Sciences), Dean of the School of Environment, University of the Aegean, Greece.
“Blue Economy and Blue Carriers upskilling in the framework of Sustainable Development Goals and the EU’s Blue-Growth Strategy Initiatives”
- **Mr Rezart Kapedani**, Deputy Team Leader of SANE 27 project (Supporting Albanian Negotiations in Chapter 27 “Environment”), Brooks Hannas & Partners, Albania.
“How to improve Local Communities near the coastal lagoons through sustainable tourism and spatial planning”
- **Mr Stavros Kalognomos (tbc)**, Balkan and Black Sea Commission, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), Belgium.
“Skills needed to be acquired by the local population to be successful candidates for work in future professions on small ports, marinas, port services, coastal short shipping, etc”



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16:00 – 16:30 Pact for Blue Economy – Regional Pact for Blue Skills in EUSAIR (VENUE: *ATHENA*)

This session introduces the "Regional Pact for Blue Skills in EUSAIR," aiming to establish a partnership under the EU's Pact for Skills initiative to enhance sustainable blue economy practices. It highlights the benefits of regional collaboration, updates on drafting the pact, and steps toward stakeholder engagement. Aligned with post-2027 EUSAIR priorities—such as green transition, climate resilience, and EU enlargement, the session emphasizes skill development in blue sectors (e.g., marine services, coastal industries).

Chair / Moderator:

- **Dr Michael Chatziefstathiou**, EUSAIR Pillar 1 (Blue Growth) Coordinator, Greece

Panellists:

- **Mr Arturo Incerti**, Policy Officer, European Commission, DG MARE, European Commission.
"Current DG MARE initiatives to boost Blue Economy"
- **Mr Georgios Emmanouil**, Policy Officer, DG REGIO, European Commission.
"Proposal to establish a Regional Scale Partnership, under the Pact for Skills initiative, on Blue Skills in the Sustainable Blue Economy in the EUSAIR"
- **Dr Michael Chatziefstathiou**, EUSAIR Pillar 1 (Blue Growth) Coordinator, Greece
"Latest developments on the drafting of a Regional Skills Partnership for Sustainable Blue Economy in EUSAIR region"

16:00 – 17:30 EUSAIR POPRI Talents: Driving the Future of Our Region (VENUE: *ARTEMIS*)

Demographic challenges in EUSAIR countries impact economic development, digitalization, and opportunities for young people. One of the key issues is the "Talent Trap"—the outflow of talent and the search for ways to retain it. During the panel, young entrepreneurs and experienced business leaders will discuss solutions for creating an attractive environment for young talents and the role of entrepreneurship and cohesion policy in regional development.

Moderators / Introduction

- **Barbara Zrimšek**, RTV Slovenia
- **Marjana Simčič Humar**, Primorska Technology Park



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Welcome notes:

- **Aleksander Jevšek**, Minister of Cohesion and Regional Development, Republic of Slovenia.
- **Mathilde Konstantopoulou**, EUSAIR National Coordinator for ESI Funds, Greece

Discussion with the panelists:

- **Lujo Hercog**, POPRI participant, Emens, Croatia
- **Bogdan Kuzmić**, POPRI participant, D-CODE, Serbia
- **Antonio Grujevski**, EUSAIR Youth Council member
- **Ankica Sokolić**, EUSAIR Youth Council member
- **Stelios Arhondakis**, CEO and Founder of biotech company BioCoS

Media Statements for RTV Slovenia:

- **Aleksander Jevšek**, Minister of Cohesion and Regional Development, Republic of Slovenia.
- **Tamara Weingerl Požar**, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Cyprus
- **Tanja Kožuh**, Director of Primorska Technology Park.

16:30 – 18:00 EUSAIR Pillar 3 (Environmental Quality): Protection and sustainable development of the marine environment in the Adriatic – Ionian region, through innovative policy approaches and integrated action (VENUE: [ATHENA](#))

This session focuses on the protection and sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment in the Adriatic – Ionian region, addressing key challenges like invasive species, biodiversity loss and climate hazards. It covers five themes: ballast water management, EU marine conservation and restoration policies, climate adaptation and disaster risk prevention through cross-border cooperation, regional environmental governance and scientific initiatives for emblematic species conservation. Emphasizing EUSAIR Pillar 3, it highlights the need for integrated policies, science-based decision-making and coordinated project implementation.



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Chairs / Moderators:

- **Mr Mitja Bricelj**, PhD, Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Slovenia. EUSAIR Pillar 3 (Environmental Quality) Coordinator, Slovenia.
- **Mr Senad Oprašič**, PhD, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina. EUSAIR Pillar 3 (Environmental Quality) Coordinator, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Panellists:

- **Mr Matej David**, PhD, Dr. Matej David Consult, Izola, Slovenia, and **Mr Ivan Sammut**, PhD, Head of Office, UNEP/MAP-REMPEC, online.
“Ballast water management in the EUSAIR - The need for regional cooperation”
- **Mr Vedran Nikolić**, Nature Conservation Unit, DG ENV, European Commission.
“EU marine conservation and restoration policy also in Western Balkans: Are we on track to achieve 2030 targets? online”
- **Ms Laura Comelli**, Managing Authority of INTERREG VI-A Italy-Slovenia Programme - autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy.
“A showcase of the INTERREG Italy-Slovenia projects fostering climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention through River basin management approach and Integrated Coastal zone management with an outlook to the Post-2027”
- **Mr Vasilis Gorgolis**, Vice Governor for Environmental Issues of Epirus, Region of Epirus, Greece.
“Protection of the Marine Environment through the Environmental Committee of the Region of Epirus” (online)
- **Mr Antonios Mazaris**, Prof. Department of Ecology, School of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and **Stelios Katsanevakis**, Prof. Department of Marine Sciences, University of the Aegean, Greece.
“Actions for the conservation of emblematic marine species in the Ionian Sea” (online)

20:00 – 22:00 **Social Dinner in ESPEROS restaurant (courtesy of the Region of Crete)**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/qBangy3aA43V92LY6>



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WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2025

08:30 – 10:00 **EUSAIR Pillar 2 (Connecting the Region – Energy): Energy Programmes and Projects to Address the Global Climate Change Challenge in the Adriatic and Ionian Region (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

This session focuses on transition toward net-zero carbon energy systems in EUSAIR participating countries, in line with EU targets for 2050. It addresses the need for national strategies to reduce carbon emissions, the importance of increased cooperation and harmonization of energy policies and the potential role of EUSAIR in supporting these efforts. The session also discusses the challenges of accelerating the energy transition, including the phasing out of traditional energy sources, emphasizing coordinated action to achieve sustainable, decarbonized energy systems across the region.

Chair / Moderator:

- **Ms Biljana Ramić**, Head of Energy Strategies, Programmes and Plans, Ministry of Mining and Energy, Serbia (online tbc)

Keynote speaker

- **Mr Davide Tabarelli**, President of Nomisma Energia, Italy
“Confronting the Global Climate Change: Prospects and Challenges Ahead”

Panelists:

- **Mr Artur Lorkowski**, Director, Energy Community, Vienna
- **Prof. Sandro Nižetić**, University of Split, Croatia (tbc)
- **Mr Dimitris Kollias**, Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Environment and Energy, Greece
- **Mr Alberto Biancardi**, Director of International and European Relations, GSE, Italy
- **Mr Davos Bajs**, Electricity Infrastructure Expert at the Energy Community Secretariat in Vienna, (tbc)



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09:00 – 11:00 **Building bridges: Enhancing communication and capitalization for EU enlargement – INTERACT (VENUE: ARTEMIS)**

The session will explore the direct and indirect contributions of IPA projects to EU accession, fostering the development of a communication framework for translating abstract benefits to tangible, project-level actions. Case studies and practical examples will be demonstrated, in a capitalisation exercise which will highlight the positive impact of Interreg IPA programmes.

Chairs (moderator)

- **Stoyan Kanatov**, Interact, Cooperation actions under IJG goal and Interreg Slam
- **Besiana Ninka**, Interact, Interreg IPA and programme evaluation

10:00 – 11:30 **EUSAIR Pillar 2 (Connecting the Region – Transport): Connectivity as a Vital Tool for Tourism Development (VENUE: ATHENA)**

This session explores sustainable and accessible transport as a driver for tourism and economic growth in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. It highlights the importance of collaboration between public authorities and businesses to bridge infrastructure and accessibility gaps. Emphasis is placed on improving regional rail, maritime, road and airport connectivity, while addressing environmental concerns. Overtourism and limited land availability, particularly on islands, underscore the need for strategic spatial planning. Given that tourism represents a significant share of GDP for many countries in the region modern and efficient transport is essential. Enhancing border crossings and cross-border procedures supports smoother travel flows. At the local level, the focus is on integrated public transport, safe cycling routes and improved access for people with disabilities. Diversifying tourism services and promoting responsible travel are central goals.

- **Chair (Moderator): Theoni Papasimakopoulou**, Hellenic Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, External and International Affairs Directorate, International & European Transport Affairs Dept.
- **Co- Chair: Dr. Evangelia Kaselimi**, Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Policy advisor, General Secretariat of Maritime Affairs & Ports.



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Panellists:

- **Mr Matej Zakonjsek**, Director, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, *“Improving Transport Connectivity in Western Balkans”*
- **Mr Athanasios Porfyris**, Chief Executive Officer, Igoumenitsa Port Authority (IPA SA), *“Intermodality and Ports - the case of the Port of Igoumenitsa.”*
- **Dr Maria Morfoulaki**, Deputy Head of the Sustainable Tourism Dept., Hellenic Institute of Transport & Tourism (HIT) / Center of Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH), *“Sustainable Tourism and Mobility hand by hand development in ADRION cities.”*
- **Dr Glykeria Myrovali**, Head of Laboratory Technologies for Touristic Development, HIT/ CERTH, *“From Transport needs assessment to Tourism rethinking in the ADRION macroregion.”*

11:30 – 11:45 **Coffee break**

11:45 – 13:30 **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Programme: Corridors, Connectivity and Cities: From Strategy to Delivery via WBEM Corridor and CEF Projects (VENUE: [ATHENA](#))**

11:45 – 12:00 **Key Speaker, M. Marinescu**
Coordinator of Western Balkan East Mediterranean Corridor (WBEM)

12:00 – 12:45 **Panel 1: Sustainable Urban Mobility: The Role of Tailored Support for Fulfilling the Mobility Needs of Cities in TEN-T Urban Nodes**

The session will focus on the urban nodes of the TEN-T and the requirements of the new Revised Regulation 1679/2024. The new Regulation requires the approval and monitoring of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) in the 17 Greek and a total of 431 European urban nodes of the TEN-T. The discussion will address the European legislation, and the steps required to update the SUMPs, considering the specific conditions of each city or urban node, as well as the needs of the citizens. This will ensure the plans are tailored to local realities and priorities. The coordinated efforts of the Greek state in drafting the SUMPs are expected to focus on both enhancing sustainable urban mobility and developing



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multimodal passenger/freight hubs, as well as improving road safety, as Greece continues to record high rates of fatal traffic accidents within cities.

Panellists:

- **Yiannis Anastasakis**, Vice Governor for climate change and urban mobility of Region of Crete
- **Evangelia Stavropoulou**, Deputy Head of Transport Development Directorate (D29), Head of Sustainable Urban Mobility Department, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport
- **Dr. Maria Morfoulaki**, Senior Research Staff Scientist HIT/CERTH, Head of Sustainable Mobility Laboratory Deputy Head of Transport and Tourism Sector

12:45 – 13:30 Panel 2: Experiences and Insights from CEF-Funded Projects: Success Stories, Challenges and Lessons Learned

This session will present key projects implemented along the TEN-T corridors in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region, primarily funded through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

Panellists:

- **Konstantinos I. Chatzifotis**, EU Affairs Manager, Motor Oil Group
“Development of electric and hydrogen refueling infrastructure for road transport”
- **Dr. Ioannis Patsouras**, Solutions Architect/Project Manager, WINGS ICT SOLUTIONS
“Deployment of 5G networks and digital infrastructure, including roaming corridors and a submarine cable for Aegean islands”
- **Athanasios Porfyris**, CEO of Igoumenitsa Port Authority S.A.
“Studies and infrastructure works related to LNG as a marine fuel and ship electrification (cold ironing)”.
- **Nikolaos Iosif**, Manager Operational Compliance & Transformation, Athens International Airport S.A.
“Projects enhancing AIA’s integration into the European Air Traffic Management Network including the redesign of departure and arrival procedures “



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12:30 – 13:30 Young POPRI Award Ceremony (VENUE: [ARTEMIS](#))

Announcement of best business ideas of High-school students and University students & award ceremony. High-school students will be awarded by Tanja Kožuh, Director of Primorska Technology Park and George Papamichail, Director of STEP-C, University students by Tamara Weingerl-Požar, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Cyprus and Slawomir Tokarski, Director of Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission.

Welcome notes:

- **Gilles Kittel**, Team Leader –South – East Europe, DG REGIO, European Commission
- **Tanja Kožuh**, CEO Primorski tehnološki park, Slovenia
- **Andrej Lepavcov**, National Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, North Macedonia
- **Tamara Weingerl-Požar**, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Cyprus

13:30 – 14:40 Lunch

14:40 – 16:00 EUSAIR Pillar 4 (Sustainable Tourism): Cultural Tourism and Mediterranean Diet as a Tool for Local Sustainable Development (VENUE: [ATHENA](#))

This session explores leveraging cultural tourism and the UNESCO-recognized Mediterranean Diet to drive sustainable development in the Adriatic-Ionian region. It emphasizes valorizing Geographical Indications (GIs) to boost rural tourism, promoting organic farming for biodiversity, and fostering collaboration between tourism and agri-food sectors. Aligned with EUSAIR's revised Action Plan, the discussion highlights initiatives like cultural routes (e.g., Iter Vitis) and multi-stakeholder platforms (living labs) to enhance authenticity and socio-economic resilience. Key goals include preserving heritage, diversifying tourism products, and integrating sustainability into regional growth strategies.



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Chair / Moderator:

- **Fotis Vlachos**, Officer, Department of International Relations, International Relations and EU, Hellenic Ministry of Culture.

Key Speaker:

- **Dr Olympia Vikatou**, Director General of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ministry of Culture.
"The Mediterranean diet as a sustainable development driver for the local communities. The case of Greece"

Panellists:

- **Mr Georgios Emmanouil**, Policy Officer, DG REGIO, European Commission.
"The Revised EUSAIR Action Plan on Cultural Tourism and the Mediterranean Diet"
- **Ms Jelica Grujić**, Head of the Tourism Department at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
"Promoting organic farming practices to enhance the sustainability of agricultural systems, supporting biodiversity and the health of ecosystems, to reinforce the authenticity and appeal of the region's tourism offerings"
- **Ms Danijela Vićentijević**, PhD, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Tourism and Youth of the Republic of Serbia.
"Increasing the awareness, that Geographical Indications/ GI are an essential commodity as well as an integral part of social and cultural heritage"
- **Ms Tamara Djukic**, Senior Adviser, Department for the Diversification of the Tourism Product, Ministry of Tourism, Montenegro.
"Gastro-heritage of Mediterranean as a tourism product: case of Montenegro"
- **Mr Afet Jashari**, State Advisor for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage Ministry of culture and tourism, North Macedonia.
"Old Skopje bazar -the historical connections of the old with new for economy, trade, culture and tradition"
- **Mrs Anthi Panagiotou**, Coordinator of Task Force Culture of the Association of European Border Regions (A.E.B.R.) and Senior Expert of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Xanthi, Thrace (Greece).
"Connecting Bridges through Culture and Mediterranean Diet - Creative Cooperation for Cohesion and Identity"



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Conclusion:

Senka Daniel, Pillar 4 Coordinator, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Republic of Croatia

15:00 – 18:15 **Addressing Challenges in Maritime Infrastructure & Connectivity in the Adriatic-Ionian Region: Chambers of Commerce Insights and Data-Driven Perspectives from the DO-AIR Observatory (VENUE: *ARTEMIS*, simultaneous interpretation will be available in Greek, English and Italian)**

This event will present key findings from the DO-AIR Observatory, a strategic tool launched last December to provide structured socio-economic data supporting policy decisions in the Adriatic-Ionian region. Collecting macroregional data since 2001 in demographics, trade flows, foreign direct investments, corporate presence, and transport & logistics, DO-AIR offers valuable insights for enhancing connectivity and infrastructure planning. The session is expected to unfold in three parts: a comprehensive overview of maritime traffic data in the Adriatic-Ionian area (2001–present) and two panel discussions on relevant topics.

15:00 - 15:20 | Institutional Welcome & Opening

Moderator: Eleonora Tramannoni, Secretary General, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Forum AIC)

- **Gino Sabatini**, President, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Forum AIC)
- **Mathilde Konstantopoulou**, Greek EUSAIR National Coordinator for ESI Funds, Ministry of Economy and Finance
- **Fabio Pigliapoco**, Head of the Permanent Secretariat of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (All)

15:20 - 16:05 | Introductory session “The DO-AIR Observatory – Data and Insights”

The DO-AIR Observatory, promoted and coordinated by Forum AIC and UNIVPM, supports strategic planning in the Adriatic-Ionian Region through data-driven insights. This session will present key findings across five focus areas—demographics, trade exchange, foreign direct investments, corporate



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presence, and transport networks—with particular attention to maritime and intermodal flows as drivers of regional competitiveness.

- **Michele De Vita**, Senior Advisor, Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Region (Forum AIC)
- **Anna Cingoli**, Project Manager, Forum AIC
- **Daniele Bregoli**, Policy & Project Officer, PhD Candidate, Research and Service Center on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Marche Polytechnic University (UNIVPM)
- **Donatella Romozzi**, EUSAIR Technical Coordinator, Marche Region

Moderator: **Robert Rakar**, Director, Primorska Chamber of Commerce (Slovenia)

16:05 - 16:55 Panel Discussion “The Port Infrastructure of the Adriatic-Ionian Macregion: Current State and Development Perspectives”

A discussion among port authorities on the current infrastructure of the main seaports in the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the strategies underway to respond to ongoing changes in maritime logistics. The session will explore capacity, investments, digitalisation, and sustainability to understand how ports prepare to become competitive hubs in the coming years.

Keynote Speaker: Antonello Fontanili, Director, Uniontrasporti

Panelists:

- **Elena Montironi**, Project Manager, Development, promotion, statistics, communication and EU projects, Central Adriatic Ports Authority (Italy)
- **Dragica Franulović**, Management Advisor, Port of Rijeka (Croatia)
- **Nikoloutsos Konstantinos**, President, Katakolo Port (Greece)
- **Dario Barbaric**, Head of Security, Environment and Port Operations, Dubrovnik Port Authority (Croatia)

16:55 - 17:10 Coffee break

17:10-18:00 Panel Discussion "Maritime Market Needs in the Adriatic-Ionian Macregion: Challenges and Opportunities"

This panel explores the demand for maritime services in the Adriatic-Ionian area, focusing on the needs of exporting companies and shipping lines. Insights from key players in the logistics



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chain will help identify which services are necessary, today and in the future, to ensure that maritime connectivity effectively meets the market's real demands and supports the region's development.

Keynote Speaker: Matej Zakonjšek, Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community

Panelists

- **Marko Škraljsky**, General manager, Dragon Maritime Adria d.o.o. Rijeka (Croatia)
- **Napoleon Tsanis**, Vice President, Chamber of Commerce of Thesprotia (Greece)
- **Stefano Visintin**, President of ASPT-ASTRA FVG (Association of Freight Forwarders of Friuli Venezia Giulia) and of Confetra FVG (Italy)
- **Nebojša Jevtić**, Senior Advisor for Transport, Head of Centre for Vocational Training in Transport at CCIS (Serbia)
- **Lucia Di Bisceglie**, President, Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture of Bari (Italy)

18:00 -18:15 | Closing Remarks & Final Takeaways

Antonello Fontanili, Director, Uniontrasporti

Gilles Kittel, Team Leader –South – East Europe, DG REGIO, European Commission

16:00 – 17:20 **Empowering Youth for a Brighter Adriatic – Ionian Future: Introducing the EUSAIR Youth Council (VENUE: *ATHENA*)**

This session presents the newly-established EUSAIR Youth Council (EYC) and how it can advocate for young people in the Adriatic-Ionian region under EUSAIR. Long-struggling with complex identities, socio-economic factors, and other challenges, young people increasingly seek opportunities elsewhere in Europe and beyond, leaving local communities brain-drained and under immense economic pressure.



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Chair / Moderator:

- **Ms Eva Omahen**, EUSAIR Youth Council Coordinator, Facility Point Lead Partner (Slovenia)

16:00 – 16:55 Part 1: Keynote address EUSAIR PRESIDENCY

Short Keynote Address from the EUSAIR Presidency. The Presidency will deliver a short address at the start of the Session.

Speaker: Representative of Hellenic Presidency of EUSAIR, Andreas Kornilakis, EYC Members

Keynote Listeners:

EC Representative, Gaby Hagmuller, (TBC), Representative of Pillar 5 (TBC)

Roundtable + Key Listeners intervention

Video from 10 different representatives of youth organisations on the challenges and opportunities in the Adriatic and Ionian Region. The video will be approximately 8-10 minutes long and will set the scene for a discussion on the opportunities, challenges, perspectives and need of young people in AIR. As well as how can EUSAIR address this and how can the EUSAIR Youth Council advocate for this

The core of the session will be an active discussion on the opportunities, challenges, and perspectives of young people in the Adriatic-Ionian Region (AIR), as well as how EUSAIR can address these issues and how the EUSAIR Youth Council (EYC) can advocate for them.

The EUSAIR Youth Council, officially launched in October 2024, will be inaugurated at the 10th Annual Forum with a dedicated session on youth issues. The session will address challenges like brain drain, unemployment, and limited educational access, while exploring solutions such as entrepreneurship and civic engagement. It aims to highlight how EUSAIR can empower young people and enhance their role in shaping the region's future.

16:55 – 17:20 Part 2: Discussion & Networking with Youth Networks, Projects and Initiatives

Invited representatives and others from audience: AIYN, POPRI, Crete Universities - Erasmus Student Network, CDI Connecting Youth platform, Gear UP Project, ASOC (TBC)

The final part of the session will be a networking activity, where youth initiatives, projects, and organizations working in the Adriatic and Ionian Region will engage with EYC members, participants, and stakeholders. The goal is to explore potential collaborations in the region and develop a sustainable plan for enhancing youth engagement. The session will include



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presentations showcasing various initiatives and their connection to the EUSAIR Youth Council, with a discussion focusing on the role of the Youth Council as a mediator between these networks.

17:20 – 18:40 EUSAIR Pillar 5 (Improved Social Cohesion): Social Innovation as an Alternative Approach to address Citizens' Needs (VENUE: *ATHENA*)

This session discusses the policy context for Social Innovation in the EU, focusing on its role in empowering people and driving sustainable social inclusion. It addresses how Social Innovation, a key topic under EUSAIR Pillar 5, can tackle challenges such as ageing populations and support vulnerable groups. The session highlights objectives like fostering collaboration among stakeholders, enhancing knowledge transfer, expanding EU frameworks, building a social innovation ecosystem, strengthening decision – makers' capacities and reducing disparities in innovation performance between EU and candidate countries in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

Chair / Moderator:

- **Ms Dunja Šare**, EUSAIR Pillar 5 Coordinator, Croatia

Panellists:

Moderator of Panel: Ms Rania Oikonomou, Director of Special Service for the Coordination of ESF+ Actions, Ministry of Finance, Greece

- **Mr Michael Grosse**, Team Leader - Social Innovation at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit G2 (Social Climate Fund, European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, Social Innovation), European Commission. *“EU framework of Social Innovation, online”*
- **Ms Marianna Kondylidou**, National Competence Centre for Social Innovation, Greece - Implementing Partner of the SEED2SCALE project. *“The SEED2SCALE project”*
- **Ms Stefania Athanasiou**, Secretary General for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty, Ministry of Family and Social Cohesion, Greece. *“Social Innovation and Policy Design”*



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Presentations on good practice of Social Innovation

- **Mr Simon Colnar**, Slovenian Multidisciplinary Research and Development Centre. *Social Innovations for Active and Healthy Ageing project.*
- **Mr Ivan Božić**, Humana Nova, Croatia. *Humana Nova association.*
- **Mr Thanasis Papavlasopoulos**, Greece. *Innovative Social Entrepreneurship in meeting social needs.*

18:40 – 19:00 **10th EUSAIR Forum Conclusion (VENUE: [ATHENA](#))**

THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2025

09:30 – 13:30 **Project Visit in Chania linked to EUSAIR Pillars** (transfer to and back will be provided by organizers):

New Archaeological Museum of Chania - located in the historic district of Halepa (Operational Programme “Crete 2014–2020”)

The New Archaeological Museum of Chania, located in the historic district of Halepa, represents one of the most emblematic cultural projects in Crete. Beyond preserving and showcasing the region’s archaeological wealth, the museum also supports local tourism and plays a key role in the urban revitalization of Halepa - a neighborhood celebrated for its neoclassical mansions and distinctive historical architecture.

Designed by renowned architect Theofanis Bobotis, the museum spans over 5,600 square meters and includes cutting-edge permanent and temporary exhibition halls, conservation laboratories, administrative spaces, a 140-seat amphitheatre, educational facilities, a café, and a bookstore. The permanent exhibition space alone covers 1,800 square meters and features more than 3,500 artifacts, including coins, mosaics, sculptures, and items from private collections.

These artifacts were carefully transported from the museum’s former location, conserved, and installed using state-of-the-art showcases and multimedia tools. The exhibition is



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supported by extensive bilingual interpretive materials, digital and audiovisual content, and interactive applications, providing visitors with a rich, immersive experience.

The New Archaeological Museum of Chania was realized through a two-phase investment: the construction of the new building, with a budget of €9.87 million, and the organization of the permanent exhibition—including conservation, transportation, and digital installations—co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Operational Programme “Crete 2014–2020”, with a total budget of €3.3 million.

Urban Regeneration of the Tabakaria District - the eastern seafront of Chania historic district (Operational Programme “Crete 2021–2027”)

Transforming Industrial Heritage into a Cultural Urban Landscape

Along the eastern seafront of Chania lies the historic district of Tabakaria, once home to 19th-century leather tanneries. Today, the area is the focus of an ambitious urban regeneration project that aims to transform this unique industrial heritage site into an integrated cultural and pedestrian-friendly zone.

Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the project covers two key areas: the Vivylaki–Fragkokastello zone and Agia Kyriaki Street and its surroundings. It adopts a holistic urban design approach that enhances public infrastructure while preserving the district’s unique identity and architecture.

Key interventions include the bioclimatic reconstruction of roads and pedestrian pathways, the creation of public resting and recreational areas, improved safety and accessibility for pedestrians, new parking spaces for residents, and the integration of green zones and shaded spots. Additionally, the project includes the restoration of preserved architectural façades and the installation of modern lighting systems to improve both functionality and nighttime visibility, while highlighting heritage features.

The regeneration project, which contributes to a broader cultural walking route within the city, is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Operational Programme “Crete 2021–2027” and has a total public budget of €2,15 million.



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ANNEX Layout of the venues for session locations

